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**On the Establishment of a New Information Order in  
Africa: A Study of PANA, Nigerian Newspapers and  
Journalists**

**By M. N. Malam**

Submitted for the degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy

Communications Policy Research Centre  
City University, London  
May 1993



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Dedication

To my dear wife, Siham, without whose moral support  
I may not have survived through the 'horrors' of a  
Ph.D

Acknowledgement

In undertaking a study, one inevitably comes into contact with a number of people both within the university and in the professional field. Firstly, I extend my utmost appreciation to my first and second supervisors, Professor Jeremy Tunstall and Dr Oliver Boyd-Barrett respectively, for their editing, untiring and timely comments on the drafts of this thesis. Both have shown special interest in the research from its beginning. I am also thankful to all PANA Staff (especially those in the information department) and to the editors and reporters of the sampled Nigerian newspapers for their enthusiastic cooperation during the period of my fieldwork. Appreciation is due to Tajuddin Abdul-Rahim for his fruitful suggestions whenever requested, Yusuf Abdu Zango for vigilantly proof reading the final draft of this work, Ann Davies of World Association of Christian Communication (WACC) library for her assistance and the staff of Centre for the Study of Communications and Culture library for allowing me to use their materials.

Special gratitude is also extended to my wife, Siham, for her tremendous assistance with typing the work; and the Centre secretary, Sue Griffiths, who helped by photocopying materials for me and assisting in various other ways during the period of the research. Indeed, the contribution of my sponsors, Kano State Scholarship Board (KSSB), colleagues and friends, too numerous to be mentioned here individually, have all helped greatly towards making this study a reality.

<u>Contents</u>	<u>Page</u>
Title Page .....	i
Dedication .....	ii
Acknowledgement.....	iii
List of Chapters .....	iv
List of Tables .....	vii
Abstract .....	viii
General Introduction .....	1
<b>Chapter I News Flow and the NWICO Debate</b>	
1.1 Introduction .....	11
1.2 The Communication Explosion .....	11
1.3 Context of the Dominance of Western News Flow...	18
1.4 The NWICO Debate .....	23
1.5 Participants/Issues in the Debate .....	27
1.6 Critique of the NWICO Debate .....	31
1.7 Unesco as a Forum for the NWICO Debate .....	33
1.8 Conclusion .....	35
<b>Chapter II The Media in Africa: The Nigerian Example</b>	
2.1 Introduction .....	37
2.2 Africa: Media Features .....	39
2.3 Africa's Integration into the Global Capitalist System .....	47
2.4 Root of the Media in Nigeria .....	53
2.5 The Media in Neo-colonial Nigeria .....	63
2.6 Conclusion .....	68
<b>Chapter III The MacBride Commission</b>	
3.1 Introduction .....	71
3.2 The Reform of the 1980s: The NIEO and the NWICO.	73
3.3 Composition of the MacBride Commission.....	76
3.4 Mandate and tasks of the Commission .....	79
3.5 MacBride: Draft Report .....	84
3.6 MacBride: Final Report.....	85
3.7 MacBride Report: Recommendations .....	92
3.8 Talloires Declaration .....	93
3.9 International Programme for Development of Communication (IPDC) .....	97
3.10 Anglo-American withdrawal from Unesco .....	101
3.11 NWICO after Anglo-American Withdrawal .....	105
3.12 NWICO Under Mayor as Unesco Director-General .	107
3.13 Conclusion .....	110
<b>Chapter IV Methodology</b>	
4.1 Field Interviews .....	112
4.2 Content and Qualitative Analysis .....	114
4.3 Selection of Newspapers .....	117

4.4 PANA/Newspaper Samples .....	120
4.5 Library/Secondary Materials .....	126
4.6 Participant Observation .....	126
4.7 Definition of Key Concepts .....	128
4.8 Conclusion .....	129

## Chapter V **PANA**

5.1 Introduction .....	130
5.2 News Agency Categories .....	131
5.3 News Exchange Mechanism Models .....	134
5.4 PANA - Pre-history .....	136
5.5 Objectives and aims .....	138
5.6 Organisational Structure .....	140
5.7 Editorial Guidelines.....	143
5.8 Newsroom Organization/News Volume .....	150
5.9 News Selection and Processing .....	155
5.10 Views About Incoming News .....	158
5.11 News Deadlines .....	159
5.12 Editorial Meetings and News Regulation .....	160
5.13 Language of Transmission .....	162
5.14 Financial Position .....	163
5.15 Telecommunications network .....	168
5.16 Ownership/Political Control .....	172
5.17 Recruitment and Training .....	174
5.18 Internal 'Informal' Politics in PANA .....	176
5.19 Conclusion .....	179

## Chapter VI **PANA Newscast: Content analysis**

6.1 Introduction .....	181
6.2 Origin of Stories .....	182
6.3 Distribution of Stories by World Region .....	189
6.4 Distribution of African stories by sub-region .....	193
6.5 Story Type and Location .....	197
6.6 Main Story Topics .....	204
6.7 Main Story Actors .....	212
6.8 Sex of Story Actors .....	218
6.9 Orientation/Direction of PANA Stories .....	224
6.10 Conclusion .....	226

## Chapter VII **Nigerian Newspapers: Content analysis**

7.1 Introduction .....	228
7.2 Comparative Analysis .....	231
7.3 Volume of Stories reported .....	231
7.4 Coverage by World Region .....	233
7.5 Intra-African Regional Coverage .....	236
7.6 News Location Centres .....	238
7.7 Source(s) of News .....	240
7.8 Type of Stories Reported .....	245
7.9 News Topics .....	247
7.10 News Actors .....	255
7.11 Coverage of actors by sex .....	259
7.12 Page location of Stories .....	260
7.13 Conclusion .....	262

## Chapter VIII Nigerian Journalists' Perception of PANA

8.1 Introduction .....	264
8.2 The Journalists' Career Background and Work Tasks .....	265
8.3 PANA, NAN and Nigerian Newspapers .....	266
8.4 Respondents' responses .....	269
8.5 Usage of Development journalism approach.....	281
8.6 Conclusion .....	287

## Chapter IX News Imbalance: PANA and the Nigerian Press

9.1 Introduction .....	290
9.2 Political and Economic inequality in the news of PANA and Nigerian press.....	291
9.3 Ownership Structure, Editorial Control and Power Imbalance in the News of PANA/Nigerian Press ..	301
9.4 Transnational Media Values, PANA, Nigerian Press and news Bias .....	306
9.5 Value Socialization, Daily Routines, PANA, Nigerian Press and News Imbalance .....	319
9.6 The News of PANA and Nigerian Press: Towards a Hegemonic Model .....	321
9.7 Conclusion.....	323

## Chapter X General Conclusion

10.1 Summary of Findings .....	325
10.2 African Journalistic Value and Western Synchrony .....	331
Bibliography .....	337
Glossary .....	357
Appendices .....	359

**List of Tables**

2.1 Africa's Share of Communication Resources .....	45
4.1 PANA/Newspapers Content Analysis Samples .....	122
5.1 PANA's Organisational Hierarchy Chart .....	143
5.2 PANA's Features Production .....	153
5.3 PANA's News Production .....	154
5.4 Amount Owed PANA by Member-Countries .....	166
6.1 Source of PANA Stories .....	189
6.2 PANA's World Regional Coverage .....	190
6.3 PANA's Coverage of African Sub-regions .....	194
6.4 Type of PANA Stories .....	201
6.5 PANA News Location Centres .....	202
6.6 PANA's Coverage by Topics .....	205
6.7 PANA's Story Actors .....	219
6.8 Sex of PANA's Story Actors .....	223
6.9 Orientation of PANA's Stories .....	225
7.1 World Regional Coverage of Foreign News in Sampled Newspapers by percentage .....	235
7.2 Newspapers African news Coverage by sub-region .....	238
7.3 Newspapers News Coverage by location of events .....	240
7.4 Newspapers News Stories by Source .....	243
7.5 Newspapers Coverage by Story Type .....	245
7.6 Topics Reported by Selected Newspapers .....	253
7.7 Actors Reported by Selected Newspapers .....	257
7.8 Sex of Reported Actors by Newspapers .....	260
7.9 Page Location of Stories in Newspapers .....	261

### Abstract

The global information and Communications debate has not only grown in importance but has also carved out a new area of international relations and study, i.e information diplomacy. In the past most attention and studies have been devoted to the imbalance in the flow of news, data and information between Western nations (considered as the most information developed) and the Third World (regarded as less information developed). However, this study attempts to argue that information imbalance and inequality within and between the Africa and the Western countries is not only an external problem but also an internal (African) one because of socio-economic inequalities and the problem of national elites.

Chapter I discusses the 'information explosion', the channels of (Western) international news flow and the NWICO debate. It presents the main issues, participants and critique of the (NWICO) debate.

Chapter II is a discussion of the media in Africa, in comparison with those in the industrialised countries, highlighting on the gaps between them and those of the developed countries.

Chapter III analyses various aspects of the MacBride Commission - its composition, mandate, report and recommendations. The Commission's submissions seemed to fit the description given them as 'vague general consensus' which did not offend any major participants (particularly Western) in the debate. Sharing similar goals with the NWICO, it is suggested that Third World national agencies and News Exchange Mechanisms like PANA, were not established on a sound footing because of the former's (NWICO's) loopholes.

Chapter IV introduces the methodology used in the study. These include field interviews, participant observation, secondary materials and content analysis.

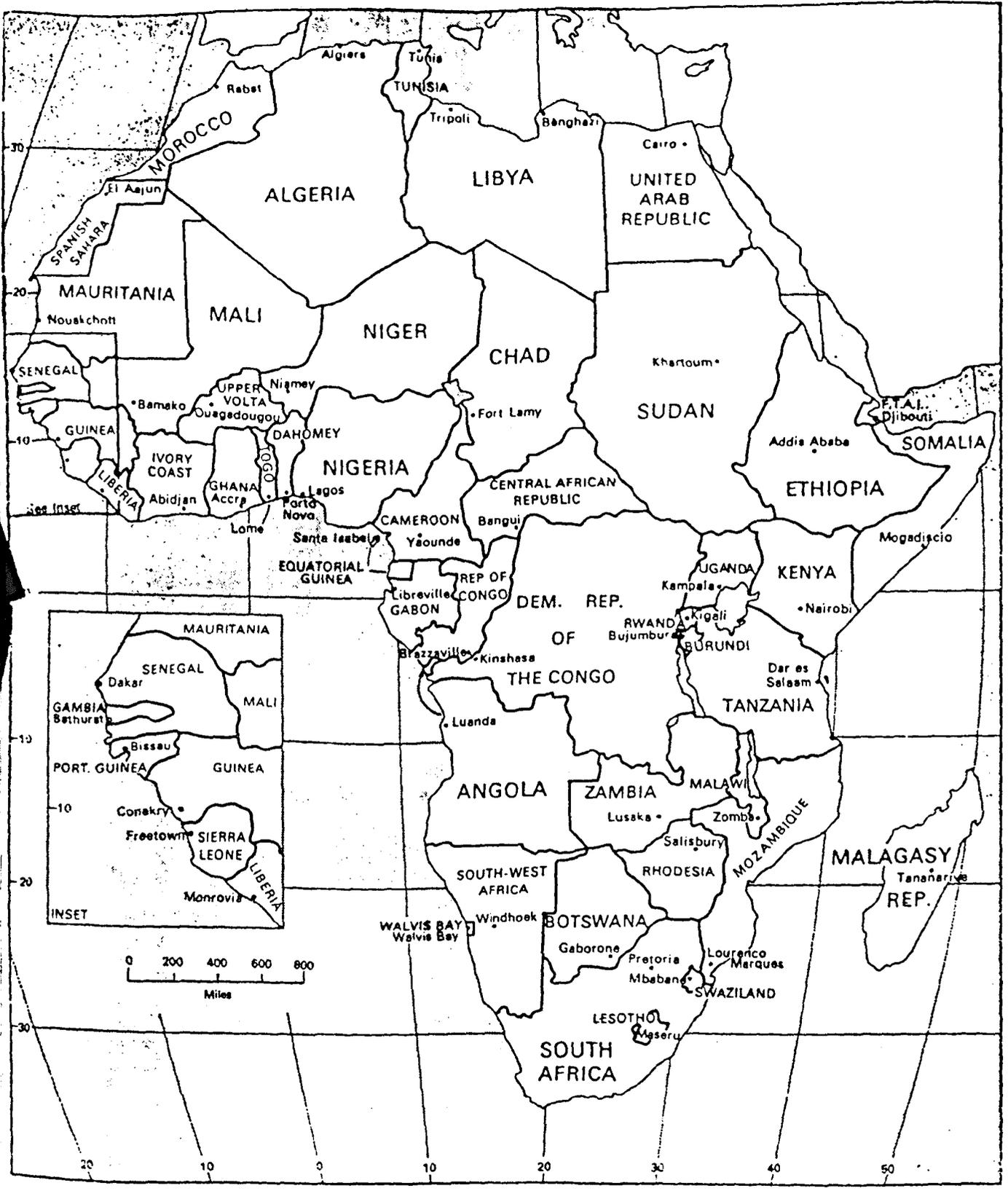
Chapter V presents the various types of news agencies, with more detailed attention on PANA. PANA's editorial and organizational structure are discussed as well as other issues (telecommunication, financial, etc) relating to the agency, particularly in the context of its (PANA's) goals to establish a new information order in Africa.

Chapters VI and VII are content analyses of the news chemistry of PANA and some selected Nigerian newspapers respectively. A number of similarities especially with regard to core news values and character were discovered in the news bulletins of the two sets of African media. Separately and jointly the news values of these two media are not found to provide 'alternative' news or information which focus on non dominant news centres, topics and actors.

Chapter VIII presents data testing the awareness of PANA among Nigerian Journalists. It suggests that the respondents' awareness of PANA's services is low, meaning that even if the agency's stories are an alternative to the existing information order, its impact (among Nigerian journalists) in reporting Africa is yet to be felt.

In chapter IX imbalances and bias in the news of PANA and the studied newspapers, favouring power holding groups in society, are explained using various levels of explanation. These include political and economic inequalities within and between Africa and the West, allocative, managerial and editorial control patterns, the global spread of Western news production practices, media organizational structures (which are hierarchical) and the socialization and training of journalists into routine media practices and values. It is argued that media (in particular PANA and the newspapers) output also contribute to the maintenance of the status quo.

Finally, Chapter X is a general conclusion chapter. Apart from summarizing the main findings in the study, it argues that though developing countries attempt to produce their own news and lessen their dependence on foreign (Western) agencies, the problems of imbalance and bias still manifest themselves in their news. It contends that the main problem seems to be the synchronization of African media to the news production values and practices of Western countries as a consequence of their integration into the global capitalist system.



## General Introduction

The scale on which the media and cultural systems of most countries of the world, including non-Third World ones, are dominated by or synchronize with the values, symbols, techniques and professional patterns of a few industrialized Western metropolitan countries seems enormous. The issue has become a central subject of inquiry in international communication in the 'recent' past. Especially related to this concern was the undertaking of an international debate on communication issues, particularly news flow within, and between Third World regions and Western countries. The main point in the debate suggests a dominance of world news flow by a few, mainly Western, international news agencies, which has led to a "one-way free flow" of news from the West to the Third World. In addition, it has been argued that Western news concerning the Third world distorts the reality of the latter countries, by giving 'undue' emphasis to 'out-of-context or exceptional' news about war and civil strife, famine, disasters, poverty, etc. Both these factors were thought to be detrimental to Third World interests.

It has been argued in the debate that the developing countries, however, are not in a position of sufficient comparative advantage to influence the direction of international news flow because the major world agencies, which have a monopoly over international news flow and which are also the targets for criticism of imbalances in news flow,

are owned by Western interests. They are also said to respond only to the needs of Western markets and Western audience interests. Hence, the imbalance both produces a negative picture of the 'developing' countries and reflects a situation of 'cultural imperialism' or media dependency in which Third World media are dependent on the media of major Western countries.

While studies on international news flow would "always be inadequate" and "lag behind" the complex and fast changing reality of their subject (Hur: 1984), a large number of such studies have been conducted since the late 1960s, and especially from the 1970s. Among the early detailed studies which re-affirmed contentions about Western 'cultural imperialism' were those by Wells (1972), Nordenstreng and Varis (1974), Schiller (1976), Tunstall (1977), Mankekar (1978), Mattelart (1979) and Lee (1980). They all considered Western influence on the cultural and media systems of other countries in the domains of film, television, video and other informational materials.

There has been a wave of relatively comprehensive and comparative studies of news agencies in the past two decades including those of Boyd-Barrett (1980), Harris (1981, 1985), Schramm and Atwood (1981) Desmond (1980), Smith (1980) Fenby (1986) etc. These studies concentrated on discussing the social and economic contexts in which the dominant 'big four' Western news agencies emerged, the benefits they derive from

the "empires" of their originating countries as well as their role in international news flow. They also confirmed Third World claims to news dominance by the Western news agencies, especially along the pattern of former colonial linkages. More recent research has focussed on the involvement of the major agencies in the instant transmission of business data. Examples include studies of Reuters and AFP by Palmer (1991), and Reed (1992). Both have commented on the entry into a more intensive competitive phase by those agencies that have diversified into this area.

The efforts made by a number of Third World countries during the 1970s and 1980s from within the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), Unesco and other forums to reduce their dependency on the media of the Western countries, especially for news about themselves, and to achieve self sufficiency in news production have led to the emergence of their own national and regional agencies, and of the Non-Aligned News Agency Pool. While most of these Third World agencies were not set up to compete with the dominant Western agencies, their aim is to provide 'alternative' or 'development' news, whose orientation differs from that of the 'big four' agencies. Likewise, the emergence in recent years of some 'developing' countries like India and especially Brazil as global producers and exporters of media materials, mainly film and television, has encouraged perceptions of a growing complexity in the international media scene due to the presence of more media actors (McNeely & Soysal: 1989:142). In fact, Antola and Rogers (1984) have

even gone far to claim a "reverse cultural imperialism" occurring since the 1980s as a result of the wide distribution of television and media materials from the 'developing' countries to others, including Western Europe (Portugal). Though it is not the immediate aim of this study to engage in discussion about 'reverse cultural imperialism', the claim nonetheless looks extreme and requires more evidence than the mere export of media material from few 'developing' countries to Western ones. The discussion in chapter nine touches on this claim.

The concern in this research has particularly to do with PANA and its functioning in international news flow. It is appropriate therefore to review the literature on news agencies. A number of studies have been conducted on how 'well' or 'badly' the 'alternative', 'development' or 'liberation' model news agencies have performed since their establishment<sup>1</sup>. Some studies compared an 'alternative' agency with the dominant Western transnational agencies. These include studies of the Yugoslav Tanjug Agency by Robinson (1981) and the Inter Press Service (IPS) by Giffard (1983). These two separate studies concluded that although each of the agencies has its own problems (for example IPS's close association with UN agencies or Tanjug's communist outlook), both represented quite distinctive models, different from the big four, in terms of news values, priorities and news focus.

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<sup>1</sup> The 'alternative' model agencies like PANA are meant to provide a news focus that is different from that of the dominant Western news agencies.

Other studies have been less positive. For example, studies of 'liberation' national and regional agencies have also been carried out by Cuthbert (1979), Burke (1981), Samarajiwa (1984), Jakubowicz (1985), Martin and Musa (1987), Musa (1989), Boyd-Barrett and Thussu (1991), among others. While all these studies identify operational deficiencies of these 'alternative' agencies, some (for example Martin and Musa, and Samarajiwa) have gone farther to argue that without change of existing structures of international news flow "it would be well nigh impossible for the Third World to set up a....news production and distribution capability responsive to its needs" (Samarajiwa: 1984:130). Without such change, 'alternative' agencies can only "re-create the image distributed by the international news agencies" as the 'alternative' agencies are dependent on international agencies for their agenda setting and 'instant' international news since they lack the manpower and resources needed to maintain a comprehensive international presence.

None of the quoted studies, however, focussed particularly on PANA. Those that included PANA did not examine the agency in depth (for example Martin and Musa, Boyd-Barrett and Thussu). The few existing sources on the African agency include studies by Ansah (1989) and Hunt (1992). The one by Ansah (1989) was more of an evaluation study (sponsored by Unesco) to "assess the activities of PANA" ten years after it was formally established - but less since the beginning of editorial operations. It was not grounded in any academic theory. The

PANA study by Hunt (1992) was not at all a "holistic" study of the agency. It only made a comparative content analysis of the agency's news stories with those of New York Times and the Associated Press. Indeed, while Ansah's study dwelt more on the quantitative increase in PANA's editorial output since it began editorial operations in 1983, that of Hunt was merely restricted to comparing the quantity of 'development' news in the three media he studied.

The introduction of electronic television news exchanges and especially the take-off of the CNN 'World Report' in 1987 has attracted research interest equivalent to that in the wire services, with respect to the type of news reported on the network, the main participants, the regions reported, etc. Studies include those by Flournoy (1992) and Ganzert and Flournoy (1992). Both studies indicate a 'significant difference' in the regions represented in the CNN 'World Report' in favour of Asia, compared to US Networks. A shift was also observed in the overall topic rank reported by the two sets of media; or between the CNN 'World Report' and the Western wire agencies studied by Weaver and Wilhoit (1983). The topical shift was from the 'traditionally' most dominant news topics, domestic politics and diplomacy, to arts/culture and entertainment.

Because studies on 'alternative' regional agencies, particularly those on PANA, have been faulted for being too prescriptive or too restricted in scope, the goal of this

research is to undertake a detailed pioneering investigation into the African agency with the aim of understanding whether or not the objectives for establishing the agency have been achieved.

First, a multi-methodological approach is used to study the political objectives, organizational and editorial structure of PANA, and how these factors hinder or accelerate its editorial output and performance as an 'alternative' agency.

Secondly, the news geography of PANA with respect to its main story topics, news location, story actors, story type, etc is examined. A comparison along these same variables is made with African and world news of some selected Nigerian newspapers. The intention here is that while similarities between the two may suggest a conformity of the smaller media (national/local papers) to the values of the bigger continental media (PANA), they may also represent other even more powerful influences from outside Africa. An IAMCR study has shown the prevalence of similar (i.e. Western) news reporting practices in some 29 different countries in which the association conducted its study (Sreberny-Mohammadi: 1985, see also da Costa: 1980). Finding similar traits between the newscasts of PANA and Nigerian newspapers on the one hand, and those of Western media on the other, may suggest that a "spill over effect" of the globalization of news production procedures by some few (largely Western) media and news agencies is the explanation for the similarity in perceptions

of news value.

Content analysis (of the events in the PANA coverage) of the dominant news agencies is not attempted here because the literature contains main recent news content of these agencies (see for example Harris: 1978, 1981 & 1985, Boyd-Barrett: 1980, Schramm & Atwood: 1981, Robinson: 1981, Meyer: 1988). Such a task is therefore deliberately avoided in order not to risk being repetitive. Constraint of resources also imposes limits on what can be achieved within a particular time period, as in this case, hence adding additional constraint on carrying out a similar content analysis of the major news agencies.

Thirdly, it investigates the perception of the Pan African News Agency (PANA) by Nigerian newspaper journalists. The aim is to assess the level of awareness about PANA among Nigerian journalists. It is suggested that this is an indicator of the extent of the likely impact on African journalism of its attempt to provide 'alternative' news for the media in Africa.

Fourthly, drawing on examples particularly from Nigeria, the study attempts to examine how the cultural sector (this includes the media) in African countries is integrated into the larger societal socio-economic structures, which are also influenced by international (largely Western) structures. It has been argued that African countries open up their economy to Western Trans-National Corporations (TNCs) and in the

process "adjust to" the needs and requirements of the Western economy and the TNCs (see Schiller: 1976; Hamelink: 1988). In this context, it is relevant to investigate the extent to which PANA in particular, and African media in general, assert their independence from international (basically Western) professional media values especially in the light of PANA's ambition to exist as an 'alternative' model agency.

#### Organisation of the study:

Chapter one introduces key concepts used, namely news, information and communication. The NWICO debate, its main contending sides and issues, and Unesco's role in the debate are also highlighted. Chapter two looks at the contemporary media in Africa with a particular focus on Nigeria and tries to situate the media within societal structures. This is done to establish the social and professional context of PANA and Nigerian media. Chapter three discusses the MacBride Commission, its relationship with NIEO and NWICO, the Commission's composition, tasks, report as well as its importance in the NWICO debate. The impact of change in the administrative leadership of Unesco is reviewed in relation to the NWICO.

The methodology used in conducting the study and its limitations are discussed in chapter four.

Chapter five investigates the origin of news exchange

mechanisms (NEMs) with particular attention to PANA. PANA's organisational and editorial structures are assessed from the perspective of whether or not the agency is capable of laying the foundation of a new information order for African media. Sources for this chapter include data drawn from participant observation, interviews and secondary sources. Chapter six analyses PANA's news output with the aim of examining how its news geography relates to the agency's objectives and the requirements of the 'new information order'. Chapter seven is a content analysis of African and world news in Nigerian newspapers with the aim of assessing whether or not the Nigerian press (an indirect client of PANA) produces generally similar or different types of news in comparison with PANA. Chapter eight examines the perception of PANA by foreign news reporters and editors in the selected Nigerian newspapers. Again, as in chapter five, materials presented in the chapter are largely derived from interviews and participant observation.

Using examples from Nigeria and Africa, chapter nine discusses the findings in the news content of both PANA (chapter six) and Nigerian newspapers (chapter seven) in relation to the broader societal context (both international and intra-African). Finally, chapter ten summarizes and concludes the study.

## Chapter One

### News Flow and the NWICO Debate

#### 1.1 Introduction:

This chapter together with chapters two and three creates a framework for analyzing PANA, and more generally 'alternative' or 'development' model news agencies established by governments and multi-lateral organisations of Third World countries. It begins by offering an operational definition of key concepts used in the discussion, namely news, information and communication. The techno-historical and economic developments in the West which paved the way for a global 'information explosion' and the worldwide dominance of a few Western agencies in world news flow are discussed.

The NWICO debate, though acknowledged as necessarily linked to the NWICO demand, is viewed as setting the background to the latter (which is discussed in more detail in chapter three). The main issues and participants in the NWICO debate as well as Unesco's role in the debate are also discussed. All the literature presented here is derived from secondary sources.

#### 1.2 The 'communication explosion':

There is a close relationship between news, information and communication. Whereas news refers to a functionally specific act of communication or information activity, the other two concepts are more general, though they both encompass news.

According to Mowlana (1986) information is not just a transmitted message or a description of an idea or event, but a patterned distribution of signs, objects and events. It may at times also be defined to mean approximately the same as data (Robertson: 1990).

On the other hand, communication is a more difficult concept to define (Mowlana: 1985). Orthodox definitions have in the past defined communication as a means rather than as a process of interaction (for example Schramm: 1964). However, a comprehensively more recent definition argues that communication is 'social interaction through messages' (Mowlana & Wilson: 1988:9). This social interaction may be conducted either through human or technological channels.

According to Beniger (1988), the relationship between communication and information lies in the fact that both are at the heart of all human and social phenomena. Information or communication is perceived as power because human beings in all types of societies, traditional or modern, are entirely dependent on it for control over their environment (MacBride: 1980). At the societal level (national or international), communication or information may be conceived of in terms of:

(1) who produces and (2) who distributes  
(3) what to (4) whom by (5) which channels under  
(6) which conditions (values) with (7) what  
international (purpose) under (8) which political  
economy and with (9) what effect (Mowlana: 1985:  
163).

Both information and communication are central to social

interaction and serve to link news producers and distributors with receivers within a socio-economic context. In this study, these concepts are used inter-changeably to refer to the transmission of news or data.

Three important developments which occurred in the fields of language, writing and printing have laid the foundation for an 'information explosion' in terms of the quantity of the information being circulated in society (Robertson: 1990). The concept 'information explosion' or 'information revolution' is seen by some as an illusion because not everyone still has access to consume and produce information. Even the proliferation of communication gadgets like home computers and their widespread use strengthens the structure of the information industry rather than weakens it because control over the technology is highly uneven and globally controlled by a few (Hamelink: 1986). Winston (1986), for instance, uses examples of television and satellite technology to argue that no serious changes, for example with regard to equal access, seemed to have taken place because the institutions which control technology have remained the same.

For the majority of people in society, such factors as high cost, restricted access and unequal control over the information industry have continued to exclude them from producing information.

The three developments which took place, i.e language, writing and printing, has each in its own way reduced the cost of

producing, storing and distributing information and has contributed to the shaping of a new form of society. In order to appreciate the value of each of these developments, each has been placed in its own historical perspective.

Though language is in a loose sense associated with all animal communities (including non-human beings), anthropologists are generally agreed that language is the 'most widely cited common denominator and distinguishing factor of humanity' (see Gould: 1989). Despite the engagement even of apes in activities done by early man like hunting and gathering, and perhaps even tool production, the spoken language as it is being used today is only attributable to human species.

The evolution of language has itself been possible only because of human 'conscious thought' which is also necessary for social and technological progress. Altman (1987) contends that one "classical" factor that distinguishes human language or communication from that of other animals is the use of symbols (linguistically referred to as "semantic messages") to represent objects, events and even experiences. Though non human primates (for example apes and monkeys) also use "semantic messages" to socially communicate, they are still incapable, contrary to human primates, of using language to share experiences which are beyond their immediate socio-biological environment (Altman: 1987).

According to Swaan (1991), the languages of the world

collectively constitute a 'single, evolving global system'. Swaan (op cit) also estimates that about 5000 languages are spoken on earth although not more than 1000 had ever been put in writing. No doubt, in the past two to four centuries a negligible percentage of the world's total languages had become supranational languages, serving as the codes of national and international interaction despite all the attendant consequences that this has entailed.

Even among major Western languages which globally compete to meet the international needs of modern communication (e.g French and English), English has been the most successful partly because France never produced a linguistic equivalent of the United States, whose influence in international politics further popularizes English language (Mazrui: 1992). Stevenson (1992) also shares the view that English has transcended from the language of British colonialism and American post-war hegemony to a 'universal' language of science, computers and air traffic control. Hachten (1992) has called it (English) the 'media language' because most international news or scientific data is first presented in English before it is translated to other languages. Indeed, the increasing influence of English has made it the leading language in international communications and more people around the world attempt to learn it than other languages.

The connection and inseparability of 'writing' and 'civilization' (Gelb: 1963: 221-222), has been disputed by

anthropologists, whose study of the Incas concluded that though they (the Incas) did not invent any form of writing, they had yet founded a civilization comparable to the Sumerians or Egyptians who had their own forms of writing (Ascher & Ascher: 1991)<sup>1</sup>.

The argument often made is that writing facilitates analytical thought by enhancing memory through direct comparison of recorded statements, documents and data. But writing in itself is not necessary for the development of analytical thought. Thus, it is education (which can be highly facilitated by writing), rather than writing, which is the key to "civilization".

It may be argued that 'communication explosion' first began with the invention and use of printing press in the fifteenth century during the renaissance and reformation periods. Printing has increased the information or data producing capacity of the societies that used it as well as led to an eventual increase in the speed of its (information) transmission. It has also helped in solving the problem of "noise" by multiplying identical copies of a text, thus reducing the ratio of overhead costs to new data (Ritchie: 1991).

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<sup>1</sup> The Incas used the 'quipu' (a collection of knots of different colours made from cotton) to store information and statistical data about population, etc. The 'quipu' was clearly not a form of writing in any sense of the word.

Closely related to the advance made in the forgoing three areas in terms of the production and distribution of information, were inventions in the fields of telegraph and telephone in the 1830s and 1860s respectively (Cherry: 1978). These inventions, particularly of printing, telegraph and telephone, have made possible a reduction of time delay in information transmission as well as the setting up of news agencies. Advances made in the fields of radio and television broadcasting between 1906 and 1928, and in new communication technologies (satellite communication) since the 1950s have equally improved the speed and quantity of news, information and communication within and between nations.

In the case of the telephone, simultaneous communication over enormous distances was made possible while the telegraph has created permanent instant connection between continents which were on an irregular contact before then. Both inventions marked the beginning of electronic communications, upon which the major Western news agencies were established. Being the traditional 'wholesale' news suppliers around the world, the major news agencies still produce the bulk of the world's news (Unesco: 1988, Hachten: 1992). Incidentally, this was the main target of complaint by the Third World countries during the NWICO debate. I will return to this discussion later.

Since this study is generally on news agencies, the historical context within which the Western news agencies emerged is provided. The relationship between the agencies and the

institutions which have always influenced them, (economic and political) as well as the agencies' own news production and distribution patterns are all discussed.

### 1.3 Context of the Dominance of Western News Flow:

In studying the flow of news between Africa and the Western countries, an examination of the connection between the media of the two regions (especially their respective news agencies) is vital because of their importance as news gatekeepers. The starting point for such an analysis from the onset is that the relationship between the two is one of dependence on the former by the latter.

According to Harris (1977) dependence is a 'conditioning situation' which more broadly characterises the nature of the relationship between industrialised Western countries and the Third World. In the case of the Third World or Africa in particular, dependence upon the West or Western media pertains to technology (e.g equipment), raw resources (report of world events) and professional know how.

The control of these resources by Western agencies or media suggests an unequal global distribution of media resources to the advantage of the metropolitan interests of the former Western colonial powers (Harris: 1977). This position is shared by Boyd-Barrrett (1980) who rightly observed that a 'truely' international news organisation which does not

concede to particular national pressures or interests had not yet emerged. The Western news agencies represent and project Western capitalist ideological interests, and their operational strength in the global news market is related to their incorporation into the international economy.

Desmond (1980) records that the first major agencies were the 'big three' comprising Havas/AFP (founded in 1835), the German Wolff Agency (established 1849) and the English Reuter Agency (dated 1851). They started as commercial ventures although all three have received financial support from their governments at different times. Initially, the agencies offered business and financial news for sale but later entered the general news distribution business in the 1850s. From 1870 onwards, these three agencies and the New York based Associated Press (AP), exchanged news among themselves through a cartel of news agencies bound by contracts and treaties. This cartel lasted nearly fifty years (Tiffen: 1978).

The major Western agencies - AP, UPI, Reuters and AFP - were (and still are) themselves dependent upon the growth of Western communications technology (especially cable) and for Western markets, which supplied the greater part of their revenues. Hachten (1992) believes the modern world news system exists today because of the effort of Western media to satisfy this need (for world news) of the peoples of Western democracies.

Historically, the international electronic communications system of telephone and telegraph basically exists to sustain the international economy by facilitating the conduct of financial and commercial trade. Equally, the major Western news agencies operated along these expanding telegraphic lines as an integral part of Western international business institutions connected with the worldwide economic expansion of Europe (Cherry: 1978). The main consideration of the agencies was to produce and distribute news as a profit making commodity and to control its world market share.

Fenby (1986) has observed that by establishing news agencies, the Europeans were out to make money and the Americans to cut down the cost of news gathering<sup>2</sup>. Thoughts of making the world a better informed place by promoting international understanding did not enter into their calculations. This marketing approach to news gathering explains why reporters are stationed in those places (mainly urban) where news of general and special interest to clients (of whom Western customers are the best-paying) is thought to occur.

In gathering general news, the agencies station their reporters and correspondents in major cities and capitals around the world where a lot of important political and economic decisions - for example business and political events such as ship movements and elections - take place.

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<sup>2</sup> News agencies in the United States started as co-operatives set up by newspapers with the aim of cutting news gathering costs.

Concentrated presence of reporters in cities and reporting of selected events inevitably led to the presentation of a lopsided and partial view of the world which neglects the peripheries of the world market (to which the Third World belongs) and the politically and economically weaker members of society. Consequently, these contributed to accusations of bias and imbalance levelled against the Western agencies by the Third World.

The partitioning of the world into Western colonial and business areas of influence manifested itself in the communications and agency news flow structure. Boyd-Barrett (1980), Smith (1980) and Harris (1981) have shown how AFP and Reuters maintained a news monopoly in the former empires created by their home governments while AP and UPI's emergence on the global scene also reflected the rise of United States as a powerful communications power in post second world war period. The major news agencies collectively constitute an 'international news network' which provide an estimated 80% of the 'immediate' international news circulating in the world (Fenby: 1986, Hachten: 1992). The international news network they operated during the colonial period still survives despite various efforts by 'developing' countries to alter it. This persistence relates to difficulties (e.g inability to compete) which new agencies from the developing countries face in the world news market (Babbili: 1990, Samarajiwa: 1984).

Thus whereas Reuters and AFP emerged and grew powerful among

the Western imperial powers of the 19th century; and AP and UPI in post-war period of American international supremacy (although AP and UPI were influential before the second world war), the Third World national and regional agencies were established in the context of the international power imbalance that characterizes the relationship between the two sets of countries.

Apart from being directly involved in the establishment of the national and regional agencies in the post colonial period, the international agencies, for example Reuters, provide(d) 'development assistance' to the staff of 'developing' agencies on a bilateral basis in the form of editorial training, technical assistance and news exchange (Boyd-Barrett: 1980). Similar consultancy and 'development assistance' services were (or still are) extended by the AFP to the national agencies of former French African colonies which started as its branch offices.

Though the international agencies presently operate with constraints in a number of Third World countries, their strength in technical, manpower and financial resources gives them a continued advantage (editorially and otherwise) in their news-exchange relationship with the smaller agencies. This imbalance of power and resources has continued to manifest itself in the dependence of the 'new satellites agencies' on the dominant Western ones. This way, the dominant Western agencies continue to set the parameters of

world news production within which the weaker agencies become 'imprisoned' (Rantanen: 1990 and Samarajiwa: 1984). Indeed, this dominance was among the major influences which led to the debate and demand for a NWICO. It is with this framework in mind that the study of PANA is approached.

#### 1.4 The NWICO Debate:

While the close connection between the NWICO debate and the NWICO is acknowledged, with the former leading to the latter, the debate is discussed separately from the NWICO, as contained in the MacBride Report. This is to allow for a discussion on the debate and the issues surrounding it as forming the background to the NWICO.

The decades of the 1950s and 1960s brought with them the success of nationalism. The most important issues that came to pre-occupy most 'developing' countries at that time were to reverse the colonialist policies in which they found themselves. Political independence did not bring with it a corresponding degree of self determination in other sectors of development. Hence in an attempt to gain their 'full' independence, the Third World countries united within what later came to be known as the non aligned movement, adopting the philosophy of non alignment as an instrument of foreign policy.

Non alignment basically connotes the solidarity of common

interest among the less powerful countries in their relationship with the super powers. It is also committed to international reform in North-South relations by advocating a 'new world order' in both economic and communication fields. Its main objective is to rectify global inequalities, which they see as the major problems of the 20th century (Singham & Hune: 1986). According to Mazrui (in Willetts: 1978), non alignment as an instrument of foreign policy, adopted by the Third World countries, has perhaps had a greater impact in North-South relationships than any other policy.

The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) was active in the calls for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) and a New International Information Order (NIIO) in the 1970s. The NIIO was later replaced by a wider demand that would include not just information but communication due to the recognition of the central importance of the latter in human social interaction. The connection between the NIEO and the NWICO are returned to in chapter three.

Concern about information imbalance has been voiced in various forums. As early as 1962 the United Nations General Assembly expressed concern that the majority of the people in the world, most of whom lived in the Third World, lacked adequate information facilities. These facilities are basic and necessary if their rights to effective information are to be fulfilled. However, a significant dimension of this problem was raised at the 1973 Fourth Conference of Heads of State and

Governments of non-aligned countries held in Algiers (Algeria). At this meeting, which was attended by 75 members, the participants declared that imperialist activities were not just confined to political and economic fields but to social and cultural spheres as well. The Conference called for concerted action in the field of mass communication as part of the efforts required to achieve complete decolonisation of Third World countries. Other efforts in economic cooperation were also initiated by the member-states.

The 1973 Algiers meeting was followed up by subsequent meetings and cooperation activities culminating in the 1975 establishment of the Non-Aligned News Agency Pool (NANAP), with its headquarters at Tanjug, Yugoslavia. The position and role of Yugoslavia in the 1970s under President Tito, whose interest in the policy of non-alignment was great (see Mohammed: 1981), was perhaps responsible for locating the NANAP's headquarters in the country as well as for Tanjug's role as NANAP's coordinator. The NANAP was the first in a series of Third World regional agencies that were later established to provide a framework for the exchange of "alternative" news and information at a regional level, in contrast to earlier bilateral news exchange agreements between Third World news agencies.

The establishment of NANAP at this point in time underscores the degree of seriousness with which Third World countries viewed the role played by the big Western news agencies in the

global news flow, and Third World's dependence on them for news. Another development which took place in this period (1970s), and which gave an additional impetus to the growing Third World concern about imbalance in global news flow, was the setting up of an international Commission for the study of communication problems by Unesco in 1977. This Commission, which popularly came to be known as the MacBride Commission, rather than resolve issues in the report which it submitted in 1979, seemed to have only intensified disagreements on the major issues raised in the debate between the developed and Third World countries because of contrasting interests and positions.

Western media organisations were also active participants in the NWICO debate. At an early period when the debate was barely gaining momentum, Western and especially US media organisations formed a new association, the World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC), to coordinate and conduct a free flow of information campaign and to lobby both within and outside Unesco. The 1981 Talloires declaration, which was a response to the MacBride report of 1980, perhaps best explains the collective position of major Western media houses on the NWICO debate.

In an effort to widen support for the "free flow" position, Giffard has argued, Western media (especially US media) have exerted anti-UNESCO influence on US Congressional opinion (and the American public opinion at large) through their news

reports, articles and editorials and in setting the agenda for discussing Unesco in the US Congress. Several of the media reports were quoted in the US House and Senate debates, and read into the Congressional Record. Indeed, American media and other organisations like Heritage Foundation had contributed significantly to the country's withdrawal from Unesco in 1984 (see Giffard: 1989, Roach: 1987).

### 1.5 Participants/Issues in the Debate:

All the issues in the NWICO debate comprising new communication technologies, 'free flow' of news, the role of the major Western news agencies, etc, revolve around the main issue or theme of "media" or "cultural" imperialism. The concept of imperialism, according to Reynolds (1981) is state-centric. It denotes a relationship of domination, whether explicit in the form of direct political control asserted by force over the subject people, or implicit, through constraints which direct the activities of the subjected society to fall in line with the interests of the dominant state. Imperialism, therefore, suggests non-physical 'imposition' of foreign cultural or media content by foreign agents on those of the Third World countries.

During the debate, as rightly noted by Meyer (1988), two contending groups and issues emerged - the 'conservatives' supporting 'free flow' and the 'structuralists' opposed to the former.

The Conservative position, although not the largest in number, was powerful due to the membership and backing of the world's leading capitalist countries, particularly the United States. Members of this group denied that imbalance in international information flow was caused by the activities of Western communication and cultural industries. Rather, they argued that imbalance is only normal and natural. Proponents of 'free flow' of news, for instance, argued that "unevenness of flow is a basic characteristic of news - and not only of news flow, but of water flow, oil flow, money flow, and even food flow" (see for example Merrill: 1981).

Another argument advanced by the "free flow" school is that rather than having any adverse effect, Western news agencies are tools of 'modernisation' for the Third World countries. Lerner's (1958) study on the role of media in the Middle-East was used as an example of the role the media could play in modernising the less developed countries (Merrill: 1981). Indeed, the Rostowian theory of modernisation (Rostow: 1961), which mistakenly confuses Westernisation with development, upon which Lerner's study and the conservatives' position were based, has itself been questioned long ago by dependency theorists (see Frank: 1967, Galtung: 1965 & 1971, Amin: 1974).

One factor that is perhaps responsible for disagreement between conservatives and other groups in the NWICO debate has to do with differences in each other's conception of news. Righter (1978) believes that the Western media provide news as

a "merchandise rather than as a service". This means that the criteria of news selection by Western media include such factors as "exoticism" and "ability to entertain as a result of the influence of market forces since 19th century Western Europe (Smith: 1980). Such Western news values emerged within a particular historical context to cater for economic and cultural needs. On the other hand, the new emerging elites of the Third World, who were unhappy with Western media dominance and Western reporting about them or their countries, argued that the 'special' needs of the Third World demanded that the media should be used "as a social good, in the service of development" (Righter: 1978: 107-108).

While it may be possible for the privately owned media to combine the dual elements of both commerce and public service in news production, it is likely that commercial consideration will have an edge over public interest in the selection of news. The two approaches, news as a merchandise and news as a public service, are necessarily and fundamentally opposed to each other (Meyer: 1988, Ansah: 1990). Thus, representatives belonging to the 'free flow' position viewed the demand for a NWICO as an attempt by the Third World to impose control on information flow and structures.

The structuralists, on the other hand, included Third World journalists, diplomats and academics whose thinking was neo-Marxist. Their main argument was that the concentration of news agencies, mass media, telecommunication facilities, data

resources and new communication technologies in a few highly industrialised countries militate against a free and balanced flow of information between different countries (Media Development, no. 1, 1981)

They used Galtung's (1965 & 1971) theory of structural imperialism to provide an analytical framework for their argument. As argued by this position, media imperialism is a part of wider problem of 'cultural imperialism'. According to Galtung, the leading proponent of structural imperialism theory, the world was divided into two types of nations - centre and periphery. The centre nations comprise the developed countries of Western Europe and United States while those in the periphery are the underdeveloped countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. Under this theory, the centre dominates the international communications network. It owns both the world's dominant news agencies and media, and occupies more space in the foreign news of the periphery nations than vice-versa.

For the structuralists, journalists in the centre define those events that are 'news worthy' and those which are not. Journalists in the periphery "see events with centre eyes". For hard core supporters of the NWICO like Tunisia's ambassador to Unesco, Mustapha Masmoudi, the implication of this situation is the negation of cultural and political autonomy of the periphery nations, hence the basis of their (Third World) complaint against the international information

order.

### 1.6 Critique of the NWICO Debate:

Generally, arguments critical to Western 'media' or 'cultural' imperialism have been criticized for failure to provide concrete empirical evidence about the actual effect of media products on their audience (see for example Fejes: 1981). On the contrary, they are thought to be highly abstract, macro in scope, more media than culture centred, and based on the implications of the economic power of Western TNCs and the global diffusion of their products (Tomlinson: 1991). But given the holistic approach of neo-Marxist structuralists, who constitute the main critics of Western (media) imperialism (for example Galtung: 1971), it is important to locate the cultural sector (especially the media) within broader political and economic structures of society.

While the contention here is that the Third World had reasons to fear even the 'free one-way flow' of technology, video and media products from the West (see also Gillespie and Robins: 1989, Alvarado: 1988, Larsen: 1990), let alone discuss their effect, the NWICO debate has been conducted in a "neo-romantic" fashion. Its main issues were discussed on the assumption that the media was necessarily at the centre of the 'cultural imperialism' thought to be taking place. Similarly, it was taken for granted that cultural identity was identical with the national identity of the countries represented in

Unesco. Because even the Western nations accused of imposing their own media or cultural products on the Third World, notably the United States and Britain, are not themselves culturally homogenous (Smith in Tomlinson: 1991), similar to the 'new' nation-states demanding a 'new order', the whole debate is, arguably, based on mistaken premises.

Studies within and outside Unesco contexts point to a number of problems associated with the NWICO debate. For example, Roach (1990) and Golding (1990) have argued that two key issues, those of social class and ruling elites had been ignored. With those missing dimensions, the NWICO debate was portrayed as a North-South issue, which it was not. Indeed, 'cultural imperialism', within which the media are located, is itself experienced both as an external process and, on a smaller scale, as a struggle between social groups within and between different communities.

The issue of the eligibility of those 'who speak' in defence of 'national culture' or 'national media' is itself conceptually problematic for the NWICO debate, since cultures or media do not speak by themselves. Even in forums such as Unesco, a site for the defence of cultural or media identity, the equally important question of the plurality of interests within modern nation-states seemed to be taken for granted (see Heidt: 1987).

Inherent in the NWICO debate, in which 'Third World national

cultures' or 'Third World national media' apportion blame on 'national cultures' outside their own geographical boundaries, is the construction of a unified single culture in both the nations of the North and South, where social class and other social differences were not considered. Consequently, this pre-supposes that, valid though it may be, the critique of media or cultural imperialism in the Third World necessarily contains the class bias of those who claim to represent their 'national media' or 'national cultures'. These issues and other related ones are returned to in chapter 10. But for now suffice it to say that the shortcomings and limitations of the debate and the demand for the NWICO, have implications for new 'alternative' model agencies like PANA and their news content, since such agencies owe their origin or growth to the NWICO debate.

### 1.7 Unesco as a forum for the NWICO debate:

The debate on international communication has to logically fall under the schedule and supervision of an inter-national institution. With respect to mass communication and cultural issues, the relevant forum for their discussion was (and still is) Unesco (Singham and Hune: 1986, Giffard: 1989).

Prior to the mid 1960s, the UN itself was the major forum of debates relating to information flow. Unesco's main function in the communication sector was at that time mainly technical (Giffard: 1989, Nordenstreng: 1984). This means it was

confined to assisting Third World countries with the building of communication infrastructures, conceived in the context of 'modernizing' or 'developing' the Third World. But Unesco's wide mandate, as the third largest specialized agency within the UN system, also includes the promotion of peace and international co-operation in the fields of education, science and culture, of which communication is a part.

Unesco's involvement in political aspects of communication began in 1965, when it issued a report calling on the use of space communications system by the media "for the benefit of all peoples" (Hajnal in Giffard: 1989). Since then, it has become a forum for discourse on the politics of communication.

The call for better information balance inside Unesco was first made by India, on behalf of the 'developing' countries at the Organization's General Conference in 1970 (Nordenstreng: 1984). Unesco General Conferences since 1974 down to its 22nd General Conference in Paris exhibited political debates over communication control, with increasing tension between members who were divided into three main interest groups. Among the groups, the West was concerned with protecting its "free flow" principle, the former socialist countries interested in curbing Western expansionism; and the Third World with protecting its 'independence'.

By the time of the 19th Unesco General Conference, held at

Nairobi, in November 1976, the Organization had become heavily involved in communication politics and media flow in particular. Difference of perception on news flow was so strong that "the only realistic solution appeared to be to pursue the study of the problem and to defer all decision" on the matter (MacBride: 1980:41). It was at this Conference (Nairobi, 1976) that the Unesco Secretariat was mandated to pursue a more comprehensive study of communication problems in modern society. This was what informed Unesco's setting up of the MacBride Commission in 1977, to work on 'finding' a NWICO. The mandate and report of the Commission are discussed in chapter three.

### 1.8 Conclusion:

This chapter has attempted to establish a framework for studying newly established 'alternative' news agencies such as PANA by Third World countries. The political economy within which the major Western agencies emerged and the relationship between them (the dominant agencies) and the 'alternative' ones was outlined. It was argued that though the imbalance in news flow between the West and the Third World provided the genesis of the global information debate of the 1970s, the imbalance was (or still is) rooted in the strong economic context within which Western agencies emerged as well as the socio-economic inequality which exists between the two sets of countries. The two main contending sides in the NWICO debate - the Conservatives and the Structuralists - were described in

some detail, together with the main issues for which each side struggled hard to win support. Also, Unesco's role in the NWICO debate was highlighted.

But perhaps equally important is the internal imbalances existing within Third World societies (Africa in particular) which also have implications for reproducing imbalances in news and media production. Hence the next chapter looks closely at the political economy of the mass media in Africa.

## Chapter Two

### The Media in Africa: The Nigerian Example

#### 2.1 Introduction:

The materials used in this chapter are derived from secondary sources. The chapter sets out the historical context which shaped the emergence of mass media and continue to influence them. It attempts to establish a framework for discussion of the media in Africa using a political economy perspective. Starting from analysis of Africa's share of global communication facilities, it is argued that existing communication and information gaps between Africa and the West, which informed the Third World call for a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), are not merely questions of information. It is argued that Africa's incorporation into the orbits of the international economy was bound to have an impact on the information imbalance within, and between Africa and the Western world.

Economic, technological and other forms of relationship within Africa and between African countries and the West are discussed in relation to their impact on the media in Africa. It is argued that the contemporary media in Africa emerged and continue to operate within the context of these economic, technological and other factors especially from the colonial period, as a part of what Althusser (1971) has called the

"ideological state apparatus" or ISA<sup>1</sup> (see also Gramsci in Hall: 1986). These same factors (i.e education) have continued to maintain and widen the gaps and imbalances between and within societies, including media gaps, even in post colonial period.

It is appreciated that discussion of all the media in Africa is problematic, given the risk of making unwarranted generalizations and the near impossibility of discussing the media in each African country within the time and resources of this research. Therefore most of the specific examples used are drawn from Nigeria, whose media have been argued to 'be among the 'freest' in the continent (Jones-Quartey: 1976, Grant: 1975, Ugbuajah: 1980).

It is acknowledged that drawing most of the examples from Nigeria is bound to produce some limitations in the analysis because of the varying historical circumstances in which the media in Africa emerged and continue to operate. But the placement of the Nigerian media on the high point of the continent's 'free media' scale perhaps provides an 'ideal' case of the context for the operation of the media in the continent. Such analysis therefore seems applicable to even the 'most free' media in the continent, let alone the rest. As noted by Barton (1979), the Nigerian press (and perhaps the other media by extension), and more generally the West African

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<sup>1</sup> The other "apparatus" of control used by the state, but which the media are not a part, are the "repressive state apparatus" (RSA) which include the police, the courts, etc.

media, has always maintained an outlook of 'Africanness' (Barton: 1979).

Perhaps with the exception of Liberia, founded as a "free colony" for freed American slaves in 1847, whose media by extension was "free" from the onset, the Nigerian example seems applicable to other African countries. Restricting the analysis to Nigeria again seems appropriate because the study involves Nigerian newspapers and journalists, as well as PANA: to which the national News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) is the largest single contributor of news.

## 2.2 Africa: Media Features:

A comprehensive account of the features and state of the media in Africa, must take into account all media of communication starting from the interpersonal, educational and cultural channels, to computers, telecommunications and other related channels. These can then be considered in relation to similar facilities in the Western industrialised countries.

Although in most parts of Africa traditional channels of communication (such as talking drum) are still widely used, the "modern" and mass communication channels are increasing in importance throughout the continent. These modern facilities comprise telephone, telegraph, postal services, newspapers, magazine, cinema, radio, television, video, etc. But as in Europe and the United States, interpersonal communication is

still an indispensable part of the communication network. Despite what Stevenson (1988:108) called a "lack of reliable statistical information about Africa", it is clear that the spread of communication facilities in the continent is still relatively modest when compared with Western countries.

With regard to newspapers, for example, Unesco's minimum criteria for what is regarded as adequate is 100 copies per day per every 1000 people. While newspaper distribution per 1000 people in USA and U.K for 1988-89 was 259 and 394 respectively, for Egypt, the country with the highest available circulation figure in the continent, it was 38. Indeed, the average figure for sub-Saharan Africa as a whole for the same period was only 13 copies as against an average of 256 in North America (including Canada) and 249 in Western Europe (UNDP: 1992). This places Africa as the most newspaper-poor continent in terms of number and circulation. For instance, Africa's total newspapers represented only 1% of the global total despite a marginal increase in their quantity and the quality of their news since 1960s (Uche: 1990).

Nigeria and Egypt, the two countries with highest newspaper circulations in Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa respectively had 1,912,000 and 516,000 copies per day in 1984. This contrasts sharply with United Kingdom and United States, which respectively were the most newspaper-rich countries in Europe and North America during the period. Circulation figures of United Kingdom newspapers for the same period was

23,206,000 and 63,263,000 in the United States.

While data relating to Africa may be highly unreliable because of inadequate research information, the point remains that even the two countries having the highest available newspaper circulation in the continent, Egypt and Nigeria, lag far behind major Western countries in both circulation and per capita. Yet the UK and US did not have the highest circulation figures in the world. For 1988-89, Japan and Norway were the two countries with the highest daily newspaper circulation figures, with each respectively having 566 and 551 copies per 1000 inhabitants (UNDP: 1992). In the last few decades, the world as a whole has not recorded actual growth in the number of newspapers in spite of increases in circulation figures, due to mergers, the death of many smaller local newspapers and, indeed, competition from the broadcast media (see Barton in Stevenson: 1988 & MacBride: 1980). This last factor is perhaps most evident in the case of Western Europe and United States where there is a very high saturation of the broadcast media.

Radio is said to be the most ubiquitous mass medium in all regions of the world (Boyd-Barrett & Braham: 1987). Unesco's minimum requirement per every 1000 people is 50 receiving sets, less than the number for newspapers by half. Whereas most African countries have had radio transmitting and receiving facilities since the 1960s, the spread of broadcasting has been uneven both between and within

individual countries. It is underdeveloped in comparison with most of the rest of the world. The transmitting power of most African national stations is often weak, with many countries having one or few networks (Mytton: 1983). The average number of radio receiving sets for 1988-89 in sub-Saharan Africa was 143, compared with 1008 per 1000 people in the industrialised world.

Though there was a small rate of increase in radio receivers between 1977 and 1984, from 31 million to 38.7 million sets respectively, Africa's receiving sets, as calculated from Unesco statistical yearbook 1989, represented merely 3.4% of the world's total. North America and Europe (including USSR) between them had 57%, and Asia 27.8% of the world's total. Again taking the example of Egypt, the country with the highest number of radio receiving sets in Africa, according to latest UNDP figures, there were only 322 sets per 1,000 inhabitants of Egypt as at 1988-89. This contrasts sharply with United Kingdom's 1,145 sets per 1000 residents and USA's 2,122 for the same period (UNDP: 1992).

Television "started from a zero base" barely 50 or so years ago in Europe and much later in Africa. Perhaps more than radio and newspapers, television is a replica of the advances made in the field of mass communication. Unesco estimate suggests that there were over 400 million television receivers throughout the world in the mid-1980s. As at 1983, television existed only in two-thirds of the African states, though it

has made a "rapid advance" in the few countries where it exists (Mytton: 1983).

In the developing countries as a whole, and in Africa in particular, television is largely confined to relatively few households in cities and towns where electricity is available and to a few homes in rural areas which use battery operated television. The actual number of television sets in the continent increased from half a million in 1965 to an estimated six million in 1980 and 14 million in 1984 (BBC research statistics), though in real terms the number of receivers in 1987 represents less than even 1% (only 0.6%) of the world's total as calculated from Unesco Statistical Yearbook 1989 (in Golding: 1990). The regions with the highest number of sets were North America and Europe with almost 73% (72.9%) of world's receiving sets between them. Latin America and Asia (perhaps because of Japan and the NICs) also had higher share of television receiving sets than Africa, with each having 7.1% and 16.4% respectively.

In specific terms, the African country with the highest television per capita, Egypt, had 4 million sets in 1986, compared with 195 million for USA and 30 million for United Kingdom during the same period. Distribution of this facility per 1,000 people for 1988-89 was 98 for Egypt, and 2,122 and 1,145 sets in the USA and UK respectively.

While these figures are useful for purposes of comparison,

they do not necessarily imply usage. Rather, they are indirect indicators of the degree of personal wealth in the societies in question. Whereas the dominant culture in Europe and North America is highly individualized and programmed, the culture in Africa is generally communal, such that one newspaper, radio or television may serve quite a number of people due to the culture of sharing. The video culture in Europe and North America may further reduce the usage of these mass communication facilities.

Telephone and telegraphic facilities, referred to as a part of the "horizontal" media because of the inherent instant two way communication which they provide, are equally inadequate in Africa despite the growth in their global importance and capacity. About half of the world's total telephone lines are located in the United States alone. Three continents, North America; Europe and Asia (China) hold over 90% of the total telephones in the world. All the Third World and its huge population has no more than 7% of the world's total. A study by the World Bank observes that telephone service in Africa is unevenly distributed even in urban centres. Less than one person in 300 has access to a telephone, and between 20-40% of the connected lines are out of service at any one moment due to lack of proper maintenance. Remote areas generally have no service at all (World Bank: 1989).

In spite of the near saturation of telecommunication facilities in the industrialised countries, the same World

Bank report states that Europe currently allocates 0.7% of its GDP on telecommunications development, while Africa's figure is only 0.3%. Given the importance of these "basic" infrastructures to the development process, the World Bank believes that "the traditional approach to telecommunications in Africa will need to be rethought" (World Bank: op cit). Table 3.1 gives a general picture of communication resource distribution between sub-Saharan Africa and the Western industrial countries.

**Table 2.1 Africa's Share of Global Communication Resources:**

<u>Newspapers</u>	<u>Circ. per 1000</u>	<u>Year</u>
Sub-Saharan Africa	13	1988-89
EC Countries	249	1988-89
North America	256	1988-89
<u>Radio Sets</u>		
Sub-Saharan Africa	143	1988-89
EC Countries	821	1988-89
North America	2,016	1988-89
<u>Television Sets</u>		
Sub-Saharan Africa	22	1988-89
EC Countries	439	1988-89
North America	796	1988-89
<u>Telephones</u>		
Sub-Saharan	3% of North's	1988-89
EC Countries	521	1988-89
North America	788	1988-89
<u>Book Titles Published</u>		
Sub-Saharan Africa	n.a.	1987-89
EC Countries	72	1987-89
North America	n.a.	1987-89

\*Source: UNDP Human Development Report 1992

Inequality in distribution, consumption and access to media facilities within, and between Africa and the West is not limited to these media only. It also includes access to media

as indicated by literacy rates, put at 51% in 1990 for sub-Saharan Africa. Though this figure is an improvement over the last few decades (for example 28% in 1979), in the West almost all adults are 'literate' because school attendance by all children of school age is nearly 100%. Other gaps have been identified in the areas of personal computers, book production, postal, library and other services (Britannica World Data Annual: 1989).

Generally, imbalances in the distribution of these information and communication facilities, rather than only the dominance of a handful of Western news agencies, were responsible for inequality in the global information flow. The distribution of these facilities inside Africa is itself uneven, with the poor having limited access to these facilities. This increases the widening gap between rural and urban areas, and the rich and the poor inside the continent, and still worse at the international level (World Bank: 1989, UNDP: 1992, Unesco: 1989, Hachten: 1992).

It will now be argued that these gaps are structurally linked to imbalances within, and between Africa and the West since the pre-colonial period. Also, the emergence and incorporation of the media into state ideological apparatuses (ISA) in the post independence period will be highlighted. But as earlier noted, the examples drawn are limited to Nigeria because of the wide scope of the topic and the time constraints faced by the researcher. But media in other parts of Africa, as elsewhere, are inevitably influenced by similar

factors.

### 2.3 Africa's integration into the Global Capitalist System:

Any comprehensive analysis of the highlighted imbalances, and the context in which the media in contemporary Africa operate requires a historical dimension. The media must be linked to the crucial roles of the slave trade (to a remote degree), colonialism and contemporary neo-colonialism in the process of social class formation in Africa and within the context of global imperialism. Onimode (1988) has equally suggested these outlined processes as useful to the analysis of African institutions or problems.

For about 350 years, during the period of the 'informal empire', Africa was first incorporated into a mercantilist world economy through slave and 'legitimate trade' from 1451 (when the first Africans were sold as slaves in Portugal) to the 1830s, when slavery was abolished. On the West African coast, which includes the area encompassing what is today known as Nigeria, European activities date back to this mid-15th century period. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to reach the coastal areas of present day Nigeria and to establish trading contacts. This commerce across the Atlantic which initially traded in items like gold; ivory; silver; and spices that were bought from Africans in exchange for mirrors; guns and other perishable manufactured products, later came to include human beings from Africa as part of the trading items.

By the 16th century, the British had displaced the Portuguese as the main trading merchants in the Nigerian coastal areas. From the onset the integration of Nigeria (indeed Africa) into this trading network across the Atlantic marked its initial gradual co-option into the capitalist world economy. The period from the 15th to the 19th century, which preceded the direct colonial domination of Nigeria, witnessed the institutionalisation of unequal trade exchange relations and the disruption (to some degree) of Nigeria's traditional path to development as a result of the consequences of slave trade. Part of the processes through which this unequal trade was entrenched include the promotion of export-cash crop agriculture as opposed to food production for domestic needs and the division created between rural and urban areas (Ihonvbere & Falola: 1987).

Generally, the slave trade under mercantile 'free trade' led to a direct loss of the most productive members of African communities, a drain on human labour and skilled manpower, a disruption of productive activities due to constant slave raids and to a small internal market base due to low population density and lack of conducive atmosphere for economic activity.

The transition from agrarian, tributary and feudal modes of production (as in Nigeria for instance) during the 'informal empire' led to a 'distorted pre-capitalist' mode of production as a consequence of Africa's contact with Europe through

international trade. Correspondingly, new antagonistic social classes comprising slave-owners/freemen and slaves; landlords/chiefs and tenants; and big merchant traders began to emerge (Ihonvbere & Falola: 1987).

A series of processes such as massive production and the saturation of internal markets in Western Europe, against the background of the capitalist logic of demand and supply, forced Britain, France and the major Western powers to "stimulate a policy of political expansion so as to take new areas" (Hobson in Falola: 1987). These new demands for cheap sources of raw materials and external markets for Western industrial products dictated the need for colonies to be established (Africa in this case), and to be brought into line with the needs of the expanding Western capitalist system.

Formal colonialism in Africa intensified the problems initiated by slavery. It destroyed African pre-capitalist social formations through monetization of the economy, the introduction of law and order and the creation of new institutions in the colonies - administrative, communication and cultural - whose roles were defined in the context of the expansion of European interests and Europe's industrial needs for markets and raw materials. In short, the colonial venture was primarily intended to help the capitalist system to expand and accumulate on a world scale.

Amin and Cohen (1977) have noted that colonization has

topically imposed a capitalist mode of production and has broadly divided Africa into three colonial zones: West Africa (where there was a huge colonial trading activity), Eastern and Southern Africa (where there were large labour reserves and colonial mines) and the parts of Africa where Western mining companies won many concessions. These are Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa, Gabon and the Central African Republic.

The imposition of the capitalist mode of production in Africa during the colonial period (though existing side-by-side with the remains of the agrarian mode of production), led to the formation of a local "petit bourgeoisie" comprising members of the traditional aristocracy, landlords, merchant-intermediaries of colonial trans-national companies, professionals and politicians. According to Cesaire (1972) this 'unproductive' class did not emerge through its own productive or accumulative activities but was "manufacture(d) for the promotion of exploitation and the programmed transition to neo-colonial dependence", meaning that it was created to serve and respond to external demands and needs. On the other hand, a class of peasants, workers and labourers emerged side by side with the former petit bourgeois class.

Around the present day Nigeria, efforts to establish a formal colonial state began with British military campaigns and expeditions in the second half of the 19th century. The British established a "protectorate" colony around Lagos in

1861, another one in southern Nigeria in 1869; and that of northern Nigeria in 1906. In 1914 all these three protectorates were amalgamated into one country named Nigeria. Through the establishment of these "protectorate" colonies, the colonial machinery had already been set in motion. What therefore started as a trading relationship between the people of "Nigerian" areas, especially those in the coastal region on one hand, and British merchants on the other, during the 'informal empire' has culminated in the latter's occupation of the former.

Yansane (1980), like several others (Rodney, Amin, etc) who before him wrote extensively on colonization, argues that following the incorporation of the colonies (in this case Nigeria) into the capitalist world orbit by metropolitan powers, political, economic and cultural institutions were then established to assert European domination. As noted, the essence of this domination was to subordinate the colonies (Nigerian in this case) to the expanding European capitalist economic and trading activities, and cultural and social patterns.

The colonial process in Nigeria, as elsewhere in Africa, facilitated its 'opening up' to colonial and neo-colonial trade relations and imperialism. This was partly made possible through the provision of essential infrastructural facilities such as banking, administration, transport, the schooling system, communications and the media. For example,

the provision of improved communication and banking systems were essential for both the administrative duties of the British colonial administrators and the operations of the multinational companies. Roads and railways were built to link the colonies to the metropolitan countries in order to facilitate European capitalist trade, and they 'radiated' out from the coastal ports into areas of colonial economic ventures (Rodney: 1981, Harris: 1981). Equally, the schooling system was designed to help produce cheaper local administrators and clerks for the colonial system and merchant companies. The mass media, among which the newspaper press, was the first to be introduced to Nigeria, were introduced as an indirect adjunct of colonialism. It was meant to provide both a service to resident Europeans in the colonies and to 'enlighten' the locally recruited literate junior cadre staff into the Western value system. Hence, from the beginning the colonial system brought with it new state institutions, such as communications and the media, which ensured a subservient role for the colonial structures and a master role for those in the metropolitan state.

Broadly, the imbalances and inequality inherently produced by the colonial process manifested themselves in the 'comparative weakness' of the various communications media in Africa vis-a-vis those in the West, as was observed in the survey on African media. Equally, the social class distinctions created within African societies by the same process of colonialism was responsible for the uneven distribution, consumption and

access to the few media facilities available. As discussed in more detail, using Nigerian examples, it is in this context that the media were introduced to Africa, and have continued to be influenced.

#### 2.4 Root of the media in Nigeria:

African journalism first emerged in the former British West African colony of Sierra Leone, where the first printing presses appeared. The Royal Gazette and Sierra Leone Advertiser were the first newspapers in black Africa, started in Sierra Leone in 1801. Later, the Royal Gold Coast Gazette was also established in the Gold Coast (in present day Ghana) in 1822. As some of the titles imply, many of the early newspapers were published in the form of government gazettes. The explanation advanced by some Western media 'experts' on Africa for introducing the modern press to the continent was essentially to provide news services for Europeans (see for example Hachten: 1971). Even if such an explanation was true, it was more likely to be a secondary reason (see below). It can be argued that colonial cultural institutions like the media were introduced to Africa to 'consolidate' European economic domination under the guise of 'civilizing' the people.

The beginning of the press in Nigeria preceded the colonial state itself, dating back to 1859 before the formal annexation of any part of the country. The press was first introduced by

the Church Missionary Society of London under the supervision of Reverend Henry Townsend, who in 1859 started a missionary newspaper, Iwe Irohim, published fortnightly in the Yoruba language. Other missionary-merchant newspapers of this period include Unwan Efik (1885) of Calabar, by the Church of Scotland Mission; the Anglo-African of 1863 in Lagos by Robert Campbell, etc.

According to Omu (1978) the introduction of journalism to Nigeria was meant to provide a colonial 'enlightenment' service, similar to education, with the sole aim of 'gentling' the local population. As rightly pointed out, missionary journalism started at a time when the middle classes in the metropolitan countries were in the ascendancy (Ayu: 1984:329). The missionaries, being members of middle class British society, saw the press as an important instrument in creating an influential class that would be sympathetic to British commercial interests within the colonies. The main motive for introducing the press to Nigeria (Africa) at this period, therefore, was to help spread literacy skills such that would enable Africans to assist Europeans in their commercial domination of the country and missionary tasks.

The circulation of these early missionary newspapers was limited due both to problems of transportation and to the small number of people able to read them. Readership was also limited to only a small number of literate Africans (though an important group) who provided a link between the people and

the colonial masters.

As the number of educated Africans increased, many of them became disenchanted with the colonial press which they felt alienated them from political and commercial activities. According to Coleman (1960), the colonial press kept on "reminding the educated African daily of his subordinate role and confirming in his mind the hopelessness of his political future". It is in this socio-political and economic context that African nationalism and the African press emerged in order to, in the words of Wilcox (1975), "challenge, compete with, and ultimately displace the colonial institutions in the socialization process". Many educated Africans who were disenchanted with the colonial system thought of establishing their own press in order to accomplish their goals of achieving equality with the white colonialists in both business and politics. Examples of these newspapers include Earnest Ikoli's Messenger and Nmandi Azikiwe's West African Pilot.

A lot has been written and said about the history of the Nigerian press and its relationship with the struggle for national independence between 1880 and 1960, when political independence was attained. Some writers even elevated the press to the same level as the struggle for Nigerian nationalism. For instance, Ugbuajah (1980) noted that the editor and the nationalist were regarded as one and the same person(s) because "leading journalists were nearly always

leading nationalists". Indeed, the early newspaper proprietors were often professionals, politicians and journalists, who used the press as a political party organ. Dr Azikiwe, himself a nationalist and a journalist-publisher of the West African Pilot in 1937, argued that the press was the most important instrument for mental emancipation from a painful colonial mentality in the hands of the nationalists "in the propagation of nationalist ideas and racial consciousness" (quoted from Coleman in Wilcox: 1975).

Indeed, the politicization of journalism during the colonial period has made it difficult to distinguish the allegiances of journalists to the dual goals of journalism and politics, and this seems to continue to underpin the daily practice of contemporary Nigerian journalism (Golding and Elliott: 1979).

While it is true, as has been suggested, that the nationalist press has played an important role in raising the consciousness of the few educated and influential Africans in the struggle for independence, equally it has been rightly noted that praise for the patriotism of these nationalist-journalists and their newspapers has been over done. According to Ayu (op cit) such praise overlooks the constraints imposed on journalism by both the colonial system then in operation in the Nigerian colony as well as the limits set by the liberal capitalist philosophy in the metropolitan country itself (Britain). This point is important for any critical understanding of the differences of interest and

social perception of issues between the nationalists and their newspapers on the one hand, and the ordinary people on the other. These differences between the two have continued to persist in post independent Nigeria (Sobowale: 1985).

Whereas initially the Nigerian press, and West African press more generally, enjoyed comparatively more freedom than that in other parts of Africa (for example East Africa), where it (the press) grew from organizations formerly dominated by Europeans, the freedom did not seem to have grown after independence (Faringer: 1991). Clearly, the press in Nigeria was used by leading nationalists such as Nmandi Azikiwe through newspapers like West African Pilot in advocating nationalism and an end to colonial rule. Nationalist papers like the Pilot were, for instance, described as a popular fire-brand and aggressive nationalist paper whose content was agitational and leftist in approach (Hachten: 1971, Uche: 1977).

Unlike the press, radio broadcasting was introduced much later to the Nigerian colony, by the colonial administration directly, not by the missionaries, though with a similar objective as the missionary press. According to the BBC, empire broadcasting service was started to help in "dispelling some of the isolation and loneliness of many of our kindred (British citizens) overseas" and to extend "metropolitan interests and culture". It was also meant to "induce among the constituent parts of the empire a greater understanding

and a greater sympathy" (BBC: 1936).

The structure of radio broadcasting was patterned on the model of the BBC despite the several changes it has undergone. Golding and Elliott (1979) have noted that although broadcasting was meant to provide an impartial and independent service, the BBC rhetoric and philosophy were reproduced in detail, style and substance in the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation's Ordinance (no. 39 of 1956). Broadcasting progressed from a relay service from Britain, to a semi-autonomous colonial service under the auspices of Nigerian Broadcasting Service (NBS), to the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC) in 1957. The NBC was given 'complete' autonomy for broadcasting matters. It was later re-organized into the Federal Radio Corporation of Nigeria (FRCN) in 1978, with zonal (formerly regional) structures and autonomy (Ladele: 1979).

Broadcasting in Nigeria, as in many developing countries, was rather more closely integrated into government than the press through a series of constitutional and organizational initiatives. The Corporation's amended Ordinance of 1961 gave the Minister of Information the authority to give the Corporation 'general or specific directions on matters of policy or matters appearing to the Minister to be of public interest'. Golding and Elliott (op cit) have maintained that since the objectives of the NBC were 'taken over' by the Nigerian Military Government during the 'emergency' situation

of the 1967 civil war, the end of the take over has not formally been declared. Indeed, throughout its history, broadcasting adopted and redefined its production practices in line with government policies.

Apart from the constraints outlined, there have been various laws and ordinances to control the media, both print and broadcast, during the colonial period. Examples include the 1903 Newspaper and Wireless Telegraphy Ordinance, the 1909 Seditious Offences Ordinance and the Newspaper Act of 1964 (see Omu: 1978).

Contrary to the example of radio, in which the federal government was the first to own broadcast stations, television was first started by the regional governments, with the federal government being the last to join. Among the regions, the Western regional government was the first to start television broadcasting (even before radio) in 1959 as a joint venture with Overseas Rediffusion Limited (ORL). The news department was common to both the television and radio services. Later, the Western regional government bought out the shares of the ORL due to the conflict of political and commercial objectives between the two organizations. The example of the former was followed in the Eastern region, before being introduced in Northern Nigeria where radio and television services were introduced simultaneously in 1962. In both the latter cases, broadcasting was started as a joint partnership with foreign companies.

Following the introduction of a federal system of government in the Nigerian colony as part of the decolonization process, various regional governments had their own media laws. For example, the Eastern Region passed its own first Newspaper law in 1955, the Western Region in 1956 and the Northern Region in 1961. These laws contained provisions for press coverage of parliamentary and other similar proceedings. Thus, the relationship between the regional broadcasting services and their governments was 'analogous' to that of the federal government and the NBC.

The Nigerian federal government was the last among governments in the country to enter into television broadcasting. Although a television service was integrated into the services of the NBC in 1967, five years after the last region (Northern) to start broadcasting, the decree establishing the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) as a separate federal service was enacted in 1977. Similar to the NBC or FRCN, the federal government decentralized the NTA into six zonal divisions and established a station in each of the former 19 states of the federation. In terms of control, the government fully funds the organization, appoints members of its board of directors and top management, of which, similar to the FRCN, the Information Minister may intervene on matters of state policy or 'public interest'.

Other Federal Government media set up in the 1970s include the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), whose policy directives are

clearly defined in the context of the decree, no. 19 of 1976, which established it. NAN's (being the highest contributor of news to PANA) ownership, structure and primary objectives, among other things, place constraints on the agency, similar to the broadcast media. Its goals were unequivocally defined as follows:

'to uphold the integrity of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and promote harmonious relationships among different groups in Nigeria....(It) must not act as an institutional opponent to any government or interest; but where it is in the public interest to report criticism of public policy, it must do so in a restrained and objective manner (in Ugboajah: 1980)'.

Since it was set up, NAN was expected to act as the gatekeeper of all news going out of, and into Nigeria through foreign news agencies including the Western ones. One of the 'immediate' unofficial explanations leading to the promulgation of the decree establishing the agency in 1976 was the Nigerian government's displeasure with the Reuters reporting of the assassination of the country's head of state in a failed coup attempt that year (1976). In the report, Reuters was said to have claimed that riot has broken out in the home town (Kano) of the assassinated head of State in protest to the killing, an act which the government denied. In short, the main point is that it was dissatisfaction with the news of the foreign wire services that led to the remote and immediate context for the setting up of NAN.

The periods of the oil boom of the 1970s under the military

and the second republic (1979-1983) witnessed the coming into existence of many state government and privately owned media organisations (both print and broadcast) in Nigeria. By 1980, almost each of the then Nigeria's 19 states had its own broadcast and newspaper houses. Private newspapers such as Punch and Concord also belong to this period.

Whether public or privately owned, the media in the "developing" countries are generally expected to contribute to 'nation building'. However, the political and commercial objectives set for them, especially in the case of the private press, pose direct and indirect constraints on their operations in addition to other colonial and neo-colonial limitations, laws and regulations. Similar to Traber's (1985) observation, "most newspapers (this applies to other media) are a part of a social system and thus a part of a power structure". Hence, the quantitative increase in media organisations in Nigeria did not seem to have resulted in a matching increase in the quality of news they provide due to the 'ordered freedom' within which they operate.

During the colonial and independence periods, the Nigerian media were mostly incorporated into the structures of state power. This is especially so in the case of the broadcast media, which had always been under state control since its beginning in the 1940s.

## 2.5 The Media in neo-colonial Nigeria:

In general terms, colonialism and neo-colonialism mark the pattern in which new forms of social inequality were instituted in three ways. First, is the intensification<sup>2</sup> of divisions between groups into different social classes in accordance with their relationship to the new society. Second, is the aligning of the 'haves' class to Western interests and social values as a consequence of their co-option into the Western value patterns through socialization and the role they (i.e the local elites) play as agents of Western TNCs. Thirdly, albeit related to the first two, is the emergence of supposedly new social institutions, including political or cultural institutions, in which the class of the 'haves' comprising political power elites and professionals were (and still are) the key local operators of the institutions. These institutions, including the media, emerged during the colonial and post colonial periods, and were tailored to serve the colonies in tune with Western requirements and later, the needs of the local African elites following the attainment of political independence (see for example Nkrumah: 1965, Rodney: 1981).

Neo-colonialism, a function carefully undertaken by post-colonial regimes, ensured the continuity of Western dominance

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<sup>2</sup> Social stratification was a feature of African societies as has always been the case in all societies. But it was more pronounced or intensified during colonial and post colonial periods (see for example Onimode: 1988).

in the absence of physical political control in the old colonies. Under this phase, direct political control of the old colonies was substituted with control of the small influential ruling group through the trans-national corporations. This group is highly significant in terms of directing African affairs because of its grasp of political power since independence (for a detailed account on this see Nabudere: 1977, Osoba: 1977, Rodney: 1981, Falola: 1987, Hamelink: 1988).

With respect to the media in Nigeria generally, political independence did not seem to have lessened the legal and other forms of restriction to which they were subject. While the public owned media were firmly controlled through funding, appointment of directors and top management, and regulation by the government; the private ones are owned by the neo-colonial members of the local ruling elite, whose interests, according to Mills (1956), are similar. These private and political elites also move between the government and private sector. Therefore both sets of media comply with varying degrees of interference by the authorities through the use of rewards and threats, depending on the wishes of the government in office.

The continued pattern of press 'partisanship' after independence meant the continuation of libellous and seditious cases between public figures on the one hand and journalists on the other, with the pattern of judgement 'decidedly in favour of government and public figures' (Agbaje: 1992). Two

examples of such cases were the Federal Government and the Amalgamated Press, publishers of Sunday Express, which paper was in 1961 charged and found guilty of 'spread(ing) false views likely to cause fear and alarm to the public'. The other, also in 1961, immediately after independence, was the celebrated case of Dr. Chike Obi and the Federal Government for publishing a pamphlet titled 'The People: Facts You Must Know', whose content were judged as seditious. The case went through appeals, with the Nigerian Chief Justice ruling that 'it must be justifiable in a democratic society to take reasonable precautions to preserve public order' (in Agbaje: op cit).

According to Article 19 (1991), the Nigerian press, both private and government owned, has since its beginning constantly struggled against bannings, detentions and harassments. Opubor and Nwuneli (1985) have argued that most African countries do not include a provision in their constitutions which guarantees press freedom. Even in the ones which do, such as the guarantee of freedom of expression without interference as contained in Section 24 of Nigeria's Independence Constitution of 1960, Section 25 of the 1963 Republican Constitution and Section 36(1) of the 1979 Constitution, press freedom has been defined in the context of law and public order, as in the example of the cited cases.

Despite the provision of laws, which constraint press or media freedom (e.g Newspapers Act of 1964) during the first

republic, the military alone had between 1966 and 1979 promulgated at least five new decrees which limit media freedom. Some of these include:

- (i) The Newspapers Prohibition of Circulation Decree of 1967
- (ii) The Police Special Powers decree of 1967
- (iii) The Public Officers Protection Against False Accusation Decree of 1976
- (iv) The Trade Disputes Arbitration Decree, a section of which makes it a crime for a newspaper to "dramatise" an industrial dispute

The period of the second republic in Nigeria (1979-83) was not a better time for the country's media. One highly publicized incident which took place was between a Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) network reporter, Miss Vera Ifudu, and the then Senate leader, Olusola Saraki, recently a disqualified presidential aspirant in Nigeria's third republic. The NTA authorities fired the news reporter because her report was said to have embarrassed the Senate leader.

The return of the military to power in 1983 brought with it other measures which restrict the press. One such measure was the promulgation of decree number 4 of 1984 (the Public Officers Protection Decree). The decree made illegal any publication considered embarrassing to public officials, whether or not it is true. Notable among journalists tried and subsequently imprisoned under this decree were two

editorial members of the Guardian newspapers, Tunde Thomson and Nduka Irabor, for publishing a news item deemed 'embarrassing' to the federal government. Although decree no. 4 of 1984 was repealed in 1985 by the General Babangida regime, the administration has itself resorted to restricting press freedom through various measures.

The international report on censorship believes the worst instance of repression so far directed against the Nigerian press took place under the Babangida regime. This was the murder of the editor of one independent magazine, the Newswatch, Dele Giwa, in 1986, by a still unexplained parcel bomb addressed to him. The editor had been questioned by the head of military intelligence two days before his death. The editor was alleged to have been working on a story implicating the wife of a top member of the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) in cocaine smuggling. The Nigerian government has resisted calls for a public inquiry and has repeatedly harassed and detained the editor's lawyer. (Article xix: 1991).

Another measure introduced by the Babangida regime to curb the freedom of the Nigerian press was the Media Council Decree (no 59 of 1988). The decree established a 17-Member council to supervise the registration of journalists. The Council members, who are largely government appointees, are empowered to cancel the registration of journalists and require them to reveal their source(s) of information. Journalists have so

far refused to co-operate in the implementation of the provisions of the decree.

These legal and other forms of restriction in Nigeria, a country sometimes regarded as having one of the 'freest' conditions for media practice, broadly highlight the context and factors which gave rise to the media and continue to shape it. While occasionally the media may serve to project the interest of ordinary citizens within the framework of 'liberal' neo-colonial Nigeria, or Africa more generally, it is generally constrained by the interests, pressures and regulations of the state, the economy and society.

## 2.6 Conclusion:

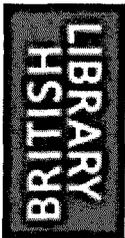
Most of the discussion presented argues that modern mass media in Africa generally have their root in the colonial period. They were products of colonial creation established to serve the interests of the colonial state. In Nigeria, the press was first introduced by the missionaries and later by nationalists, who used it in the agitation for independence. The newspapers established by the nationalists had the attainment of political independence as their main aim, outlook and aspiration. Similarly, private and government owned newspapers and media in the post colonial period (including PANA) were also established either for political or commercial objectives or both, and like the colonial press, they operate under certain legal and other forms of conditions

which serve the interests of the ruling class.

While it is acknowledged that the Nigerian press has played a role in the struggle for independence, due to the constraints imposed on it and on the nationalists by the colonial system then in operation, the mass media as a whole (private and public owned) have not generally enjoyed greater freedom in the post colonial period. Perhaps the contrary seemed to be the case for according to Barton (1979), "as political freedom came to the continent (Africa), so did press freedom disappear".

The old colonial legacies challenged by the nationalists were retained by them after they had taken over political control. The nationalists had become politically greedy and highly sensitive to criticisms from the opposition. Many had also become local 'partners' of Western companies operating in the country. Perhaps their familiarity with the power of the press, both real and potential, made them interested in expanding their control over mass media institutions in order to remain in power. It is with this framework in mind that the analysis of PANA, its news content, and that of the sampled Nigerian newspapers is conducted. But before indulging in that, the next chapter takes a look at the MacBride Commission, the NWICO and NIEO.





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## Chapter Three

### The MacBride Commission

#### 3.1 Introduction:

In the light of the centrality of the MacBride Report to NWICO, this chapter looks in detail at various issues relating to the MacBride Commission including its composition, tasks, draft report and final recommendations. The chapter begins with looking at the connection between the NWICO and the New International Economic Order (NIEO), and the theoretical constraints posed on the former by the latter. Drawing a relationship between the two demands is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of the conceptual limitations of the NWICO, to which the NIEO is the theoretical base. It is argued that the NWICO (and by extension the NIEO) as both a call and a strategy for the development of Third World media, whether directly or indirectly, has impacted on agencies such as PANA, established in the context of proposals for a 'new international order'.

In particular, an attempt is made to discuss the politics and ideology infusing both Unesco in general and the MacBride Commission, especially the tension between the Western representatives on the one hand, and representatives of the Third World and socialist bloc on the other. This chapter argues that the Commission's work is primarily a report on the political economy of global mass communications media. It was

the widest possible 'consensus-report' on major issues of communication, which in the 1970's had reached a stage of confrontation between the West, and the Third World and former socialist countries.

The MacBride Commission signifies a formal acceptance by the international community (through Unesco) of the importance of information in international relations and the gap which exists within, and between the 'developing' and developed countries in the generation and distribution of information. Secondly, it represents an effort to comprehensively map the information gap within, and between the two sets of countries, and to propose a foundation for a 'new order' in the communication sector.

Though many Third World regional agencies such as PANA, CANA and NANAP had taken off or were about to start operations by the time the MacBride Commission's report was released in 1980, the NWICO debate and its demands, which the Commission's work symbolised, have influenced the framework and aims of the regional agencies. Hence, discussing the Commission and its work, whose recommendations number 6 and 70 with respect to news agencies relate to the aims of most Third World national and regional agencies, is considered important.

### 3.2 The Reform of the 1980s: The NIEO and The NWICO:

Concern for the need for new world economic and communication orders led respectively to the establishment of Commissions presided over by Willy Brandt (for NIEO) and Sean MacBride (for NWICO) respectively in the late 1970s. According to Galtung (1980), the NIEO demand was articulated in the early 1970s within UN circles to deal with the question of improved terms of trade among 'developing' countries, and between them and the industrialised countries. In particular, the Brandt Commission, whose responsibility was to work for the 'new world economic order', had the following broad objectives:

- (i) to study the global issues arising from the economic and social disparities of the world community, and
- (ii) suggest ways of promoting adequate solutions to the problems involved in developing and attacking absolute poverty.

The report of the Commission was arranged under five headings comprising development financing, international trade, industrialisation and technology, food and natural resources, and organisational policies and social issues. Policy goals relating to these issues were to be achieved under medium and long term 'reform' programmes. Though the Commission started from the premise that the world economic problems were related to existing global structures, its report was only "hopeful" for change in the economic imbalances between the 'developing'

and industrial countries through "cosmetic reforms".

Its medium-term programme was to cover a 5-year period, from 1980-85, under which large scale transfer of resources including food and energy strategies, from the West to the Third World was to take place. It was also meant to serve as a period for beginning a more lasting 'major reform' in the international economic system.

Various weaknesses undermined the NIEO's proposal for a 'new world order'. First, the report's division of the world into 'North' and 'South' was in itself simplistic. The classification was even more problematic if the case of Japan, for instance, with a strong industrial economy but belonging to the 'South' (or more appropriately South-East), is considered.

Secondly, it took for granted that the contemporary relationship between countries of the world represented the process of global 'interdependence', not dependency. While vital to safeguarding the interests of Western TNCs, such a conception is necessarily capitalist inclined and pro status-quo taking into cognisance the unequal historical relationship between the nations involved in the so-called interdependence process. Galtung (1980) has described the NIEO as "a part of the picture of Westernization, in which Western capitalism can spread more symmetrically over the world", while for Amin (1981) it was barely an "attempt to respond to the challenges

of our time while safeguarding what decision makers deem to be essential", i.e the unequal global 'interdependence' of contemporary societies. Onwuka (1986) also enumerated several obstacles such as transfer of technology and protectionism in international trade (for example through GATT) which hindered the NIEO to materialise. As Brandt Commission Members themselves pointed out

our (the NIEO) proposals are not revolutionary; some are perhaps a little ahead of current thinking, others have been on the table for many years. We envisage them as part of a process of negotiated reform and restructuring (Brandt: 1980: 66).

According to Pavlik and Hamelink (1985), the realization of the success of a NIEO depended on factors beyond economic ones, for example socio-cultural, and meant that the scope of the NIEO had to be extended beyond the economic sphere. This view was based on theories of society which argued the inseparability of economic and non-economic factors in societal development (see for example Myrdal, in Pavlic & Hamelink: 1985). This led to talks about the establishment of a new international socio-cultural order as an integral part of the establishment of a NIEO. It was the former concern, therefore, that culminated in the demand for a NWICO, which was 'officially' launched at the fifth Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned countries in Colombo in 1976.

The first loophole of NWICO seems to be its founding on the principle of Brandt's NIEO, already criticised for failing to critically grasp the political economy of the international

crisis. Being an off-shoot of Brandt's NIEO, the NWICO is not, and could not have been revolutionary. It does not go far enough to provide the sufficient and necessary solutions required for a new world communication and information order.

As argued by Schiller

....The world business system has not contained the movements (for example NWICO) toward national independence that have grown up during the past four decades. Battles will become more intense....Yet it must be acknowledged that when the armed struggles for dissociation succeed - and it seems difficult to imagine success without such struggle - enormous problems remain in the way of maintaining dissociation as a long term course (Schiller in Hamelink: 1988) (emphasis added).

From Schiller's account of the problem, the widening cultural gap between the countries of the North and South must exceed the mere demand for a NWICO, based on the foundations of the NIEO demand, to include 'armed struggle' for dissociation to succeed. While accepting Schiller's concern for the inadequacy of such movements as NIEO or NWICO to resolve the global cultural 'disorder', his holistic lumping of the problem as a North-South one seems unhelpful for research.

### 3.3 Composition of the MacBride Commission:

To begin with, the gigantic task of studying the world's overall national and international communication and information problems was entrusted in the hands of 16 Commission members under the chairmanship of an Irish man, Sean MacBride, from whose name the Commission derived its title.

The 16 members of the Commission can be divided into three groups; with each group representing a particular set of countries and a view on the state and role of communication and information in society. With respect to the West, it was represented on the Commission by five members including the chairman (from Ireland); Elie Ebel (USA); Hubert Beuve-Mery (France); Betty Zimmerman (Canada) and Johanness Pieter Pronk (Netherlands).

The Third World was represented on the commission by eight members comprising Zaire's Elebe Ma Ekonzo; Gabriel Garcia Marquez from Colombia; Mochtar Lubis from Indonesia; Mustapha Masmoudi of Tunisia; Fred Isaac Akporuaro Omu from Nigeria; Juan Somavia from Chile and Boobli George Verghese from India. Sergei Losev from the old Soviet Union and Bogdan Osoluik from former Yugoslavia can be said to represent the socialist bloc countries. The last or 16th country, Japan, does not neatly fit into any of the three group of countries just described and may therefore be said to represent the "Japanese style economic miracle and democracy", hence probably the most nominally represented country or system in the Commission. But still, Japan has more in common with Western countries than the Third World because of its interest in "international" trade.

The Third World and socialist countries and their representatives in the Commission were collectively in favour of a NWICO that would ensure the cultural independence and

sovereignty of their own countries. The West, on the other hand, was against any restriction in communication structures and information flow, and it viewed such a move as censorship of information and of journalists.

Whatever the criteria used in selecting members of the MacBride Commission, it was clear that the position of the West was well represented in the Commission's final report despite the numerical advantage of Third World and former socialist bloc countries combined. This is also clearly seen in many adopted mass media Declarations of Unesco from 1974 to 1978 (see Nordenstreng: 1984). Indeed, this might have prompted Tunstall (1991) to describe the Commission's final report as a "vague general consensus" which neither states explicitly the position of the Third World and former socialist bloc countries nor is offensive to the West.

Ideologically speaking, the Commission's members can be divided into two groups. While socialism was represented by only two among the 16 members, namely those representing the then Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, capitalism was well represented by all the remaining members. Six members from United States, Ireland, France, Netherlands, Canada and Japan (i.e four out of seven members of G7 countries) clearly represent the Western "free flow" doctrine. The remaining eight members from Zaire, Colombia, Indonesia, Nigeria, Egypt, Chile and India, though they largely disagree with the dominance of Western media in global communications

(especially Tunisia's Mustafa Masmoudi), they do not generally resent the capitalist ideology. In fact, all these eight countries are themselves dependent capitalist countries. Hence, they are not only nearer to capitalism than socialism but they nominally add to the number of capitalist inclined countries in the Commission.

It has been argued that the influence of MacBride was crucial in keeping the Commission together and in reaching the broad general consensus attained by its members (Becker and Nordenstreng: 1992). Looking at his career as an Irish nationalist, political activist, politician and proponent of human rights, Becker and Nordenstreng have maintained that it is still difficult in Ireland to regard MacBride as a "leftist" or "rightist". This perhaps re-affirms Tunstall's (1991) position that the MacBride Commission's members collectively belong to what he called the "soft left" or what may be termed "non-marxist socialists" or "social democrats" in ideological terms.

#### 3.4 Mandate and Tasks of the Commission:

The mandate to establish the international commission for the study of communication problems was given to the Unesco Secretariat at the 19th session of the organisation's General Conference held in Nairobi in 1976. Serious concern about fundamental issues relating to international communication led to many delegates at the Conference agreeing on the need to

thoroughly discuss all problems hindering effective flow of communication and information within and between countries, which they argued was a basic fundamental human right. Delegates at the Conference also believed that a thorough discussion of the subject would facilitate wider understanding and lead to easier ways of resolving the controversies. It was in the context of these deliberations, consensus and mandate that the Director-General of Unesco decided to establish an international commission of "experts" to study and review the entire problems of communication in modern society.

Established in December 1977 under the chairmanship of Sean MacBride, the Commission's mandate as defined by the Director-General were as follows:-

(i) to study the current situation in the fields of communication and information and to identify problems which call for fresh action at the national level and a concerted overall approach at the international level. The analysis of the state of communication in the world today, and particularly of information problems as a whole, should take account of the diversity of socio-economic conditions, levels and types of development;

(ii) to pay particular attention to problems relating to the free and balanced flow of information in the world, as well as the specific needs of developing countries, in accordance with the decisions of the General Conference;

(iii) to analyse communication problems, in their different aspects, within the perspective of establishing a new international economic order and of the measures to be taken to foster the institution of a "new world information order" and

(iv) to define the role which communication might play in making public opinion aware of the major problems besetting the world, in sensitizing it to

these problems and helping gradually to solve them by concerted action at the national and international levels.

Given these wide ranging tasks, the MacBride Commission (which began work in December 1977) was given only one year to submit its report and an even lesser period to submit an interim report for the 1978 20th General Assembly of Unesco, the organisation which commissioned the study. The content of the Commission's reports, both interim and final, are discussed later in the chapter.

Despite the interest shown by Unesco delegates (from the West, Third World and socialist countries) and the apparent free hand given to the Organisation's Director-General to set up an independent Commission to study the problem at hand, the context in which the Commission's tasks were outlined placed vital restrictions on it. These restrictions seemed to have affected the outcome of the Commission's report. As argued, for example, the requirement of the Commission to analyse various communication problems within the perspective of a 'new international economic order' presupposes an agreement with the new economic order by all countries involved in the NWICO debate.

The weaknesses of the initial premises of Brandt Commission to ask the 'right' questions which go beyond the existing international framework in its analysis of the causes and mechanisms of development and underdevelopment led it to

propose misleading and inadequate solutions to the various problems discussed.

Despite progress towards the NIEO and the economic progress made by countries of East and South-East Asia (excluding China), which recorded an annual growth rate of 3.3% of their GNP per capita between 1980-89, sub-Saharan African countries seemed to have farther fallen behind. Their annual growth rate over the same period was minus 1.7%, a fall back from what it was in 1980 (1.5%) when the NIEO was supposed to have come into effect.

The dependency and developmental problems of sub-Saharan African countries seemed to have increased as a result of increasing debt. Overall, the total external debt of 'developing' countries has multiplied thirteen fold in the last two decades: from \$100 billion in 1970 to around \$650 billion in 1980 to around \$1,350 billion in 1990 (UNDP: 1992). The debt problem has continued to grow despite attempts to find a 'satisfactory' solution. The same is also true of the gap in the global distribution of communication facilities (see chapter two).

It was within the context of this new economic order that the MacBride Commission was set up to study communication problems and provide a recommendation for the emergence of a NWICO. The implication of the NIEO for the NWICO in precise terms seems to have manifested itself in Third World media

dependency on the West through training, technology, infrastructural assistance, etc.

In recommending 'appropriate' policies that are conducive to greater self reliance such that would enhance the development of communication facilities and the 'free flow' of information, the MacBride Commission recommended concerted inter-national action to help achieve the outlined national goals. Among them, the international efforts were to include:

(i) providing alternative means of communication to enable people to participate and communicate in contemporary society (pp 267);

(ii) international assistance and contribution towards international understanding (pp 268).

No specific way of implementing these recommendations was categorically stated in the report. Their implementation was only left to the moral goodwill of the international community. Even their implementation was likely to have merely contributed to the circle of Third World media dependency.

Whatever the values and shortcomings of the MacBride report, it is important to see them against the background of the Commission's difficulty in implementing its assignment, compounded by lack of conceptual consensus on major issues in the debate. Another difficulty also had to do with the composition of the Commission's members, which included the Soviet Union and United States. That these countries then represented two contending ideological and theoretical

positions meant that specific conclusions were almost impossible or difficult to be reached by the Commission.

### 3.5 MacBride: Draft Report:

The MacBride draft report stimulated animated debate inside Unesco. Although it was submitted with the expectation of being criticised and re-written, in the normal UN or Unesco style of presenting draft reports, it was seen by the West as more than objectionable.

The main issue in the draft report which sparked off the conflict between the US and the West on the one hand, and the Third World and socialist bloc countries on the other was the accusation that the NWICO was a means of restricting journalists' access to information through 'registration', which White (1988) argued was a misrepresentation. According to him, "such a proposal was never made in official discussions of the NWICO" and would itself run counter to NWICO's objectives of providing 'justice' in communication.

The West saw the alleged proposal as a constraint on "freedom of information" and to its "free flow" principle. It thought that the Unesco Secretariat was siding with non-Western ideological interests (i.e Third World and Socialist interests) by bringing the proposals in the draft report to the 1978 General Conference. In contrast, the Third World and socialist countries viewed Western concern as a way of

promoting the "free flow" principle which Richstad and Anderson (1981) saw as necessary for Western, especially America's, business corporate needs, Cold War positioning, and dominance of global information flow.

On the surface, the main issue of contention - that of "restricting" and "registering" journalists - looks more easily reconcilable than it fundamentally is. Being inherently restrictive to the West's "free flow" principle, it threatened the main tenets of the Western mass media system and professional ideology, which is itself a part of the entire capitalist system. According to Mowlana and Roach (1990), Anglo-American disapproval of Unesco's pro-NWICO position, culminating in America's and Britain's withdrawal from the Organisation, reflected the two countries' response to an attack on the international system, which the NWICO not only represented, but was itself "sufficiently threatening to justify (their) withdrawal".

### 3.6 MacBride: Final Report:

The final report of the MacBride Commission titled Many Voices, One World was submitted to the 21st Unesco General Conference held at Belgrade, Yugoslavia, in 1980. While the title of the Report at least reflected the reality of the variety of voices which participated in the NWICO debate inside Unesco, in the present circumstances of increasing globalisation of Western capitalist cultures and value-

patterns, the report's title is perhaps a misnomer.

The MacBride Commission completed its assignment in December 1979. The work was 'rushed' in order to be made ready for presentation at the 1980 General Conference of Unesco at Belgrade. The Report was written in five parts and contained a total of 20 chapters excluding conclusions and recommendations which were treated under two sub-sections of its part five. Predictably, it attracted a wide range of scholarly reactions. For example, whereas Szecsko (1982) commended the Report for daring to ask questions about who dominates the media market, Capriles (1982) thought it did not contain a correct definition of the NWICO.

The Report emphasised the need to give a "more comprehensive approach to communication problems" particularly in Third World countries. A number of issues were made explicit in the report. First, as directly mentioned by Sean MacBride himself in his preface to the report, the study provided "invaluable insights into the interlocking nature of fundamental issues in communications; (and) particularly....confirmed that these issues are structurally linked to wider socio-economic and cultural patterns" (MacBride: 1980). Information and communications technology and infrastructures were shown to be related to political and socio-economic policies. Communication problems - formerly presented as merely being about press freedom; and the right to information (being informed) - were shown to have socio-economic and political

dimensions at the international level. Of course the connection between 'press freedom' and human rights had previously been recognised, for example in USA's first Amendment in the 18th century, though more focus seems to be put on the right of the media to gather information than the quality or adequacy of the information produced (see for example Tunstall & Walker: 1981:120).

Secondly, the Report has made clear that despite the lack of general agreement and complexity of some concepts used in the debate such as free flow, balance, imbalance, etc, there was virtually no dispute about the reality of the imbalance (MacBride: op cit:36). But there was little agreement about solutions to the problem or the necessary policies needed to bring about solutions to the problem at hand. Another set of issues raised and discussed in the report concerns the rights and responsibilities of journalists and their professional code of ethics and conduct.

The issue of democratization of communication (pp. 166) was also brought out as an important part of a new communication order. In the report, communication democratization was defined at three levels as follows:-

- (a) the individual becomes an active partner and not a mere object of communication;
  - (b) increase in the variety of messages being exchanged;
- and

(c) the extent and quality of social representation or participation in communication (MacBride: op cit:166).

On the establishment of a new order, the Commission's report did not precisely define it. Rather, the new order was inferred in almost all the 82 recommendations put forward. Sweepingly, "collective self-reliance" was said to be the "cornerstone" of the NWICO inside the report. This "collective self-reliance" was itself defined as the making of necessary changes by Third World countries to overcome their dependence in the field of communication. These actions have to begin at national level but "completed by forceful and decisive agreements at the bilateral, sub-regional and inter-regional levels" (MacBride: op cit:268).

The Chairman of the Commission, Sean MacBride, in his preface to the report, himself noted that "there are many varying views as to the meaning of the "new order" and as to what it should encompass, just as there are diverse opinions on ways and means of achieving it (MacBride: 1980:xviii). In the same preface, MacBride again wrote that "with goodwill governing future dialogues, a new order benefitting all humanity can be constructed" (MacBride: op cit:xx). This statement is by itself a self confession to the disagreements and inadequacies of their report. Leaving the enforcement of the new communication order to the goodwill of national and supra-national political leaders only, as opposed to adopting 'concrete' measures for its establishment, is again another

weakness of the proposals.

The phrase used in defining the 'new order' since the adoption of the final version of Unesco's mass media Declaration is "a new, more just and more effective world information and communication order". Though all parties in the debate seemed to agree on this phrase (but not its goals and conditions), its usage is itself confusing. The terms "more just" and "more effective" pre-suppose that a "just" and "effective" order had already existed but it only needed reshaping to make it "more just" and "more effective".

The definition and inference of the new order in MacBride's report was quite different from the Non-Aligned Movement's (NAM's) initial conception and definition of it. According to resolutions 1/2 and 4/9 devoted to the new order, adopted by a majority of delegates of NAM members at the 20th session of Unesco General Conference held in Paris (Unesco: 1979), in which the United States and other major Western countries like Britain abstained, the new order was conceived as follows:

(i)...The Director General....(should) continue his efforts with a view to the establishment of this new order, entailing in particular, the promotion of national systems in developing greater reciprocity in the flow of information.

(ii) Endorses efforts to establish a new, more just and more balanced world information and communication

order

Contrary to Unesco's and MacBride's vision of the new order, as stated in the final Declaration on Mass Media and the MacBride Report respectively, the new order, to the NAM, emphasized "equilibrium", "reciprocity in the flow of information" and "balance". Therefore, it seems clear that there are differences, and even disagreements, about the types of changes required to bring about the new order. Indeed, the type of change required, whether radical or reformative, inherently has implications for how the new order is to be brought about.

From the point of view of Non Aligned Countries, the best way to establish a new world order entailed "promoting....national systems" and creating the right national policies. The issue of national systems and policies is an important ideological one, which raises the question of "national independence" and "national cultural autonomy", both of which are essential to Third World development (Schiller: 1976, Hamelink: 1988). Formulating the 'correct' national policies, according to the view of Third World countries, is the basis for attaining development and sovereignty in communication, information and other national structures.

On the contrary, the Western position on a new world order both in the general context of the NWICO debate inside Unesco, and the MacBride Commission in particular, was that it can

best be achieved through training; transfer of technology; and assistance to the Third World by the West. Indeed, this was the main idea behind the establishment of the International Programme for the Development of Communications (IPDC) in 1981, an idea first mooted by the United States in 1978 (see Giffard: 1989:16). This vision of effecting a new world order through transfer of technology or what Galtung called the 'international technological (or scientific) order' has continued to be a basic instrument through which Western economic penetration into the Third World has been maintained (see Galtung: 1980:2).

Simply put, the transfer of technology approach to creating a new order means giving the Third World communication equipment and the know-how for producing news and information, but not the knowledge of how to create the equipment themselves or produce the know-how to use it. This new order approach (the Western version), which puts emphasis only on training and transfer of technology, neglected the more important issue of 'national policies', which the Third World regarded as crucial to the NWICO debate.

It may be argued that the MacBride report is the only report of its kind to cover these issues at a global level. Unlike several other studies, it did not attempt to avoid problems related to communication and information - i.e government censorship; the effect of TNCs vs cultural dominance and one-way flow; media ownership and concentration; new communication

technologies; people's right to communicate; etc. More interestingly, perhaps, all these problems were discussed in a global political and socio-economic framework. But although the report ideologically tilts more towards Western interest than to those of socialist bloc or Third World countries, it is still rather an ambiguous, critical and non-offensive literary piece which "salutes almost every known ideological position" (Tunstall: 1991).

Whatever problems the report had, one important broad consensus reached by all members of the MacBride Commission, was their agreement on the fundamental nature of Third World communication and information problems, which needed to be solved. This itself is an achievement given the formidable task at the hands of the Commission, which was to study "the totality of communication problems in modern societies".

### 3.7 MacBride Report: Recommendations:

A total of 82 recommendations were made in MacBride's final report. The recommendations touched on virtually all aspects of communication policies: Third world countries in particular were encouraged to give communications development a central place in national development and to design comprehensive policies which link and integrate their overall economic, political, social and cultural objectives. Specific recommendations were made with regard to national and regional policies on language; education; book production; film

production; provision of telecommunications infrastructure; print and broadcast media; training of media personnel; and a whole range of other things. Of particular interest and relevance to this study is the commission's recommendation numbers 6 and 70 on national and regional agencies. Recommendation no. 6, for instance, states as follows:

Strong national news agencies are vital for improving each country's national and international reporting. Where viable, regional networks should be set up to increase news flows and serve all major language groups in the area. Nationally, the agencies should buttress the growth of urban and rural newspapers to serve as the core of a country's news collection and distribution system (MacBride: 1980:255; see also appendix).

Although the idea of establishing an African continental agency dates back to 1963, PANA nonetheless shares similar concerns and aims with the MacBride Report (see also chapter on PANA). It could even be argued that because African countries were too slow to establish a continental agency, PANA may not have taken-off at the time it did had the issue of regional agencies not been highly emphasised by the MacBride Commission.

### 3.8 The Talloires Declaration:

Mindful and unhappy about the MacBride Commission's report, publishers, editors and media managers, mostly from Western countries, met for three days in Talloires, France, in mid-May 1981 to re-affirm their position on resisting any encroachment on the worldwide "free flow" of information (Unesco, undated: pp 129-133). The media houses represented at this meeting

were members of the World Press Freedom Committee (WPFC), which was itself established in May 1976 in response to calls for media restrictions in 1976 (inside Unesco) by a Soviet proposal.

According to Marks (in Giffard: 1989), the basic objective of the WPFC was to unify the "free world's media" against major threats. The WPFC draws two-thirds of its members from the United States alone, and comprises different media representatives (1,300 members) such as broadcast and print media editors, working journalists and newspaper publishers. Indeed, the American Newspaper Publishers Association (ANPA), a member of the WPFC, is argued to be among the most active trade organisations which opposed the New Information Order supported by Unesco.

At the Talloires Conference, which was titled "Voices of Freedom Conference", 63 delegates from 21 countries representing 60 media organisations (including the four major international agencies) met to re-consider their stand on the MacBride final report. At the end of their discussions, representatives at the meeting issued a 10 point declaration on what merely amounted to a re-affirmation of Western views on the NWICO debate. It was also a counter position to the resolutions of the 1980 Unesco General Conference (UGC) held at Belgrade, at which the MacBride report was adopted, though only on the understanding that individual member states implement its recommendations.

Each of the points in the declaration stressed in a peculiar way arguments relating to the "free flow" principles, and the supply of media hardware and software. These touch on the importance of "free flow" of ideas and information for "mutual" understanding and world "peace"; the importance of advertising as a "consumer service" and in financially supporting a "self reliant" press; and supporting the "free flow" doctrine as contained in Unesco and UN Charters and the Final Act of the Conference on Security in Europe. For example, some of the points unequivocally argued thus:

(i) We support the universal human right to be fully informed, which requires the free circulation of news and opinions. We vigorously oppose any interference with this fundamental right.

(ii) We insist that free access by the people and the press, to all sources of information both official and unofficial, must be assured and re-enforced. Denying freedom of the press denies also the freedom of the individual.

(iii) We recognise that new technologies have greatly facilitated the international flow of information and that the news media in many countries have not sufficiently benefitted from this progress. We support all efforts by international organizations and other public and private bodies to correct this imbalance and to make the new technology available to promote the worldwide advancement of the press and broadcast media

and the journalistic profession (emphasis added).

(iv)....We reaffirm our views on several specific questions that have arisen in the course of this debate (i.e NWICO debate).

By claiming to support efforts by "international" organisations to correct information imbalance, it is clear from the provisions of the Talloires Declaration that the participating countries and media were not prepared to support the demand of the Third World countries for a 'new information order'. Though the Third World countries have later signed the Conventions and Charters of the UN and of Unesco, they were not among the countries which wrote or influenced their charters. Nor were Third World interests considered when the charters, which contained Western, especially America's post second World War "free flow" principles, were written.

On the question of technological imbalance between the West and Third World, making the new technology available to the Third World in order to promote "worldwide advancement of the press...." is again another way of enhancing Third World media dependency. First, such a suggestion is only bound to reproduce the dependency cycle. What is required is not just to make new technology available to the Third World but to transfer the know-how that would enable them to produce by themselves the technology they need.

Secondly, though related to the first point, the Talloires

declaration represents a typically Western position adopted throughout the NWICO debate and which generally offered no solution to the Third World nor to Africa, in particular, as no nation has developed by simply having access to new imported technology from outside. Technology has to be acquired and mastered by the user nation. As pointed out earlier, therefore, the Talloires meeting at best only reaffirmed Western viewpoints on the NWICO debate after the adoption of the MacBride report in 1980 in Belgrade.

### 3.9 International Programme for Dev. of Communication (IPDC):

The IPDC was set up by an endorsement of the Unesco General Conference in Belgrade in September 1980. Its proposal was discussed earlier in April (1980) in Paris, although the initial idea was first proposed in 1978 by the US in response to complaints by Third World countries about their acute lack of communication infrastructure and personnel. The IPDC's first meeting was held in Paris in June 1981.

According to Giffard (1989), the US's main intention in proposing the IPDC was to divert Unesco's attention away from what it regarded as theory (meaning research on NWICO) towards practical development of small and medium size communication projects.

The IPDC is a semi-independent organisation under Unesco. It is governed by an inter-governmental council which is elected

by the Unesco General Conference. It is funded from Unesco's regular budget and by voluntary contributions from member countries. During 1981-1985 it funded 110 field projects, of which 39 were regional in scope, costing a meagre \$8 million. Among the beneficiaries of the regional projects was PANA, which was given \$80,000 for a feasibility study on its computerization project (interviews at PANA; see also Giffard: 1989; Journal of Communication, no. 4, 1981).

As stated in Unesco resolution 4/20, IPDC's main aim was to increase cooperation and give assistance for the development of communication infrastructures in order to

reduce the gap between various countries in communication field (and as) part of the efforts for the establishment of a new, more just and more effective world information order (Unesco: 1980).

Ideally, the IPDC was meant to serve as a compromise between Western and Non-Aligned interests in the NWICO debate. But like all issues relating to the new world information order, the IPDC's establishment was not straight-forward. The main points of conflict had to do with how the programme was to be funded and what its main activities were to be. Both questions have deeper implications for control and maintenance of the existing world order.

With regard to funding, the Non-Aligned countries were in favour of setting up an IPDC international fund or "Special Account" which would receive contributions for sponsoring programmes on the basis of the priorities and needs of individual Third World countries. The United States and the

West, on the other hand, were not in favour of the "Special Account" (Giffard: 1989). According to Roach (1990), the US and some of its Western allies preferred to sponsor IPDC programmes through bilateral agreements and private sector assistance and participation. They see the programme as a means of "transfer of technology", equipment and training to Third World countries. To the Third World, this has the implication of maintaining Western dominance and reproducing the existing world order, especially since foreign "aid" generally has conditions (which are always beneficial to the donor) tied to it (Hayter: 1971, Payer: 1991). Therefore it was this fear which informed their preference for direct IPDC sponsorship of assistance projects (the IPDC being more representative of the international community).

Another point of conflict between US and the Third World concerned the type of activities IPDC should engage in. Harley's position, being a member of the US national Commission for Unesco, is that the US and the West agreed to the establishment of IPDC on the conditions that the IPDC must not associate with

UNESCO's attachment to political objectives. It must exclude any mandate for normative activities. There must be no provision for media accountability....In particular, it should not undertake research or other programmes that can lead to....any form of monitoring or judging behaviour in any respect of the communications sector (Harley: 1981).

The IPDC described above is not exactly the type of IPDC wanted by the Third World countries. In contrast, the Third World wanted an IPDC whose council would evaluate

contributions and assistance projects before they were approved; one which would help the Third World improve its own communication and information situation by helping it to produce its own equipment; train its own media personnel; and one in which Third World's 'cultural identity' is respected (See resolution 4/19, Unesco: 1980).

As on the question of funding, conflicts over the IPDC's functions led the West, especially the United States, to starve the organisation of funds. Having refused to give money directly to IPDC's "special account", the US proposed that the organisation's programs for 1981-83, costing \$1.5 million, be funded with money from Unesco's communication sector. The logic behind this was that some programmes opposed by the West, for example research, might have to be dropped.

It may be argued that America's and the West's vision of the IPDC was simply as an organisation that would assist them in boosting their image in the Third World as "providers of aid" under the philosophy of transfer of technology, which according to Abba et al (1985) never gets completely and permanently transferred, and which effectively perpetuates Third World dependency on the West. However even though the IPDC was not structured purely according to Non-Aligned or Western, particularly American interests (being a compromise between the two), it still has some potential for exporting Western ideological interests to the Third World through

donation of equipment and training. This perhaps explains why despite America's unwillingness to contribute funds to its "Special Account", it yet exported audiovisual equipment worth \$130 million to some countries under the IPDC programme (Giffard: 1989).

### 3.10 Anglo-American withdrawal from Unesco:

The period 1976 to 1981 has no doubt witnessed a "hostile" new information order debate between the West, led by United States, and the Non-Aligned and socialist bloc countries within the confines of Unesco. One practical result of this new order, that could be vividly seen and which was an outcome of the "compromise" between the two contending parties in the debate, was the establishment of the IPDC. But suddenly, and perhaps predictably in December 1983 the United States ambassador to Unesco, Jean Gevard, submitted a formal withdrawal letter giving Unesco the required one-year notice to prepare for the country's withdrawal.

Already, in mid-1983, the American Assistant Secretary of State for international organisations, G.J. Newell, had asked the U.S National Commission for Unesco, under the chairmanship of James B. Holderman, to advise the American government on Unesco policy. At the end of its assignment, the Commission voted 41 to 8 in favour of America's continued presence inside Unesco despite the perceived problems of the organization. Despite the Commission's call for "positive American

leadership in Unesco affairs in place of restrictive, damage-limiting stance....so often adopted" and for the country to remain in the Organisation, the United States proceeded to withdraw in December 1984.

According to Roach (1990), the American threat to withdraw from Unesco was first made as early as 1978. For Tunstall (1986) it was the accession to power of the Reagan administration in 1981, which wanted to put a stop to American public criticism and the "supposed humiliation" of the US, and of other Western countries in Unesco forums, which led to America's withdrawal. In private, the US also had other reasons for withdrawal (Tunstall: 1986). For example, senior officials have criticized Unesco of Francophone tendencies and of being influenced by the interests of francophone Africa. A number of key Unesco figures, including the Secretary-General, were from former French African territories like Senegal and Tunisia (Tunstall: 1986:212-213). All these reasons led to the feeling that the Unesco Secretariat was 'hostile' to America's policies in the Organization.

In December 1983, the State Department gave a 12 months formal notice of US withdrawal from Unesco. The official concerns raised in the letter included the view that

trends in the policy, ideological emphasis, budget and management were detracting from the organization's (Unesco's) effectiveness

The American letter also charged that Unesco has moved "away from the original principles of its constitution" and that it

was America's view that Unesco has "served the political purposes of member states, rather than the international vocation of Unesco" (see Journal of Communication: 1984:82). M' Bow's reply (see Journal of Communication: 1984:83) responded well to the criticisms against Unesco by explicitly stating that most of the decisions taken by Unesco since 1976, the year the crisis began, were reached only by a consensus of the Organization's Member-States. M' Bow also defended Unesco's activities by maintaining that it was the realization of the role of information and communication in asserting the cultural identity of deprived Third World countries that had led Unesco to vigorously pursue the establishment of a new world order.

It was clear from the differences which existed between the United States and the Third World on almost all issues of the new order debate, and from M' Bow's reply to the American letter, that the main motive behind America's withdrawal from Unesco was simply its lack of interest in supporting an organisation which it felt threatened her interests<sup>1</sup>.

The problems and disagreements leading to American withdrawal from Unesco should not have arisen if the principle of democracy, which is about majority views and which United States and the West supposedly practice, had been observed

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<sup>1</sup> The United States alone paid the highest contribution, 25% of Unesco's regular budget. The old Soviet Union paid 10.98%; Japan 9.48%; W. Germany 8.22%; France 6.19 %; Britain 4.1%; Italy 3.41%; Canada 3.24%; and the remaining countries jointly paid the balance (Giffard: 1989:3).

especially since all the controversial Unesco resolutions on the new world order were adopted only by majority vote. But because all the issues raised and the adopted resolutions had ideological connotations, which might lead to less Western dependence by the Third World countries, Anglo-American democracy could not contend with the democracy inside Unesco. Hence the American decision to withdraw in December 1984, followed one year later by its major Western supporter, Britain.

The implicit American ideological motive for withdrawing from Unesco, possibly to continue the existing world order under which it dominates other countries, had not been mentioned as one of the reasons for the withdrawal<sup>2</sup>. Instead, other obfuscating and diplomatic explanations were given. For instance Unesco's research activities were labelled by the Reagan administration as politicization of its (Unesco's) activities and being anti-West. Likewise its effort to curb the excesses of Western media (especially the news agencies) was portrayed as imposing censorship; and its attempt to improve the communication facilities of Third World countries under IPDC conditions was interpreted as wasteful budgetary expenditure.

Consequently given the fundamental differences between the United States and Unesco, and the Third World, and the

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<sup>2</sup> But this is not solely to deny that there may have some been concern in the US that Unesco has become the talking-shop for arm-chair neo-Marxists of Third World diplomatic elites.

"conditioning of the American press to believe only the negative", it was hardly difficult for the United States press to persuade the country to leave Unesco. Therefore when the US State Department "formally added politicization, financial extravagance and maladministration" to the charges against Unesco, the American press was quick to "act without adequate balance and campaigned for withdrawal from the UN body" (Sussman, in Forward to Giffard: 1989:XV-XVI).

### 3.11 NWICO after Anglo-American withdrawal: Current trend:

During the 1970s and early 1980s, the Third World and former socialist bloc countries have enjoyed the cooperation of a Unesco Secretariat, which supported the views of the majority of member-states. Roach (1990) has observed that by the time of the 22nd Unesco General Conference (UGC) in Paris in 1983, the language used in referring to the NWICO had become a bit more 'diplomatic', describing it as an "evolving and continuous process". Many states were unhappy with the 'diplomatic' change of NWICO language by Unesco Secretariat. According to a Unesco report, since 1983 a "large number of countries regretted Unesco's shrinking role in communication research....and....would be unable to accept further reductions" (Unesco: 1985).

The noted change in the language used by the Secretariat and the reduction in research activities was in this period perhaps more for tactical than other reasons. The threat to

withdraw from the Organisation by the United States and the uncertainty of which Western countries would follow the US example, had considerable implications for funding and for the implementation of Unesco's programmes. Having reached a "compromise" with difficulty, on the establishment of the IPDC barely two years previously, the Secretariat found it wise to slow down a bit in its conceptually radical research programme on communication, which included NWICO, in order to please the Western countries. But, again, this could not be done in a way that would offend the majority of the Organisation's member-states, mostly from the Third World.

The first Unesco General Conference after the US withdrawal was that of 1985, held at Sofia, Bulgaria. Though almost all delegates at this Conference made mention of the NWICO as the "reference point of their discussion", Unesco has issued new "guidelines" on its activities. The new guidelines put emphasis on giving priority to "operational activities" though still claimed to be within the "context of....establishment of new world information and communication order seen as an evolving and continuous process" (Unesco: 1985). This position was perhaps indicative of the effect of the 25% reduction in the Organisation's regular budget, caused by America's withdrawal, which at this period compelled Unesco to necessarily make changes in some of its programmes.

### 3.12 NWICO Under Mayor as Unesco Director-General:

At the 1987 24th General Conference of Unesco, held in Paris, Frederico Mayor of Spain was appointed as Director-General. Mowlana and Roach (1992) have argued that since his appointment, Mayor has made several press statements "endorsing the Western position on international communications". They noted, for instance, that he had made unambiguous statements in 1988 which distanced the Organisation from the NWICO, such as the following:

This is a house of freedom, and we can never go against our constitution, which says we guarantee a free flow of information. (We) rejected the concept of a "new world information order", promoted by Third World and Soviet bloc nations (AP, 7 October 1988 in Traber and Nordenstreng: 1992:6).

The statement by Mayor signals a complete "U-turn" from the tenureship of M'Bow (as Director-General) by the Unesco Secretariat as well as a re-assurance to the West, particularly the United States, that it was now safe to go back to the Organisation, given that plans for the establishment of a new world order no longer exist. Indeed, this statement was followed up in 1989 by practical action to further demonstrate Mayor's "sincerity" in keeping Unesco's programmes within the existing old order.

Unesco's medium-term plan for 1990-95, the organisation's guideline of activities for this period, was presented by Mayor at the 25th General Conference, held in Paris. As analyzed by Roach (1990) and Mowlana and Roach (1992), the medium-term plan only mentioned NWICO in its introductory part

and excluded it in the operational section. This "new" approach to communications may be generally defined as follows:

- (i) More emphasis on the free flow of information; freedom and independence of the media
- (ii) Priority being given to operational activities, with reduced attention to research
- (iii) Much attention given to the role of information development.

In line with Unesco's "new strategy" for communications policy, the medium term plan for 1990-95 is geared towards these objective. So far committed is the plan to "free flow" that, according to Roach (op cit), even Leonard Sussman of Freedom House complained of the phrase being "repeated to the point of boredom".

The Mayor administration's efforts to end the NWICO did not stop with its medium-term plan. In 1989, it withdrew from its co-sponsorship of a book Hope and Folly, dealing with the history of US relations with Unesco. The book was commissioned earlier by Unesco and the Institute for Media Analysis (IMA). The latter went ahead with work on the book, but Unesco still threatened to take legal action if the book was published because it felt the book would "open up old wounds" between Unesco and United States. The IMA went public and Unesco's threat of legal action was almost immediately

dropped (see also Roach: 1990).

Since the late 1980s, support for the NWICO has shifted to non-governmental and professional organisations having concern with information and communication. Between 1989-1991, for instance, a number of MacBride Round Table Conferences on communication were organised.

The first MacBride Round Table was held in Harare (Zimbabwe) between 27-29 October 1989. It was organised by the Federation of Southern African journalists in conjunction with the Organization of International Journalists (OIJ) and the Media Foundation of NAM. Delegates from 14 countries and 18 NGOs took part in the discussions. The objective of the gathering was to assess the state of global communication ten years after MacBride's report was submitted (Mowlana and Roach: 1992).

The second MacBride Round table was hosted by OIJ, a Communist oriented Organisation<sup>3</sup>, in Prague between 21-22 September 1990. Twenty countries and 19 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were represented. Its discussion centred on 'current' and future problems of communication in view of the changes that occurred in Eastern Europe in late 1989 (Mowlana and Roach: 1992). The NWICO was also the theme of discussion at a September 1990 World Association of Christian Communication

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<sup>3</sup> The OIJ is the umbrella body of journalists trade unions in the former socialist countries.

(WACC) sponsored colloquium on strategies to promote NWICO in the 1990s. Another MacBride Round table (the third) met on 21 June 1991 in Istanbul, Turkey at the end of a conference on the role played by the media in the Gulf War. Again 14 countries and 18 NGOs were represented.

All three Round Tables have persistently reviewed and upheld the principles expressed in the MacBride Report in 1980 (Traber and Nordenstreng: 1992). They have each viewed with concern the rapidly increasing rate of homogenisation of various national and world cultures into a few, mainly Western, stronger ones. Perhaps more than the concern they each expressed, the Round Tables have kept the NWICO debate alive.

### 3.13 Conclusion:

The chapter has looked at the relationship between the NIEO, the NWICO and the MacBride Commission. The composition, tasks, the reports submitted by the Commission, the various responses and reactions to the report, primarily by WPFC and the US, were all discussed. It was noted that the sheer number of Third World and socialist bloc representatives inside the Commission, though greater than that of Western members (8:6), did not produce any 'viable' document of action on a 'new communication order' for Unesco and its Member-States. Rather, the ideological interests of a few countries in the Commission (largely Western) guided the decisions

reached on the various issues discussed. The decisions, as published in MacBride's final report, seemed to resemble more of what Tunstall (1991b) called a "vague general consensus" which did not offend 'contestants' in the debate.

The chapter also argued that support for the NWICO has shifted from Unesco to NGOs having to do with communications since the appointment of the incumbent Unesco chief executive in 1987, ostensibly in order to win back Western support in general and of the US in particular. This was due to the almost complete 'U-turn' of Unesco from its earlier practice of intensive involvement in communication research activities undertaken during M'Bow's tenure as Director-General, which was among the major causes of disunity between Western and Third World members of Unesco.

Before presenting the empirical data in the study, the next chapter (Chapter four) presents the methodology used, especially with respect to the collection and analysis of the data.

## Chapter Four

### Methodology

This chapter introduces the methodology of this research. A number of techniques were used for gathering and analyzing data. These comprise field interviews, content and qualitative analyses of news services, use of secondary or library materials and participant observation.

#### 4.1 Field Interviews:

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with PANA reporters/editors and directors as well as editors and reporters of foreign news desks of the selected Nigerian newspapers in order to explore their knowledge of PANA and how they perceive it in terms of fulfilling its declared objectives, and more broadly the goals of the NWICO. All the interviews were conducted between November 8th 1990 and February 8th 1991.

Semi-structured interviews were considered to be a more flexible and productive way of collecting first hand information from the journalists than using, say, mail questionnaires, library sources or even content analysis. Ten interviews were conducted in PANA over a two-week period December 11th-24th 1990. Those interviewed in the agency included seven senior reporters/editors (including the editor-in-chief) and three top executives comprising the directors of information, technical services and the Director-General.

Semi-structured interview enabled me to sometimes digress from the questionnaire and seek the interviewees' views on a variety of issues relating to the stories they receive and process in the news room, and the performance of PANA. In the case of the executives, questions relating to funding, computerization and the agency's communications network with its member agencies were also raised.

In the case of close-ended questions efforts were made to maintain a high degree of uniformity with respect to the questions asked and the category of answers provided. As for the open-ended ones, the interview schedule used was prepared and pre-tested before being administered on the interviewees. No interview request was turned down, apart from three instances when the time had to be re-arranged. Shortage of funds to employ assistants to help with the interviews turned out to be an advantage in terms of the high degree of standardization (in the questions asked) that was achieved.

In the newspaper establishments selected for the study, the interviews were carried out with 30 journalists (five in each newspaper) including the foreign news editors and editors of each of the newspapers. Most of the questions asked had to do with their perception of PANA, its news stories vis-a-vis those of the major wire services, their views on development journalism and news exchange among Third World or African countries.

Another interview was conducted with the PANA-desk editor of the News Agency of Nigeria on how PANA stories received from Dakar are selected and re-transmitted to NAN clients in Nigeria. Being in the same premises with NAN, the West African bureau chief of PANA was also interviewed on the tasks he performs and the constraints and problems he faces.

All the interviews in PANA headquarters at Dakar, the PANA regional office in Dakar, NAN and the selected newspapers were conducted by the researcher himself within the three months period (i.e November 8th 1990 to February 8th 1991).

The limitations and disadvantages of the interview technique are widely understood, for example the difficulty of knowing for sure whether or not the answers given by respondents represent the respondent's true views on the questions asked, and whether they yield accurate and insightful as opposed to superficial information. Nor can it be easily ascertained whether the questions were understood and interpreted in the same way by all respondents. Attempts to standardize questions in an effort to achieve precision may yield reliable more than valid information. In view of these limitations, I have used additional data gathering techniques.

#### **4.2 Content and Qualitative Analyses:**

The scientific investigation of communication content developed only in the last fifty years (Krippendorff: 1980). According to Berelson (1952), content occupies a central

position in the communication process. It represents the symbols carrying meaning which constitute the communication message itself as well as those symbols through which single individuals or groups of people interact and share experience with one another. Media content comprise of coded messages which transcend the symbols or meaning they 'ordinarily' convey. By the same token, content analysis is a kind of "archaeology of social knowledge" (Golding & Murdock: 1979). It is essentially the act of decoding social and ideological relations inherently contained in the message.

Content analysis is used because of the advantage it offers in making it possible to explore the content of the news stories directly generated by PANA, its member national agencies, and the selected Nigerian newspapers. The analysis is with respect to the news geography of these news sources, focusing largely on their main news topics, actors, source(s), etc, with the aim of analyzing the relationship or differences between them in order to evaluate PANA's claim of providing 'alternative news'.

A prepared coding schedule adapted from the one designed by Golding and Elliott (1979) in their study of broadcast news in Sweden, Nigeria and Ireland was used in this study<sup>1</sup>. Similar content analysis techniques have been widely used in a number of studies since it was founded (see for example Schramm and

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<sup>1</sup> The coding schedule and definition sheets are attached in the appendix.

Atwood: 1981, Harris: 1985, Giffard: 1983, Sreberny-Mohammadi: 1985, Hunt: 1992). Indeed, it could be argued that the Golding and Elliott content analysis schedule has become a standard acceptable tool for scholars concerned with studying the character of news.

Double coding was not done in order to reduce the task of analysis to manageable proportions. Hence each story was coded on the basis of the main category it belongs to.

Because of the limitations of content analysis, such as its inability to incorporate latent or hidden meaning of the content to be analyzed, it was complemented with a qualitative technique of analysis. A radical political economy approach which attempts to explain culture and media news production processes as part of broader social structures is used. A radical or critical political economy approach, as rightly noted by Golding and Murdock (1991), is concerned with the interplay between economic, political, social, and cultural factors as well as how these factors or variables generally shape 'particular micro contexts' or 'situated actions'.

Avoided in the political economy approach is the Marxist structural determinism, where all social and cultural action or meaning is always determined 'in the final analysis' by only the economic structure alone, or the idea of deliberate manufacture of cultural meaning in order to ensure continuity of the status quo. On the contrary, the approach views

cultural or media symbols as assisting in reproducing societal structures while they are also shaped to some degree by the latter, a process Agbaje (1992) called that of "construction" and "contestation of hegemony". In short, the political economy approach is used to complement content analysis in studying the news contents of both PANA and Nigerian newspapers.

Semiotic analysis, which according to Fawcett et al (1984) is about the study of the nature of sign signals and symbols (such as words) to convey meaning or knowledge, is also implicitly included by way of qualitative analysis. The study has not devoted particular attention to semiotic analysis because of the usage of different research techniques such as interviews and content analysis, which became necessary due to the scope outlined in the beginning, i.e encompassing both the journalists' attitude survey and detailed news content investigation. Semiotic analysis is particularly useful for studying multi-media systems (for example studies incorporating sight and sound), whereas this study focuses particularly on print media. Also, devoting much attention to semiotic analysis can divert attention from other important objectives of the study, for example discussing the views of journalists on PANA.

#### **4.3 Selection of newspapers:**

Only Nigerian newspapers were chosen in the study primarily

because of limited resources. The print media in Nigeria are generally thought to be relatively more free from government control compared with, say, the broadcast media. This assumption, though misleading, is founded on two bases. First, private ownership of the press is allowed in Nigeria. Two, the country's newspapers were very conspicuous in contributing to the nation's struggle for political independence, a situation quite contrary to other African countries, particularly the French speaking ones (Jones-Quarty: 1976, Ugboajah: 1980, Hachten: 1971, Grant: 1975, Faringer: 1991). These 'distinguishing' features of the Nigerian press, therefore, make it interestingly representative of the African press because of its location at the peak of the African 'free press' continuum.

Newspapers were chosen to represent varieties of ownership, geographical location and numbers of copies published. These are New Nigerian, Reporter, National Concord, Punch, Triumph and Gaskiya. All these newspapers are dailies published in English, except Gaskiya which is published three days a week (Monday; Wednesdays and Fridays) in one of the major Nigerian local languages (Hausa).

Out of the six newspapers three are privately owned, namely Reporter; Concord and Punch. The other three, Triumph; Gaskiya and New Nigerian are government owned and controlled. Out of these three government newspapers, Triumph is a state government owned newspaper while the other two are federal

government owned. In fact, Gaskiya is a part of the New Nigerian Newspaper group.

In terms of geographical location, New Nigerian has its headquarters in Kaduna but it is simultaneously published in both Kaduna and Lagos. Reporter and Gaskiya are also both published and headquartered in Kaduna. Triumph is based and published in Kano, while Concord and Punch have their headquarters in Lagos, and they are both published there.

The circulation of the papers range from between 20,000-100,000 copies per day, with the national dailies claiming a higher circulation beginning from at least 50,000 copies upwards.

In both layout and foreign news coverage, all the newspapers are basically tabloids, with each one devoting at least a single page daily to foreign news (excluding foreign sports).

The column size of four of the newspapers is approximately one and a half inches (and each has six columns in a page). The only exceptions are New Nigerian and Gaskiya whose column size is one and three-quarter inches, with each of them having only five columns in a page. The papers also share a similar deadline, with the exception of Gaskiya, and they all publish most of their (foreign) news stories in the form of 'news briefs'. Hence, any differences in their coverage is likely to stem from the news selection procedures of the newspapers themselves rather than from their physical design or news

deadline.

Using the six newspapers, it is possible to confidently generalise the results of the study to cover over 30 Nigerian dailies - differences of ownership, geographical location, scope of coverage or circulation figures notwithstanding.

#### 4.4 PANA/Newspapers Samples:

According to Krippendorff (1980) sampling is necessary in social research in order to reduce a large volume of potential data to a conveniently manageable size. For example, Stempel's study of 1952 (in Krippendorff: op cit) has revealed that increasing a sample size from 12 newspaper issues to 18; 24; 48; or even a whole year's did not produce 'significantly more accurate results'. Thus, even small samples are likely to represent the news pattern of any given media. With respect to this study, sampling was found even more necessary due to the limited resources available.

In drawing the sample of PANA stories, two sampling procedures (purposive and random) were both used. These are both acceptable in research (Krippendorff: op cit). The aim was to draw a four weeks sample of different composite weeks in a month over a four-months period. The selection began (purposively) with stories of the first week of December 1990, being the consecutive week preceding the researcher's arrival in Dakar for field work. It then continued backwards because the news stories could not be selected in advance.

With stories of the first week of December at hand, PANA's librarian was asked to provide stories for the remaining three different weeks which include different composite weeks in a month for the remaining retrogressive three months (i.e. September, October and November). But he was cautioned to exclude the first week of the month since it had already been selected for December. The bulletins obtained turned out to be for the last week of September (September 24-30th), second week of October (October 9-15th) and the third week of November (November 20-26th). Together with the earlier chosen stories of the first week of December (December 1st-7th), the sample therefore included materials of four different weeks over a four-month period.

Only the English version of the PANA newscast was selected for study because the researcher neither understands French nor has money to employ translators. Yet, the sample still seems representative of the agency's entire news stories because PANA's information Director had earlier pointed out in an interview that all important news stories are always translated by the agency from either English into French or from French into English. These two languages are presently the ones used in news transmission by the agency. These reasons therefore make it safe to assume that all news stories considered important by PANA during the sampled weeks were included in the story-sample.

In all, the sampled stories amounted to a total of 750 news

stories, features and other materials. It is the contention that this number is well representative of the nature, type, pattern and orientation of PANA's stories.

The newspaper issues sampled in the study were limited to one week. In all, 357 foreign news stories from the six newspapers were coded and analyzed. The week beginning from Monday 7th - Saturday 12th January 1991 was purposively selected for this analysis. There is no special reason that guided this selection apart from the primary reason that the researcher made his second visit to three of the sampled newspapers during the week, namely the New Nigerian, Reporter and Gaskiya. The purposively selected composite week is considered to have more advantages over an artificially constructed one because it comprises day-to-day news events as well as unusual or special news events, examples of which include the visit to Nigeria by Zimbabwe's president, Robert Mugabe (a routine but special event for foreign news), the Liberian and Gulf crises. Table 4.1 summarizes the periods sampled for the content analysis:

**Table 4.1 Summary of Content Analysis Samples:**

News Media	Areas of Content	Dates	Story Nos.
PANA	Whole English output	24-30th Sept '90	} 750
"	"	9-15th Oct '90	
"	"	20-26th Nov '90	
"	"	1-7th Dec '90	
New Nigerian	Foreign Page, etc	7-12th Jan '91	} 141
Nat. Concord	Foreign Page, etc	"	
Punch	Foreign Page, etc	"	} 216
Reporter	Foreign Page, etc	"	
Triumph	Foreign Page, etc	"	
Gaskiya	Foreign Page, etc	"	

Sunday editions of the selected newspapers were deliberately kept outside the study because not much foreign news is published at weekends.

In the case of both media, there were no highly exceptional news events which took place within the selected newsweeks except possibly the Liberian crisis and the Gulf conflict<sup>2</sup>. Also, in the newsweek of the newspapers, there was a state visit to Nigeria by Zimbabwe's president, Robert Mugabe: though such visits are a familiar type of national and international news. Again, for the New Nigerian, the sampled week was relatively not a normal one because the paper was celebrating its silver jubilee at the time. This could possibly have affected its foreign news coverage in one way or the other.

Being the week that preceded the start of the Gulf War, a big news event for the media, the newspaper sample coincided with the time when the conflict possibly reached its peak. In the case of PANA's, the sample included a period when the crisis had already begun. So was also the Liberian domestic crisis which was then going on<sup>3</sup>. This therefore implies that stories about the two conflicts, their main actors, and the regions in

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<sup>2</sup> The Gulf war had not yet begun as at the week this sample was taken, hence the phrase 'Gulf conflict'.

<sup>3</sup> The Liberian crisis was a civil war between the then country's president, Samuel Doe, and the main rebel leader, Charles Taylor. It was basically over political leadership. Member countries of the West African Economic Community (ECOWAS) intervened to 'restore peace' by sending allied forces to the country.

which they occurred could have attracted more attention than they would have done if the conflicts had not occurred or if the weeks sampled were different.

Indeed, the Liberian crisis and the Gulf conflict in particular were likely to dominate the sample because both events were important to the media. Hence important actors in the Gulf conflict, such as Egypt, may not have made as much news as they did if not for the conflict. This is perhaps a weakness as far as the sample itself is concerned.

But since the main aim of the PANA and the newspapers' content study was to basically analyze their news actors, topics, locations, sources, etc, the impact of these two conflicts (Liberian and Gulf) did not have much likelihood of changing the final results given that there is generally a tendency for one two events to dominate a sample at any moment. Thus, if anything, the events in the brief period covered, particularly the newspaper sample, were only likely to 'dominate' the samples. But this itself may just be indicative of the type of events the media was interested in reporting. Sreberny-Mohammadi et al shares a similar view by arguing that

a news week is indeed 'unique' in terms of the particular events occurring, but 'typical' of the general structure of news habits and formats through which events are filtered, and into which all stories are slotted (Sreberny-Mohammadi: 1985:52).

This means that the failure of the period for the newspaper sample to coincide with any of the weeks of the PANA sample is not likely to distort the final result of the newspapers' news

geography.

Presumably, the content analysis ought to have included an analysis of similar news reports of the major news agencies since the aim is to assess PANA's ability to provide 'alternative' news - i.e news which is different in focus from that of the major news agencies. However, such a three sided comparison of PANA newscast, the major agencies and Nigerian newspapers has not been carried out for two main reasons.

Firstly, it is considered that the objectives of PANA to, among other things, provide "information about, and assist in the liberation struggle of peoples against....all other forms of exploitation and oppression.....", as spelt out in Article 2 of its Convention, are equally sufficient criteria, different from the goals of the major agencies (see for example Fenby: 1986), upon which to assess PANA stories. Thus it is possible, as done in the study, to assess how 'alternative' PANA stories are by using its declared objectives as the reference point for the analysis, since PANA's goals are radically different from those of the major agencies.

Secondly, a three sided content analysis comprising similar stories of the major agencies was not conducted because of time constraints, which imposes a limit on what can be done in the study. Besides, as already noted, various studies had been conducted on the news character of the major Western

agencies (for example Harris: 1985, Meyer: 1988). Thus, it is assumed that the analysis of the newspaper stories may broadly compensate for the failure to analyse similar stories of the big wire services particularly because the newspapers (though broadly expected by the state to contribute to 'development' as all media in developing countries) are not ostensibly aimed at providing 'alternative' news as PANA.

#### 4.5 Library/Secondary Materials:

The research aims were formulated with a view to building on existing literature. The study has benefitted from previously published literature, to which references are made. It is also the hope that this study will itself contribute to future research in this field.

#### 4.6 Participant Observation:

During the period of the fieldwork, participant observation was carried out in PANA (apart from interviews) during the two weeks research visit. It was not possible to make the stay longer because of financial constraints. While at Dakar, the researcher spent most of the day in the news room except during lunch time or when conducting interviews. In the evenings, I stayed and lodged with two PANA reporters/editors<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Thanks to the kindness of PANA's information Director and the two agency reporters/editors who assisted with accommodation during most of the period due to exorbitant hotel costs in Dakar.

Observing the same routines and people for two weeks in the news room of a small organization like PANA seems reasonably much. Being a medium-size general office with seven to nine staff at any of the agency's two working shifts, even the short stay provided a good insight into the work routines, occupational values and world view of the PANA newsroom journalists. Again, many of those interviewed were the same people observed and interacted with. For example, during the first day of the visit, the researcher was invited to lunch by the information Director. At another day, dinner was held with five PANA staff, two of whom were the researcher's hosts. These informal interactions and discussions provided much insight into the organisational character, performance and weaknesses of PANA.

Because most of the two-weeks visit was spent in PANA news room or with the agency's journalists outside the news room, except during bed time, some of the information obtained couldn't have been got from interview or secondary sources. Therefore, the contention is that a reasonable understanding of the agency and its journalists was attained.

Brief notes on each day's observations were written during lunch time, and the detailed account at night after retiring to privacy. No tape recorder was used nor were notes written down in the presence of the respondents to ensure that my presence did not affect their actions or comments. In any case, journalists are used to interacting with different

people and as such the respondents didn't seem self-conscious at my presence.

The weekly editorial conference, held on fridays, was the only formal meeting on news processing in the agency during the visit. One was attended by me and the other was cancelled.

In the selected newspaper organizations, some observations were also made although not in an elaborate form as in PANA since the main objective of visiting the newspapers was to obtain data regarding the interviewees' views on PANA, for which the interview technique was thought to be a better tool.

#### 4.7 Definition of key concepts in the study:

Spot news: These are news stories which quickly state their message by answering the 5-Ws of journalism, that is What, Who, Where, Why and When. Editorial comments and opinions are 'avoided'.

Feature stories: These are stories describing their subject matter in full detail. They contain editorial or personal interpretations and analysis.

Development news/journalism: Development news (or journalism) is similar to features in its detailed comments, but is different in the sense that it is written in line with the realities and the developmental concerns of developing countries.

#### 4.8 Conclusion:

All the research techniques outlined were used in this study. The limitation of content analysis was complimented by the use of qualitative analysis, and that of interview by participant observation. Hence, it is contended that the combined use of these outlined research techniques were adequate to the the overall research aims regarding the organizational nature of PANA, its news content and those of Nigerian newspapers, and the journalists' perception of the agency.

## Chapter Five

### PANA

#### 5.1 Introduction:

The information presented and discussed in this chapter was mainly generated from three sources, namely interviews with reporters/editors and executives of PANA, participant observation, and documentary and published literature. The multi-data gathering technique was found necessary in the light of the relatively short period of stay by the researcher at PANA headquarters due to some already noted constraints (see methodology chapter).

The chapter briefly identifies four categories of news agencies based on their scale of operations. In greater detail, it discusses the main subject of this study, i.e the Pan African News Agency (PANA). An assessment of the organizational aims and structure of PANA is made in relation to its editorial output since the time it began operations in 1983. The issues of political control and interference, differences of official language between Member-States, financial contribution, foreign assistance, news production process, telecommunications network, recruitment and training, etc are all discussed in relation to their impact on PANA's overall performance.

## 5.2 News Agency Categories:

Since the 1970s, concern about the influence of news agencies as 'wholesale media' has received unprecedented attention. Broadly, Boyd-Barrett (1980) has categorised news agencies into three. The first set of news agencies comprise the major international ones widely referred to as the "big four", namely the AFP; Reuters; AP; and UPI. These agencies still constitute the dominant sources of foreign news on Western Europe; North America; Africa; Asia and Latin America. Between them they internationally distribute a total of over 3.28 million words per day. More recently, two of these agencies (UPI and AFP) seem to have declined in importance in relation to the others (Palmer: 1991), while other global news sources such as Reuters Television (formerly Visnews), WTN and CNN have assumed a higher degree of importance than before.

The assumed new increased influence of these latter news sources, particularly the CNN's role in covering the Gulf-war, has generated much recent discussion on the role of satellite and cable television in global news production, thus adding impetus to the 'natural history' of media impact studies (on the role of CNN see Gurevitch: 1991, Ryes-Matta: 1992, Katz: 1992, Flournoy: 1992, Mowlana, Gebner & Schiller: 1992). This may have prompted Katz (op cit) to title his essay 'The End of Journalism' (which it certainly is not), following the American contemporary political analyst, Francis Fukuyama (1992).

The second category of agencies comprise the semi-international news agencies which resemble those in the first category but their main concern is to serve the news interest of their domestic subscribers. These are operationally smaller with respect to their number of foreign offices, staff strength and financial stability. Examples of these agencies are China's Xinhua, Japan's Kyodo and India's PTI.

The third set of news agencies comprises the national agencies of most developing countries. Their main functions include the circulation of foreign news inside their own countries and dissemination of domestic news abroad. They are mostly owned and controlled by their respective governments, such as Nigeria's NAN or Ghana's GNA. Their major task is sometimes proclaimed as the provision of 'development news' whose focus is different from the issues largely reported by the 'big four', which are often alleged to give more attention to crisis news. These set of agencies have turned out to be mere 'extensions' or dependents on the 'big four' for their foreign news and news outlook (see Samarajiwa: 1984, Musa: 1989 & Rantanen: 1991).

Another (the fourth) set of agencies are the regional news pools of developing countries, whose objective is to promote cooperation and exchange of news and information among countries, based on regional and political interests. Examples of these agencies include the Non Aligned News Agency Pool (NANAP) and PANA. Because these agencies were primarily set up to re-transmit the domestic news (supposedly 'alternative' or

'development news') of their members, which are foreign news in countries other than in which the stories originated, their news output is expected to be largely 'alternative' (see for example PANA Stylebook: 1987, Boyd-Barrett & Thussu: 1991, Cuthbert: 1979).

One problem with this categorization of agencies on the basis of their news operations is the inherent comparison of all agencies with those of the West, rated as the 'first' category, and the others following behind. Consequently, 'big alternative' agencies, like IPS - which does not compete with the 'big four' in spot news coverage; though having bureaus or correspondents in various countries and its services distributed in various languages (such as Arabic, French, German and Swedish), do not seem to fit neatly into any of the categories provided. The IPS is a non-profit co-operative based in Europe (Rome) operating with a different structure and philosophy than those of the 'big four' but it internationally gathers, processes and distributes news about the Third World from the industrialized countries.

While it is acknowledged that the news agencies collectively and separately represent different models, their ordering to a hierarchy dominated by the 'big four' is necessarily conservative, pro status-quo and does not take account of the immediate aims of other types of agencies such as the IPS.

### 5.3 News Exchange Mechanism Models:

News Exchange Mechanisms (NEMs) are decentralised loose regional groupings of media organisations involved in a news exchange undertaking among themselves (Gurevitch: 1991). With respect to Africa or the Third World, the importance of NEMs lies in their contribution to both the enhancement of the news flow and their potential for reducing Third World news dependency and Western media imperialism (see Boyd-Barrett and Thussu: 1991). Most NEMs are squeezed between the giant international agencies like the 'big four' and the national agencies of particular countries like Nigeria's NAN.

According to Boyd-Barrett and Thussu (op cit), there are at least four major models of NEM, all Third World in origin and the services they offer. These four models are represented by the Non-Aligned News Agency pool (NANAP), Caribbean News Agency (CANA), the Inter-Press Service (IPS) and the Pan-African News Agency (PANA). Each of these models represents an international or regional organisation involved in collecting, processing and exchange of news between different countries and world regions.

The main objectives of NEMs are to increase the flow of news between countries within or across particular world regions and to provide an accurate representation of events taking place within the participating countries. Others include the establishment of data banks for the storage and retrieval of information, as well as providing a forum for co-operation in the

training of journalists and the setting of uniform standards for the profession across a given region(s) (see for example document PANA/CIM/4(II) REV.). In short, the aim of NEMs is to improve the quality of news circulating within the member-states involved.

The concept of NEMs, of which PANA is a typical example, is in ideological terms broadly related to the demand for a NWICO, which became popular with Unesco's involvement and support for it (the NWICO demand). According to UN Yearbook 1978, resolution 33/155 of the UN General Assembly recommended the UN Secretary-General to take necessary measures through its specialised agencies, especially Unesco, to encourage co-operation and assistance conducive to strengthening the information and communication systems of developing countries. The specialised agencies, like Unesco, were also requested to help developing countries to identify and eliminate problems hindering their effort to establish greater information production and exchange between themselves. It is in this respect that, as discussed later in the chapter, Unesco continues to be involved in assisting PANA to survive.

Whereas some NEMs like CANA do generate and distribute their own news independently, others like NANAP are only information exchange pools. Yet PANA seems to do both. Being specifically on PANA, this chapter presents a detailed discussion on various aspects of the agency since its formation.

#### 5.4 PANA: Pre-History:

PANA forms the centre of a news exchange network linking the national agencies of 45 African countries. The idea of starting an African news agency was first conceived in the 1960s. It was informed by the Pan-Africanist desire for 'complete' decolonisation and 'total' independence.

In May 1963, the first session of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) adopted a resolution on the need to establish a continental news agency for Africa. Shortly afterwards, the Union of African News Agencies (UANA) was established with the aim of preparing the ground for a single continental news agency. Since then, developments in the field of information and communication taking place within and outside Africa have directly and indirectly contributed to the take-off of PANA. Two such developments were the proclamation of the concept of NWICO by Unesco at its Nairobi General Conference in November of 1976, and the adoption of a resolution relating to the creation of PANA by the first session of the Conference of OAU information ministers held in Uganda in 1977.

Two years after the Uganda Conference, in 1979, the Convention establishing PANA was signed after an OAU Heads of State meeting in Liberia in June of the same year. In all, 42 countries signed the Convention establishing the African continental news agency. Dakar was selected to serve as the agency's headquarters. Editorial operations began much later, in May 1983. As with the

take-off of the agency between 1963, when the idea was first conceived, and 1979, when its Convention was signed, lack of financial and manpower resources and political commitment were responsible for the four-year delay between the political ceremony in 1979 (signing of the Convention) and the beginning of editorial operations in 1983.

It may be argued that the example set by Non-Aligned countries in 1976 in establishing NANAP, coupled with Unesco's pressure on countries of the Third World to establish regional mechanisms to facilitate exchange of news among themselves added external pressure on African countries to set up PANA in their effort to be self reliant on news about each other. Thus, whereas the idea of establishing PANA predated the Unesco-coordinated NWICO debate of the 1970s, the NWICO and the NAM have had an impact on the take-off and shaping of PANA.

Since its creation, PANA has been a "specialised institution" of the OAU, whose primary function is to "ensure the gathering, editing and exchange of news about Africans". This service is considered significant in the light of charges of bias levelled against the dominant Western media, especially the 'big four' news agencies (Schiller: 1976, Varis: 1985).

PANA was not intended to be a replacement of the international agencies operating in Africa but one which provides 'alternative' news for the media of African countries. In addition to its functioning as a news-pool operation, PANA operates as a standard

news agency with its own editorial staff. Its staff report and write features on 'significant' continental events. Thus, a sizeable proportion of what the agency transmits is directly its own production.

As a news pool, the main service for which it was established, PANA is an 'alternative' news source which retransmits the domestic news (supposedly containing 'development news') generated by African national agencies, many of which were themselves set up as alternatives to the 'big four'. It is this 'alternative' domestic news re-circulated by PANA which serves as foreign news in countries other than the ones in which it originated.

Like all agencies, PANA reaches the public through other media like radio or newspapers. But its news product has to pass through the various African national agencies which receive it. Consequently, its impact - for example news content and style of reporting - depends on how well it is accepted and used by the national agencies and media of individual African countries.

#### 5.5 Objectives and Aims:

As spelt out in article 2 of the Convention establishing PANA, the objectives of the agency are as follows:

(a) promote the aims and objectives of the OAU for the consolidation of the independence, unity and solidarity of Africa;

- (b) give more information about and assist in the liberation struggle of peoples against colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, apartheid, racism, Zionism<sup>1</sup>, and all other forms of exploitation and oppression;
- (c) promote an effective exchange of political, economic, social and cultural information among member-states;
- (d) correct the distorted image of Africa, its countries and people resulting from partial and negative information published by foreign press agencies, and to portray its cultural values;
- (e) establish a data bank on Africa with a view to promoting the facilities of collection, processing and dissemination of adequate documentation;
- (f) contribute towards the development of already established national news agencies and multinational training institutes on information, if need be, in collaboration with competent international organisations in the field;
- (g) ensure the preservation and promotion of traditional oral, written and visual communications and;
- (h) co-operate with African news agencies so as to have greater impact on the press, radio, television and cinema.

There appears to be a clash between the idealistic political objectives, in particular items (a), (b) and (d) of the article establishing PANA, and its general editorial guidelines. For

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<sup>1</sup> The Chambers Concise Dictionary defines Zionism's aim as trying to secure better national privileges and territory in Palestine for Jews.

example, whereas the foregoing items clearly commit the agency to promoting and consolidating the "unity and independence...of Africa; assisting in the liberation struggles...against colonialism,....imperialism, apartheid", etc, its editorial guidelines emphasise such concepts as "factuality, balance and objectivity (see PANA Stylebook).

Perhaps one explanation why there appears to be this lack of harmony between the editorial guideline and some items in PANA's Article of Convention has to do with the 'standard' professional identity in conformity with Western models of press functioning, which the agency wants to be seen to have, but which conflicts with its social and political goals. This is clearly evident in the agency's definition of news, which conceived news as universal and standard. This itself constrains PANA to operate within the parameters of the Western journalism tradition, an approach PANA is expected to provide an 'alternative' for. This will be returned to later.

#### 5.6 Organisational Structure:

The Director-General of PANA is the agency's chief executive officer. Directly working under him are three Directors heading the three departments which constitute the three main centres of responsibility in the agency. These Directors are those of Information, Technical services, and Administration. The separation of these departments is consistent with the existence of a clearly defined organisational structure, hierarchy and

functions, similar to that found in equivalent organizations. The separation of administrative from editorial and technical services departments in separate blocks, about a quarter of a mile away from each other, may reinforce this separation of functions.

The information department is operationally the most important in the agency because it is there that editorial services are carried out. It is headed by a director whose responsibility includes planning, supervision of activities in the department and making policy recommendations to the Director-General on new ways of enhancing editorial performance, including staff training. Below the Director is the editor-in-chief, responsible for co-ordinating the work of journalists in the news room, the five regional pool offices at Lagos (West Africa), Lusaka (Southern Africa), Tripoli (North Africa), Kinshasa (Central Africa) and Khartoum (Eastern Africa). The editor-in-chief also liaises with national agencies belonging to the "PANA club".

The location of PANA's headquarters in Senegal, a francophone country, perhaps explains why none of the regional pool centres is located in another French speaking country. Equally, the lack of geographical centrality in the location of some of PANA's regional offices within their regions, such as those of North and Southern Africa (Tripoli and Lusaka) seems to suggest that other reasons, for example political interest in supporting the agency, were responsible for locating the offices in their present centres.

Good communication and support facilities are also other possible reasons why some regional pool offices are situated in Tripoli and especially Lusaka, whose communication link with Dakar is among the most reliable within the PANA network.

Following from its dual objectives, PANA's organisational structure makes it both an agency in itself and a news pool. The latter by necessity sets a limit to its operational pattern. As a news agency, it has its own editorial structure and staff comprising full time reporters, translators and editors at the headquarters, and accredited correspondents in five sub-regional offices who cover events by using their own professional judgement following PANA's house style. At times reporters are also sent from the headquarters to cover events considered significant, like OAU Heads of State summit or World Cup competitions.

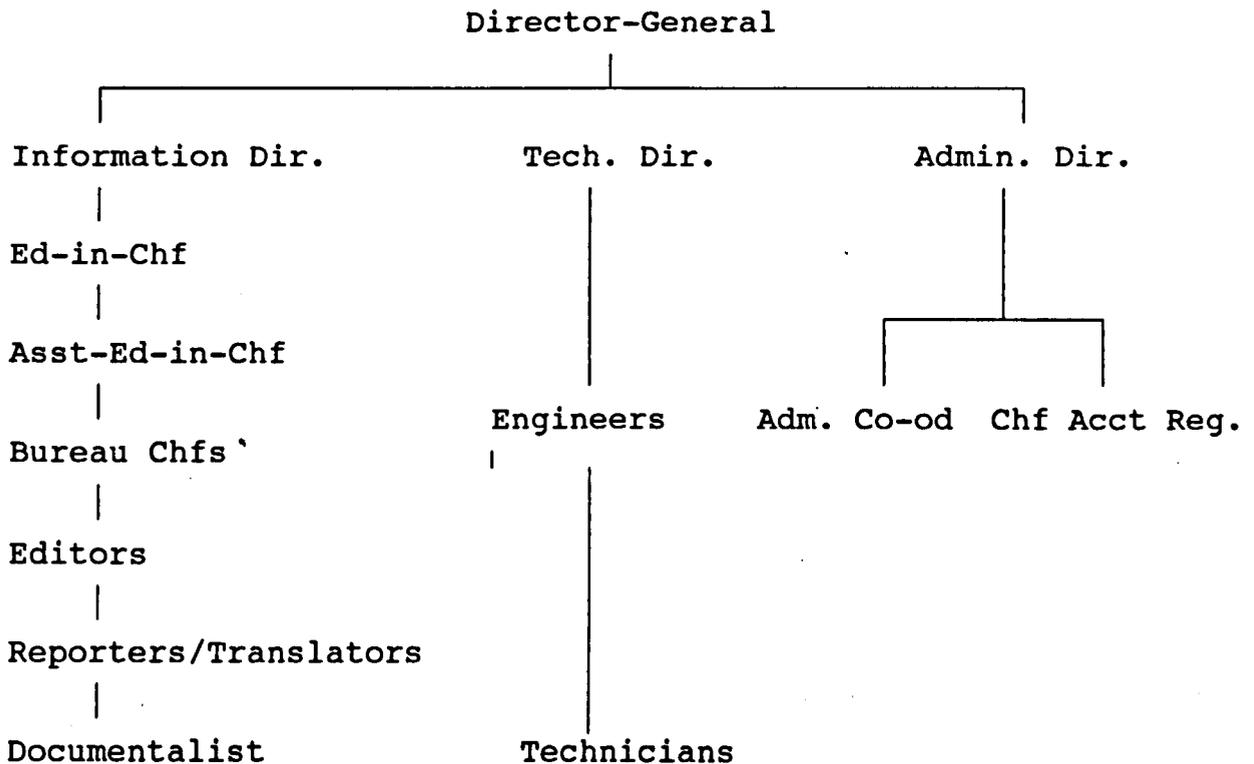
As a news pool on the other hand, PANA does no more than collect and improve the technical quality of the stories it receives from contributing agencies and transmit them in bulk again to its client or member agencies.

The two other departments in PANA are those of administration and technical services. The latter is a relatively smaller department consisting of a Director, two engineers and few technicians including those who operate the agency's radio transmission system. This department's main job is to design, maintain and develop news transmission facilities such that would

enable a smooth reception and transmission of news to and from Dakar, the five regional pool offices and the national agencies.

The administration department, also headed by a Director, oversees such matters as staff recruitment, promotions, staff welfare and discipline, and payment of salaries and allowances. Table 5.1 illustrates:

**Table 5.1 PANA's Organisational Hierarchy Chart:**



### **5.7 Editorial Guidelines:**

As highlighted before, there seemed to be a conflict between some of the objectives outlined in Article 2 of PANA's Convention which, among others, states that the agency would seek to promote "the aims and objectives of OAU for the consolidation of the

independence, unity and solidarity of Africa" and the agency's (PANA's) definition of what constitutes news.

In its stylebook, approved by editors-in-chief of African national news agencies, PANA set for itself editorial guidelines which in its own words "will result in a high degree of professionalism, consistency....and uniformity" in the presentation of its news stories. In the stylebook, news was defined as follows:

A standard definition of news is the factual report of an event which is timely or new and which is interesting, unusual and/or significant to the public (PANA Stylebook: 13).

The above definition of news is similar to what is found in standard Western journalism textbooks (see Hodgson: 1989, Highton: 1978). Inherent in this definition is synonymity with the Western traditional or classical perception of news as a report about an event that can only be directly observed, which has just happened, and is unusual. It is possible to argue that the increase in the proportion of features and documentary materials in Western newspapers and televisions respectively has perhaps made this definition a little outdated and raises the need for a new conceptualization of news which takes into account the changes in Western media.

Completely missing or avoided in the definition (both Western and PANA's) are process-orientated events which are not necessarily directly observable, but which also constitute news - for example news stories which talk about the processes of colonialism, neo-colonialism or imperialism as phases of the capitalist process

of expansion. Importance is also attached by the Western journalism to drama (unusual) as well as an implied assumption of an individual editor's or media institution's judgement of which event is interesting and significant to the public. **Timeliness** is also emphasised as a criterion of news. Consequently, this could have impact on producing event-oriented news. Thus, it seems safe to assume that PANA's editorial guidelines would influence its editor's news outlook since studies on gatekeeping indicate that the perception of editors or reporters towards events influence their selection of stories (Harmon: 1989).

The adoption of a Western definition of news by PANA, as shown above, brings with it the 'big four' market approach to news, which perceives news as a commodity for sale that becomes unusable and perishable if it is not used straight away, into the agency (PANA), whose primary objective is to provide 'alternative' news. The adoption of this definition by PANA, ignorantly or otherwise, did not recognise the cultural and economic factors (or market forces) that had given rise to the Western news values which it copied into its stylebook and which it assumed are universal. This misconception of what "news" is or should be for Africa seemed to have put the agency on a wrong premise on how it is to achieve its objectives.

One major problem with reporting only event oriented activities as news is that (as seen in the agency's news content analysis) "prominent" political actors and members of society (usually

elites) tend to dominate in news. Bias may also arise (though perhaps unconsciously) with regard to the editor's conception and definition of what constitute interesting and significant stories for the public. The implication of this Western news-value stereotyping by PANA is that its news stories can reflect only a partial view of cultural reality.

Although the agency has attempted not to fall into the trap of concepts, widely accepted and used in the West, like "objectivity" and "balance" by directly refusing to state that PANA stories must be objective, yet it seems to believe in the concepts if only in principle. In the agency's own words "a news agency....lives on credibility", which, according to it, requires that "news and features should always be factual, objective, and balanced....". Therefore the stylebook advised that for PANA to survive as an effective, agency, "its journalists and those of national (African) agencies must....make credibility their watchword".

Another Western concept which PANA has adopted is "conciseness". Conciseness is also a western news requirement that emerged in the mid to late 19th century in order to primarily save on telegraphic costs, make news less tedious to read as well as to (secondarily) improve its clarity. Calling it by a different name, "brevity", PANA stressed in its stylebook that "economy in the use of words is a cardinal rule of news agency journalism" particularly because of the expensive nature of internal news gathering and dissemination. It went on to argue that the agency

considered it important for journalists to employ "precision and brevity in their writing" because of limited resources on the part of the agency.

Indeed, even if PANA wanted to operate within its own cultural context, using its own news values, it may not be possible since it doesn't have its own telecommunication facilities, while tariffs for leased facilities are high. This makes it impossible for PANA to re-define its newsworthiness criteria in line with its cultural objectives in a way that suits the needs, requirements and interests of Africa and African media.

Therefore, rather than provide leadership to African media in its quest of finding suitable 'alternative' news values for Africa, PANA seemed to have trapped itself inside 'standard' (mainly Western) professional media practices, whose importance were even stressed by the agency in noting that "newspaper and radio editors expect from the news agencies....stories that are brief and to the point". Though it is probably the case that media editors expect stories which are brief, as was noted in the foreign news content of Nigerian newspapers in chapter seven, one of the aims of PANA is to change this kind of orientation and provide 'appropriate length' stories to its clients.

Like conciseness, "speed" in news transmission is also a vital element of western news requirements and perhaps the most important. This is necessitated by competition in news delivery among agencies and the need to provide the latest information about events and financial data which is crucial for the

continuity of the capitalist system.

Similar to the major Western agencies, without consideration of the differences in the economic and cultural contexts of Western and African societies, PANA attached paramount importance to "speed" in its news transmission and urged all concerned to strive to ensure that the agency "is first with African news".

Typically Western as they are, the duplication of these news concepts in PANA's own stylebook is not only bound to "re-create" stories according to Western models but also raises two important, albeit related, issues. These concern the extent to which both PANA and its journalists, and indeed African media practitioners as a whole, are free from the influence of Western journalistic traditions.

Specifically, PANA's definition of news and its adoption of Western professional concepts are themselves a part of the colonial legacy, which the agency was set up to modify. By adopting Western news values, which according to Golding (1981) mainly reflect the values of the powerful in society, PANA may be said to prepare for producing only a partial view of the world that is largely supportive of the powerful in society. This way, the agency itself contributes to the dominance of Western media agencies as well as to its own subservience. Hence, adopting these Western concepts by the African agency is necessarily pro-status quo and a negation of the hope for independent African journalism and media.

Perhaps one vital explanation why PANA is heavily dependent on Western journalistic practices and news values relates to the dependence of African institutions, including the media, on those of the West. With regard to the media, the dependence is specifically in terms of organizational structures, work practices, professional training, education and socialization as well as other imbibed attitudes of Western European and American societies. There are also the questions of ownership and control, which are again related to (for example) the problem of organizational structure and control.

As a news pool, PANA depends much, though unpredictably, on African national agencies for news stories (for example NAN). These African agencies and media more generally are themselves dependent on Western values (Musa: 1989, Golding: 1977, Golding & Elliott: 1979). For example, NAN's editorial policy, in-built into the decree which established it, contains phrases of providing "objective" and "impartial information" similar to that of PANA (see NAN Stylebook: 1978), implying a heavy dependence on Western news values by both PANA and its member-agencies.

Most or all PANA journalists, including its Information Director, were trained in the West or in Western orientated institutions. They have worked in news agencies established on the same basis as Western ones. In fact, PANA's Information Director was NAN's first editor-in-chief, and it was under his direction that the agency's stylebook was compiled. Little wonder, therefore, that Western journalistic values infiltrated PANA's stylebook. In a

similar manner, Western journalistic influence on the editors-in-chief of African national agencies, who head agencies patterned after those of the West, has made it possible for them as members of PANA's editorial board to, in the words of PANA's Information Director, "critically" examine PANA's stylebook and approve it in June 1987.

#### 5.8 News room Organization/News Volume:

PANA's news room is a modern, ground floor, open office located in a separate block from the administrative department. Open floor offices are generally thought to facilitate interpersonal communication between staff.

There are two main desks in the news room - English and French. These desks evaluate, translate and at times technically edit the news that is received before transmitting it again.

Though his office is located in a separate room, the Editor-in-Chief is the head of the news room. Working under him in the news room are three assistant editors-in-chief, reporters/editors and translators. There are also journalists on rotation from the national agencies posted to PANA on attachment for an average period of three to four months. The aim of the attachment is to train the participating journalists in PANA's own reporting style and standard, as part of the agency's effort to lay the foundation for a 'new approach' to journalism in Africa, generally advocated by Third World countries during the NWICO

debate. Whether or not this objective has been attained, will be seen in the next chapter on the analysis of PANA news stories.

With the exception of Sundays and public holidays when journalists work only one shift (morning shift), staff work daily in two shifts. The morning shift lasts from 7.00 a.m to 1.00 p.m and the afternoon shift from 1.00 p.m to 7.00 p.m. from Mondays to Saturdays. News can be received on a 24 hour basis after the computerisation of the news room in June 1990, but it can only be processed and transmitted within the 12 hours the agency's staff are on duty. This puts PANA at a disadvantage in comparison with the international agencies, which operate round the clock to ensure rapid transmission of news as it occurs, something which the African agency also recognises is important.

During the early years of its editorial activity, PANA concentrated on developing a daily news service and on producing 20,000 words per day. Member agencies were encouraged to send news stories and feature articles to the agency. Almost everything 'publishable' that was received was re-transmitted. Also, specialised feature services on sports, economic affairs, health, science and technology were produced. Writing of features was not restricted to journalists inside the agency but extends to those in the national agencies and other international organisations.

The inability of several national agencies to consistently contribute 'high quality' feature articles motivated PANA to

organise a small workshop on feature writing in Dakar in 1984. Senior journalists from twelve national agencies attended this training exercise. The participants were expected to share their experience with colleagues in their agencies who could not attend. As far as the agency was concerned, the workshop has resulted in some improvements in the number and quality of articles received.

At the beginning, features were distributed through postal services because of the inadequacy of the telecommunications network linking Dakar with some countries like those in Southern Africa. Post was considered a cheap means of transmission of features particularly because they do not need to be received as quickly as news stories, since they relate to news which has already been reported.

After its first two years of editorial operation, still concerned with improving editorial quality - especially of features - PANA introduced a policy in 1987 which made it compulsory for all the agency's journalists to write features; and to pay \$50 to every journalist from the national agencies whose article was accepted and transmitted. PANA claims that this policy has attracted a positive response from the national agencies, whose journalists saw it as an opportunity to earn what was equivalent to or even higher than their monthly salary (\$50 is more than the monthly salary of average senior journalists in most African countries due to the devaluation of their currencies). Table 5.2 illustrates:

**Table 5.2 Sources of PANA's Features Production**

Year	Total Number	PANA	Agencies <sup>2</sup>	Others
1985	75	23	32	20
1987	290	69	136	85
1988	339	178	143	18
1989	376	183	184	9

From Table 5.2, there was a consistent dramatic rise from 1987-89 (compared to 1985) in the number of feature articles written by both PANA staff and its client national agencies possibly as a result of the new policy that was introduced. Conversely, there was also a significant reduction in the number of articles the agency received from outside sources (Others) between 1987 and 1988-89. It is likely that the number of features for 1987 from the "Other" sources was higher than that of the other years because of extra-ordinary events, which might have occurred in that year (1987), which prompted the outside writers to contribute more articles to PANA.

The issues discussed in the features covered a wide variety of topics ranging from Africa's political, economic, social and technological problems and prospects.

The increase was not only limited to the number of features. According to the agency's 1990 progress report, the volume of news also rose overall in the period between January 1986 and

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<sup>2</sup> Agencies means feature materials whose source is PANA Member-Agencies but which were processed and transmitted by PANA.

December 1989 by 50%, followed by a slight down turn in total production in 1988. See Table 5.3.

**Table 5.3 PANA's news stories production:**

Period	PANA's own production	%	Total production
Dec. 1985	180	14.3	1261
Dec. 1986	236	14.8	1595
Dec. 1987	412	20.3	2025
Dec. 1988	422	22.3	1888
Dec. 1989	403	20	2011

The computerisation of PANA's news room in June 1990 is one development which has had a positive impact on the reception and transmission of news. According to some interviewed reporters/editors, the computer has made it "easier and faster for editors to have access to news at all times". This also makes it easier for countries with similar facilities to instantly transmit and receive news stories to and from PANA.

PANA's wire photo service is meant to be a part of the news services. Despite its importance in a continent where nearly half the population is still illiterate, the photo service is yet to take off due to the technical complexities involved and the high cost of the project. Moreover, the project can only facilitate the exchange of pictures when national news agencies are equipped with similar facilities, which most do not presently have.

The documentation unit, which is the centre of PANA's data bank, is also a part of PANA's news room. Serious staff shortage prevails there. Only one staff was available to handle all work in the unit, which comprises the stocking and retrieval of all information processed and transmitted by the news room, as well as other documentary materials.

### 5.9 News Selection and Processing:

At the time of this study's field work, the news room in Dakar had about 20 full time journalists out of whom sixteen were editors/reporters of different ranks, and the remaining four were translators. These staff work in two shifts daily from Mondays to Saturdays. On Sundays and public holidays, only one shift works. The correspondents in the five regional pool offices are also considered a part of the news room.

About ten staff work in each of the two shifts. This number seems small for a big news agency operation or even for PANA, whose scope covers the whole of Africa, particularly if the functions to be performed are considered. The tasks include news editing, feature writing and news translation. Some of those interviewed in the news room, especially those who worked earlier with 'established' agencies, often complained of lack of clear organisation in terms of which member of staff performs which duty and at what time. Lack of clear organization also makes it difficult to assess the productivity of each single staff member.

Only two translators per shift undertook all the translation of stories from French to English and vice-versa. Considering that about half of the agency's member states transmit their materials in French, it seemed the few translators available were being overworked.

All stories coming in from the national agencies either by telex<sup>3</sup> or computer pass through two main selection stages. Each reporter/editor has responsibility for particular national agencies, from which they select stories and edit for re-transmission. The second stage of selection is done by an assistant editor-in-chief, responsible for the agency from which the story originated. Stories may be either selected or dropped at any of the two selection stages.

The criteria for story selection are largely the professional judgement of the editors. Emphasis is given to stories which tend to reinforce 'African unity' and 'cooperation'. This contrast with conventional agencies where many control measures such as the diary, daily desk and editorial conferences set the 'parameters' for the events that get reported in news bulletins.

Editors believe they work independently of interference. Most could not recall cases in which the information director or even the editor-in-chief interfered in the selection or non-selection of any particular stories apart from an incident in which the

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<sup>3</sup> As at the time of the research visit PANA still received and sent news through telex because some of its member-agencies were not computerised.

agency reported a border clash between Senegal and Mauritania, when the Senegalese Information Minister personally registered his country's complaint to the agency. They therefore tend to feel satisfied with the autonomy with which they exercise their professional judgements.

Despite their impression of working "independently", news stories are an integral part of the socio-economic system of the society in which the journalists work (Robinson: 1981).

In the case of PANA journalists, therefore, the values they use in selecting stories inherently contain biases about the social composition of the societies they report. Since most of the stories in the agency's bulletin emanate from national news agencies like NAN, whose product has been found to reflect the interest of national ruling groups (see Musa: 1989), the incoming national agency news from which PANA editors make their selection, may itself be said to be already biased towards the interests of the power groups in their societies. Indeed, national agencies in Africa broadly operate in similar environments and share similar constraints.

What seems to occur, therefore, is that the two stages of gatekeeping and news selection in PANA, rather than excluding stories which contain inherent biases, tends to facilitate their inclusion within the aim of selecting stories which would contribute to African unity.

### 5.10 Views About Incoming News:

News processors in PANA are not generally satisfied with the editorial quality of incoming news stories, not even of those sent by their own regional correspondents. They complained of cases in which they spent more than 30 minutes editing a three to six paragraph story sent in either by PANA correspondents or by national agencies. A specific example of poor practice was offered to the researcher. For fear of identifying the person concerned, the example is presented in a hypothetical manner. The incident occurred at a time when an important African trade union meeting took place in one of the five regional pool centres of the agency. The correspondent-in-charge of the region was directed from the head office in Dakar to cover the event on behalf of PANA.

In his first news report of the event, he mentioned that the meeting had been declared open by the number two man of the country in which the meeting was taking place. The report did not say anything about the countries taking part in the meeting, or about the agenda of the meeting. In fact, my sources even claimed that the report was silent on what was said in the opening speeches.

It was not until the second day of the meeting that this same correspondent sent another report to Dakar on the agenda that was being discussed at the meeting. It was only when the meeting entered its third day that the correspondent managed to send a report on what was said in the opening ceremony speeches two days earlier, at a time when it was no longer newsworthy.

Related to this example, were other accusations of inefficiency targeted at regional correspondents. For instance, some correspondents were accused of sending to Dakar an average of only fifteen stories a month most of which consisted of press releases and statements from other official sources - not personally researched news reports. These inadequacies on the part of agency staff and member agencies made editors feel dissatisfied with the news output of PANA, and were generally demoralizing.

#### 5.11 News Deadlines:

In news agencies modelled after those in the West, time deadlines for news are highly valued while the opposite is the case in 'alternative' ones like the IPS. From observation, it was noted that although PANA produces news bulletins once a day at a fixed time and attaches importance to receiving news stories as soon as events occurred, the editors do not look under pressure of time to process stories within a given time deadline. Possible reasons for this may be related to low morale, poor training or poor awareness of client needs. This seems contrary to the situation in conventional news agencies where pressure for producing stories 'in time' prevails (see Boyd-Barrett: 1980, Musa: 1989).

The manifest 'conflict' between what the journalists theoretically believe in and practice in PANA news room with respect to timeliness or news deadlines may be attributable to

the agency's higher emphasis on its role as a news exchange co-ordinator than as a conventional agency which only occasionally send its own reporters on spot news coverage. This fusion of dual objectives and practices is not necessarily conducive for 'smooth' news agency business.

#### 5.12 Editorial Meetings and News Regulation:

Weekly editorial meetings are held on Fridays at 12.30 in the afternoon. It is the only formal forum at the time of the fieldwork, where PANA editorial staff meet to review and discuss matters relating to bulletin quality, stories to be followed up and other general editorial matters. All journalists in the news room are members of this meeting. During the fieldwork, this meeting was held once, with the editor-in-chief as its Chairman. The researcher was also in attendance.

The non attendance of the Information director to this meeting tends to give an impression of non interference and relative autonomy in the day to day gathering and processing of news. That only the weekly editorial meeting serves as the formal day to day news 'control' body inside PANA reflects the agency's 'loose' editorial structure as primarily a news pool.

Two issues kept on re-emerging throughout the meeting which lasted approximately one hour. First was the consensus among members that many of the stories sent by the national agencies

were reports of domestic events which did not have 'continental significance', and were of 'low professional standards'. It was believed that some of the national agencies, being the official news sources of their countries, wanted to use PANA for their own propaganda objectives. Proposed long term solutions to this problem were discussed in terms of granting more editorial power to PANA and continuous co-ordinated training of the staff of the national agencies. In the short term, however, editors were advised to continue using their professional judgement to make the best out of the stories that were available. Second, was the inability of the agency to generate as many news stories by its own staff as its management would like. It was agreed, after a vigorous discussion, that each of the journalists, including regional correspondents, write two feature articles in a month as the only way for the agency to create its own identity, distinct from the national agency stories which it receives and re-transmits.

One point that is common to these two issues seems to be the lack of satisfaction with PANA's own news output by the agency's editorial staff. With regard to news from the national agencies the dissatisfaction was with respect to quality, while with regard to the news generated by its own staff the dissatisfaction was quantitative, though some editors have privately complained about the quality of the news sent by some of the agency's correspondents as well. But both complaints are consistent with the views expressed in

interviews that there was consensus that the agency was not producing the type of stories PANA needed.

Because PANA's own originated news stories were not found to basically differ from those contributed by the national agencies in terms of news focus (see chapter six), the type of news wanted by PANA is not likely to differ much from that of its member-national agencies.

### 5.13 Language of Transmission:

At present, PANA receives and transmits stories in only two Western languages - English and French. Although it is also scheduled to operate in Arabic, the Arabic desk was yet to take off due to what was described as financial problems. As argued by Ansah (1986), the fact that PANA receives and transmits in only English and French is by itself a limitation for many national agencies which want to use the agency's materials but have no adequate translation facilities. Equally, the inability of PANA to translate all the news stories it receives into its two languages of transmission is another shortcoming with respect to promoting 'full' interaction and solidarity between French and English speaking countries. Thus, the information barrier between the two sets of countries, originating from different colonial experiences, is not in this respect being 'bridged' by PANA.

#### 5.14 Financial Position:

163

Since its take-off, PANA has been engulfed in financial crisis. PANA's main source of revenue was to be the financial contribution of member-states which was fixed according to an OAU formula based on a country's financial strength and ability to pay. PANA had spent over \$16.47 million from the period of its initial take-off in 1979 to the end of 1989 financial year, of which about \$5.59 million was spent between 1979-1985 and over \$10.8 million between 1986-1989. This increase in expenditure between 1986-1989, by almost 200%, reflects both the high cost of expansion in editorial services and of running an inter-national news agency.

Interviews have revealed that some countries such as Gambia have never paid even one single dollar to PANA as at the time of the research visit to Senegal (December 1990), i.e eleven years after the agency had begun operations. By now, it is still unlikely that such countries would have paid anything since 1991 because of the more severe hardship faced by them during the global economic recession. The seriousness of PANA's financial situation is perhaps exemplified by the broadcast made on Radio Tanzania on December 17, 1991 in which its information Director was reported as saying that only five countries (out of 52) have paid in full their contributions to the agency as at that period. This meant that the total arrears owed to PANA by its clients exceeds \$15 million.

Indeed, the African agency has almost always operated at half or even less than half of its projected annual budgetary

requirement. In 1990 for instance, out of the \$3.5 million budgeted for the agency, only \$1.5 million was collected due to non payment by members. Even oil rich countries like, Algeria, Libya and Gabon did not pay any contribution during the year. The case of Libya is particularly interesting because despite its oil rich resources, it owed PANA three years contribution amounting to \$1 million. In fact, even Nigeria which pays the highest contribution to PANA, an average of \$600,000 annually, and which has always shown keen interest in its continuity, sometimes delays its payments to the organisation.

The non fulfilment of financial obligations to the continental news agency itself suggests either a lack of commitment and confidence towards it on the part of most African countries or perhaps, and more importantly, too, a general apathy towards news and information or even both. It may be argued that news agency customers are often reluctant to pay for the services they receive, and that the threat to cut off the service (in this case PANA) is not sufficiently threatening. There is also the possibility that such non-payments are bound to happen in an organisation of 50 different countries like PANA. Even the United Nations Organization also faces similar problem of non-payment of contributions involving economically powerful members like the United States (monitored from BBC Broadcast in De Quellar's farewell speech at UN, in 1991).

That some of the countries that were up to date in the payment

of their contributions were not among the richest in the continent - for example Senegal, Rwanda and Congo - adds to the point that non-payment was not necessarily related to a country's level of wealth. Table 5.4 shows the amount owed PANA by member-countries in US dollars as at 1988.

**Table 5.4 Amount owed PANA by Member-Countries:**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Indebtedness to PANA*</u>	<u>1989 GNP*</u>
Algeria	218,246.00	53.1
Libya	1,757,439.72	n.a
Tunisia	611,120.32	10.1
Egypt	676,234.00	32.5
Mauritania	203,917.07	1.0
Gambia	132,678.64	0.2
Guinea-Bissau	203,408.09	1.0
Guinea	95,886.09	2.4
Liberia	405,447.37	n.a
Sierra Leone	298,379.02	0.8
Ghana	559,928.68	5.5
Burkina Fasso	62,592.00	2.7
Niger	126,700.70	2.2
Mali	121,264.04	2.1
Cape Verde	586,624.27	0.3
Togo	94,963.02	1.4
Benin	78,081.63	1.8
Gabon	1,013,422.33	3.1
Cameroon	116,615.02	11.7
Chad	114,301.32	1.0
C. A. R.	142,362.18	1.1
Congo	56,805.33	2.0
Swaziland	438,046.01	0.7
Malawi	76,117.74	1.5
Botswana	296,990.11	n.a
Mozambique	121,899.00	1.2
Zaire	154,066.02	8.8
Burundi	104,237.00	1.1
Sao Tome	227,967.04	0.0
Sudan	694,475.23	n.a
Ethiopia	115,680.04	6.0
Uganda	238,522.01	4.3
Kenya	151,076.83	8.8
Tanzania	339,271.32	3.1
Djibouti	88,759.83	n.a
Somalia	103,576.06	1.0
Seychelles	176,137.21	0.3
Zambia	320,486.95	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,323,725.24</b>	

\* The amount owed PANA is in US dollars while the GNP is in US billion dollars.

Because of the further worsening of PANA's financial position since especially 1988 (see The Guardian of London of February 8, 1992; Nigerian Daily Times of May 6, 1992), perhaps it is right to hypothesise that the agency would not have survived

to date if not for the politics surrounding its establishment and the financial assistance it gets from Unesco and other donor international organisations. Indeed, PANA has no doubt benefitted considerably from many external sources of financial support. In particular, its initial establishment was made possible with a grant made available by three donors (Boyd-Barrett: 1990). These consist of a \$2 million grant from the Arab-Gulf fund for development (LAGFUND) which was made available through Unesco. It was with this grant that PANA built its headquarters at Dakar. The remaining two initial sources of funds were IPDC's \$100,000 grant and aid given by the West German government.

Years after its take off, PANA acknowledged having received financial assistance from Unesco's IPDC in June 1988 which enabled it to, among other things, organise a seminar in Brazzaville (Congo) for Directors of its member national agencies. The same IPDC also assisted PANA with \$3 million aid to establish its own independent satellite transmission network. Again, by courtesy of the Director-General of Inter-Press Service (IPS), Dr Roberto Savio, who helped lobby the European Economic Community (EEC) for assistance, PANA was able to get \$1.6 million aid for its computerization project both at Dakar and the agency's five regional offices.

Other international organisations which have assisted PANA financially and in other ways since its take-off include the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA), Canadian

International Development Research Centre (CIDRC), United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), UNICEF and the former West German government's WANAD programme.

Because of the huge arrears of dues which African countries owe PANA, which according to its Director-General amounted to \$15,604,994 as at December 1990, it is possible that foreign international organisations have contributed to the agency's sustenance more than even the African countries themselves. This is likely given that more than half the media assistance from Europe was directed to Africa, with a large part of it being in the form of capital aid to news agencies (Wedell: 1986).

Indeed, the problems posed by this lack of financial viability of PANA are enormous especially in relation to the agency's efficiency in news gathering and transmission.

#### 5.15 Telecommunications network:

According to PANA's technical services Director, the most serious issues confronting the agency revolve around the poor telecommunications network between African countries, high tariff rates and poor transmission equipment. Despite decades of independence, the structure of telecommunications in Africa is still such that it is difficult to contact neighbouring Mauritania from Senegal through telex lines, though the difference is less than 300 kilometres by road. Similarly, to

contact Zaire from Senegal by telex, the lines have to be linked up through Belgium. This poor infrastructure of telecommunications in Africa led PANA's editor-in-chief to reiterate the point that "Africa is not yet decolonised".

Presently, PANA uses three modes of transmission between the headquarters in Dakar; its five regional offices located in Lusaka, Lagos, Tripoli, Kinshasa and Khartoum; and the various national agencies. These are as follows:

(i) Specialised lines hired from postal and telecommunications departments. An example of this is the one that permanently links Lagos and Dakar. It makes possible a reliable and permanent contact between the two centres. This line became operational in January 1988 and is rented at a tariff of \$52,000 per year. This is the most reliable of all the three types.

(ii) High frequency radio transmission. A high frequency telegraphic transmitter is being used to transmit stories to news agencies in some parts of West Africa (except Lagos); Central and East Africa. The transmitter was rented from the Senegalese Telecommunications Authority (SONATEL). Materials transmitted via radio transmission are susceptible to interferences which weaken the signal, resulting in low quality reception at certain times of the day.

(iii) Leased telex transmission. Some member-agencies receive PANA's cast through leased telex lines.

Countries under this category are Sudan, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Cameroon, all countries in West Africa except Nigeria (Lagos), and all countries of East Africa except Kenya and Uganda.

One related problem hindering effective exchange of information between PANA and its member-agencies is the high cost of telecommunication charges. Though the exact cost varies from one country to another, only three countries - Nigeria, Senegal and Zambia - have reduced their tariff to PANA by 50% as requested by the agency. This example again re-affirms the suggestion made earlier that payment of annual financial contributions and other modes of assistance to the agency is not necessarily related to the financial well being of member countries, as evident from the few that have paid or have not paid in full their telecommunications tariff to it.

Contrary to expectations, the computerisation of PANA's news room has not made communication links with most national agencies easier. With the IPS assisted computerisation of the agency's editorial services in June 1990, PANA's modern telex printers transmit information at the speed of 50 bawds per second. This technology puts it far ahead of most national agencies, resulting in many being unable to take advantage of the agency's direct transmission of news and features because of differences in the level of sophistication of equipment.

General communication problems led the Director-General to

contact Unesco and IPDC in August 1988 to explore the possibilities of securing funds for providing the agency with its own reliable telecommunications network. This effort led to the signing in May 1989 in Moscow of a memorandum on the setting up of an intersputnik telecommunications network system that would exclusively meet PANA's requirements. The Intersputnik system leases three Soviet satellites and runs fourteen earth stations in thirteen countries worldwide (Mowlana and Wilson: 1988). Intersputnik members include the old Soviet Union, Cuba, Yemen and some European member-states of the COMECON. This project between PANA and the Intersputnik System was to be part of the latter's planned expansion to Africa.

Because of the "reform" process taking place inside the old Soviet Union, the project could not take-off immediately. But as late as June 1991, PANA's information Director has confirmed to the researcher during a follow-up interview in London that his agency had been informed that the intersputnik project was to begin within a short period. But that was before the complete disintegration of the Soviet Union in December 1991 and it is only logical to expect further delay or perhaps even total cancellation of the project.

According to the earlier arrangement for the project, the Soviet Union was to pay part of the project cost while Unesco was to settle the difference. It was also the Soviet firm for external trade, Techno-Export, which was to conceive and

design the project for PANA.

In Africa, the Pan African Telecommunications Network (PANAFTEL) and the Pan African Telecommunications Union (PATU) are the major organizations responsible for developing satellite and telecommunications technology in the continent. They are also charged with promoting cooperation between telecommunications organizations in Africa and other countries. Though INTELSAT operates in many African countries including Nigeria since 1974 (when Algeria first joined the organization), PANAFTEL did not seem to have made progress in developing 'indigenous' telecommunications system.

#### 5.16 Ownership/Political Control:

The highest PANA policy making body is The Conference of African Information Ministers (CAIM) which meets every two years in a general session to assess and review the agency's performance and policy. At this Conference, a 14-Member Council, the Inter-Governmental Council (IGC), is elected to serve as PANA's governing body for two years, before the next CAIM meeting. The criteria for the allocation of elective seats for the IGC is defined by the OAU on a combined geographical and populations basis. West Africa, the most populated among African sub-regions, is allocated four out of the 14 seats. East and Central Africa are each given three seats, and North and Southern Africa two seats each. Senegal, the country hosting PANA, and the countries of the five

regional pool headquarters, are ex-officio members of the IGC having no voting rights. Through these bodies, policies are made for PANA and control of the agency ensured by the African countries. Other forms of control, though not independent of the former two, are structural and self imposed.

Structurally, Article 8 of the Convention establishing PANA places a further restriction, requiring that permission be sought before reporting "domestic" events within member countries. Though some domestic events may have 'continental significance' or bearing, their definition as 'continental' or 'national' is subject to the interpretation of the country in which the event is to take place. This makes PANA incapable of directly reporting events in other countries without their consent.

Even when newsworthy continental activities take place within its reach, PANA does not feel free to independently report such activities due to fear of offending a member country, which may stop its financial contribution or withdraw its moral and political support from the agency. For example, in late 1989 PANA reported a border crisis that occurred between its host country, Senegal, and neighbouring Mauritania. Immediately after the news report, one of the leading national dailies in Senegal accused the agency of being pro-Mauritania and even questioned PANA's mandate to directly report on the crisis without receiving a news report about it from the Senegalese national news agency. Indeed, the matter was

sufficiently serious for the country's information minister to go to PANA's office to lodge an official complaint to its executives about what the government considered to be an 'interference' in the country's domestic affairs.

These direct and indirect measures serve to control PANA and ensure that it conforms to the wishes of its political masters. In fact since its launching, PANA had been warned by NANAP's vice-president that some Articles in the agency's Convention may hinder smooth editorial operations and independence from political interference.

#### 5.17 Recruitment and Training:

PANA has three categories of editorial staff in its service. The first category are the 'permanent' staff. These are recruited from the various Member-countries of the agency on a quota-basis. Staff in this category are appointed under a contract agreement for at least five years. At the time of this fieldwork, over one-third of PANA's staff were of this category.

The second category is that of temporary staff. These are also appointed on quota basis from the agency's member-nations. Staff in this category are appointed under a shorter period contract, usually two years. Only a few staff (three) were in this category during the fieldwork in December 1990.

In the third category are staff on rotation. This comprises staff sent to PANA's newsroom in Dakar from the national news agencies for a few months duration, usually between one to four months. In 1988, 12 journalists from SONNA, AMP, ANG, etc worked in PANA's newsroom under this programme. This number was reduced by half in 1989 due to financial problems. Participating agencies in 1989 included NAN, ZIANNA, SAP, JANA, AIP and ENA. There was no journalist under this category during the researcher's visit to Dakar in December 1990.

Whereas only journalists from the various national agencies of Africa are appointed by PANA in the second and third categories, those from other media organisations (like radio or television) may be appointed under the first category.

PANA organises various forms of training for its journalists in the form of in-house workshops and seminars. Journalists from the national news agencies of Africa are also invited to these training programmes. PANA thinks their participation would assist them to widen their scope of news coverage and news contribution to the continental agency (PANA). It also thinks the training would help improve the skills of the journalists in accordance with PANA's own special needs. Most of the PANA training programmes are jointly organised with international organisations, who provide the financial assistance. The 1989 PANA-UNICEF workshop on 'Child Survival, Protection and Development in Africa' is an example of such

training programmes.

### 5.18 Internal 'Informal' Politics in PANA:

One factor that could easily be observed in PANA's newsroom is the difference in the colonial upbringing of staff from the two main sets of countries that established the agency - namely the anglophone and francophone countries. The basic difference between the two seems to have emanated from the political background and outlook of journalists from the two sets of countries.

A more vivid example of this factor was an incident which took place in the presence of the researcher during the fieldwork. It happened on a Sunday, a day in which there was relatively light work for staff on duty. Being a half day in which there was only one duty shift, it so happened, perhaps coincidentally, that three of the staff on duty were from English speaking countries while the rest (four persons) were from French speaking ones. One of the English speaking journalists was at that moment editing a story on West African economic and monetary integration. Though this is a highly controversial issue (even in Britain for example there is controversy over European Monetary Union), the editor (name withheld) working on the story started expressing his opinion about it to his colleagues. His view was that it was time for Africans to find internal solutions to their problems through joint efforts like a single monetary union and possibly a

central government for all African states.

Soon after these remarks were made, the news room entered into a general free-for-all discussion on the subject. As a result, the news room became divided into two camps, seemingly reflecting colonial upbringing - French and English. The journalist who started the discussion, together with others from English speaking nations, had a more positive and radical view about the idea of African cooperation, perhaps reflecting the more radical and anti-imperialist thinking with which the anglophone countries are generally associated.

On the contrary, those on the other side of the argument, who were from the francophone countries, argued that the question of integration was only going to provide an opportunity for countries like Nigeria to dominate African regional or continental affairs. One Senegalese even argued that although the idea of regional integration was good in itself, yet he did not believe it would work because of fear of domination of weaker states by the bigger ones and the lack of a will to compromise by African leaders, most especially when it touches on their position. The example of the 1988 Sene-Gambian confederation was cited by the Senegalese journalist. The Confederation between Senegal and Gambia failed shortly after the agreement was signed because each of the two leaders could not allow the other to become president.

At this point the discussion changed track from the wider

issue of regional integration to the specific case of PANA and other similar continental organisations. This time the francophone journalists in the news room pointed out that most member states that participate in the establishment of continental agencies like PANA are more concerned with getting influential positions inside such organisations and employment for their citizens rather than having sincere interest in the activities of such organisations.

Generally, differences between anglophone and francophone Africans could be traced to the colonial policies and orientation of both Britain and France. According to Mazrui (1992), whereas the French policy of assimilation (in West Africa)<sup>4</sup> aimed to encourage use of French in language and culture, the English were less keen to spread their language, and by extension their culture. Despite differences in matters of detail, and in the assumptions behind them, Post (1968) believes both policies, i.e the British policy of indirect rule and of assimilation by France, had basic features in common. Perhaps the most basic of these features, similar to colonial rule everywhere, is the domination of a majority by a minority in various respects, which colonialism itself symbolized.

In contrast with the French, the British colonial policy of indirect rule in West Africa never attempted, nor did it aim,

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<sup>4</sup> The French policy in West Africa was different from that in Algeria or Indo-China where France had a huge settled population.

to give any impression of equality between the British and the 'natives'. Coleman (1958) even noted that the British were sometimes disturbed by attempts to indiscriminately teach "natives" (colonised or local non-British) the English language purposely in order to "keep Africans African" and the English people supreme.

Under the two different colonial and neo-colonial policy orientations, therefore, procedural or 'tactical' disagreements were bound to occur or continue between English and French speaking citizens or countries. Though this problem could pose a threat to African unity and integration, it does not necessarily imply a neat division between the two sets of countries on all issues and at all times.

#### 5.19 Conclusion:

In this chapter, an overall picture of the organization and of problems confronting PANA, and by implication its news product, were discussed. Some of the problems, which include lack of good telecommunications infrastructure (which is necessary for the survival of the agency), staff inadequacy, lack of editorial power, etc seem serious. In concrete terms, they revolve around political, structural and financial issues. Others, for example differences in the the cultural background of staff of different member-states, take root in the colonial history of the various countries which own PANA, particularly the former French and English colonies.

Indeed, the most serious setback for PANA is its inability to get the money it needs for capital investment and the daily running cost due to non-payment of contributions by most member-states. By relying on various kinds of assistance from EEC, Unesco and other non-African organisations, it is highly difficult (if not impossible) for the agency to chart an independent journalistic path for both itself and Africa. This is even more evident in the 1992 'rescue plan' designed for PANA by Unesco, which is supposed to put the agency on an independent path.

Equally too, PANA also faces the problem of organisational direction, which Basil Davidson (1974) believed was the main problem facing Africa. Like the continent itself, PANA's crisis is structural and systemic, which makes it hardly capable of remedying the information inadequacies and inequality both within and beyond the continent. All these make PANA insufficiently prepared to lay a solid foundation for the provision of 'alternative news' in Africa. In order to find other additional evidence on whether or not PANA has provided a new approach to news reporting and journalism in Africa, the next chapter (chapter six) looks at its news geography, through a content and qualitative analyses of the agency's newscasts.

## Chapter Six

### PANA Newscast: Content analysis

#### 6.1 Introduction:

This chapter analyses the content of PANA news stories. According to PANA's objectives, the agency is to provide, among other things, "information .... (that may) assist in the liberation struggle of peoples against colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism ..... and all other forms of exploitation and oppression". Broadly, PANA's objectives are similar to those of IPS. The IPS is claimed to be a highly successful agency in organizational terms and in initiating its own 'alternative' news perspectives. It generates 80% of its news through its own correspondents and stringers, yet does not compete with the major agencies in the coverage of spot news. Rather, its news bulletin comprises a "daily news feature service, focusing on such themes as the needs of people in developing countries and efforts to satisfy them". IPS was also found to aim at covering "actors who normally are not considered newsworthy, including rural workers, women, church and labour organizations" (Giffard: 1983).

On the contrary, studies on the news composition of the major Western agencies and news media, and others established on their model, have shown that they generally focus more of their attention on key government institutions, important administrative and commercial capitals, formal political

figures, events involving drama, etc. Some of these studies were by Golding and Elliott (1979), Desmond (1980), Boyd-Barrett (1980), Harris (1981, 1985), Robinson (1981), Stevenson (1988), Meyer (1988) and Musa (1989).

This chapter therefore assesses whether PANA is providing 'alternative' news stories, whose focus differs from that of the conventional agencies in terms of its news geography. All stories in PANA bulletins, whether directly generated by it or by any of its sources, are defined as PANA's since they must have passed through the agency's gatekeepers, and therefore accepted as newsworthy by its editors. Explanations are advanced as to why some agencies contribute more stories to PANA than others.

## 6.2 Origin of Stories:

A large percentage of the stories examined were reported by national news agencies which contribute stories to PANA. These types of stories amounted to as much as 85% of the total stories. PANA's own correspondents were the source of 13% of the stories while the Non-Aligned News Agency pool (NANAP) was responsible for the remaining 2% of the stories. This low percentage of NANAP stories perhaps suggests very low penetration by NANAP in Africa despite the membership of African news agencies to the Non-Aligned Pool. No single story originated directly from any of the major Western wire services in all the 750 stories that were examined. This

suggests that the chances of any story emanating from Western news agencies being included in PANA bulletins is highly negligible, particularly as the agency does not receive or have exchange agreement with any of the major Western wire agencies.

Part of the explanation for not receiving the Western news services may include cost factor, or the perception that their services are not wanted by PANA, since its goal is to provide news stories whose focus is different from those of the Western agencies. But perhaps it could still be argued that PANA needs to receive the African service of the major agencies in order to be up to date on their pattern of reporting the continent, and provide a better alternative to it.

As a news exchange pool for national news agencies in Africa, PANA can be said to have achieved a high degree of success since it relies heavily on its member-agencies for most of its stories, and much less on its own staff correspondents and Non-Aligned news agency.

However even among the national news agencies, the output is very uneven. The News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) contributes up to 21% of PANA's output, a figure far higher than the 13% contributed by the Egyptian national agency (MENA), which is the second major contributor of stories. Others, like Lesotho's ENA, have contributed less than 1% of stories in the

sample. Thirteen other national agencies have not contributed even a single story out of the entire 750 that were sampled. These agencies are Burundi's ABP-BUR, AMP of Mauritania, Gambia's GINS, Chad's ATP, CABO PRESSE of Cape Verde, Sudan's SUNA, Madagascar's ANTA, SAP of Seychelles, ACAP of Central African Republic, Djibouti's ADJI, SONNA of Somali and ABP-GUI of Guinea.

One point common to all these latter agencies is that they represent countries whose mass media are poorly developed. One reason which may account for the high contribution of agencies like NAN and MENA in terms of the overall number of stories and in each of the weeks selected may be that there were two important events in which both countries were important actors that happened during the period. These events were the Liberian civil war in which Nigeria played a central role in mobilizing a West African regional peace keeping force (ECOMOG) to ensure a cease-fire and peace in the war torn country. Similarly, the co-operation which Egypt gave United States and its allies in the Gulf war, by contributing the second largest number of ground troops, made the country an important centre of visits and diplomatic activity by senior officials of influential Western countries during the crisis period, hence a centre of attention for the media. Most of the stories about Egypt in the sample were directly or indirectly related to the Gulf crisis.

Contrary to the assumption that the countries with a higher

level of economic development would tend to dominate the continental agency, political prominence or role in regional or international politics tended to be more important determinant of whether a country was reported in PANA stories. Taking gross domestic product (GDP) and gross national product (GNP) per capita as indicators of the level of economic development of any country, while acknowledging that economic growth is not commensurate with human progress, a comparison can be made between countries with higher and lower GDP and their news contribution to PANA. For example whereas the 1987 GDP and per capita income in Nigeria were \$12.4 billion and \$370 and for Egypt \$34.5 billion and \$680, Libya's GDP for the same period was \$15 billion and a per capita income of \$5,460 per person. Yet Libya's national agency, JANA, contributed the lowest percentage of stories among national agencies from the three countries - 2% against NAN's 21% and MENA's 13%. This findings compare with that of a survey of foreign news editors by Chang and Lee (1992), in which they concluded that "a country's economic progress....(was) simply irrelevant to whether a story (about it) was covered".

Similarly, MENA, whose country of origin has a higher GDP than Nigeria, was found to have contributed a lesser percentage of news stories than NAN. In the same manner, the Zimbabwean national agency, ZIANA, whose country has a GDP of \$5.2 billion, was among the top four contributors of PANA with its 6% contribution - amounting to three times that of JANA.

Apart from the element of political prominence (giving importance to politics-related stories), which Robert Stevenson believes dominates news internationally, the growth of Nigerian media, relative to the media in other African countries, may be another possible explanation why the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN) was active in contributing stories to PANA more than other agencies. In the same light, generally weak and inactive media (including news agencies) in most other African countries, many of whom (particularly those colonized by France) still only possess one radio and one newspaper organization, account for the inability to actively contribute stories to the African agency.

Apart from the national agencies, PANA's own reporters were themselves the source of 13% of the sampled news stories. Whereas this figure may signify the numerical inadequacy of reporters, it can also be argued that PANA has, above all, acted and served as a news exchange pool for its members, which is one of its main policy objectives.

While other international agencies were able to operate offices in most news centres around the world, PANA could only count on the goodwill of its host countries for the running of its one-man regional pool offices located in Lagos, Lusaka, Tripoli, Khartoum and Kinshasa. Though PANA only occasionally covers events which have relevance to Africa outside the continent, editorial independence requires that the agency maintains its own reliable news network. But being dependent

on the goodwill of its host governments means that PANA cannot always operate independently and confidently in the same way as other major 'alternative' agencies like IPS.

The restriction placed on PANA by Article 5 of the agency's Convention, which stipulates that PANA can only send its correspondents to gather reports relating to events 'on Africa or events favouring sub-regional integration', also has an impact on the type (and consequently the number) of stories the agency can report. The implication of this is that unlike the IPS or other major agencies which directly write and send reports about activities in individual countries, PANA's correspondents are only empowered to report on continental matters or issues involving at least two or more African countries. This constraint, coupled with others (such as manpower and funds) mean that the agency directly generates only 13% of the news stories it transmitted (in the sample), much less than it would have wished, according to its information Director in an interview with the researcher.

Another additional, albeit obvious, reason responsible for the low generation of stories by PANA, apart from inadequate staffing and finance, is the lack of good communication links between some regional bureaux and the headquarters in Dakar. Because of the necessity for an effective communication network between field correspondents and the main news room in any news agency work, PANA headquarters, which has poor communication links with most of its bureaux, is unable to

receive many stories on time from its regional offices. Examples in this case are the regional offices in Tripoli (North Africa) and Kinshasa (central Africa) both of which do not have a good telecommunication link with Dakar.

Indeed, out of the five regional offices operated by PANA only the ones in Lagos (for West Africa) and Zambia (for Southern Africa) can be said to be the most functional in terms of good telecommunication links with Dakar. A specialized line has been in operation between Dakar and Lagos since 1988. Perhaps the availability of this facility, among other reasons, explains why the West African regional office in Lagos was able to send to Dakar up to 57% of the total stories originated by PANA itself. This percentage is higher than that of the stories contributed by any of the agency's (PANA's) remaining regional offices. Table 6.1 summarises this point:

**Table 6.1 Source of PANA Stories:** (Sampled between September-December 1990)

<u>Source (Agency)</u>	<u>Number of Stories</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
PANA Rep./Coresp.	95	13
PANA/NANAP	14	2
PANA/Western agencies	-	0
APS BEN (Benin)	3	0
AIC (Congo)	11	1
AGP - GAB (Gabon)	9	1
AIB (Burkina-Faso)	5	1
AIM (Mozambique)	25	3
AIP (Cote D' Ivoire)	2	0
AMAP (Mali)	2	0
ANG (Guinea-Biss)	2	0
ANGOP (Angola)	50	7
ANP (Niger)	14	2
APS-ALG (Algeria)	1	0
APS-SEN (Senegal)	11	1
ATOP (Togo)	7	1
Azap (Zaire)	12	2
BOPA (Botswana)	2	0
CAMNEWS (Cameroon)	6	1
ENA (Ethiopia)	1	0
GNA (Ghana)	37	5
JANA (Libya)	13	2
KNA (Kenya)	22	3
LENA (Lesotho)	2	0
MANA (Malawi)	3	0
MENA (Egypt)	98	13
NAN (Nigeria)	155	21
SHIHATA (Tanzania)	16	2
SLENA (Sierra Leone)	2	0
SNA (Swaziland)	1	0
TAP (Tunisia)	22	3
UNA (Uganda)	20	3
ZANA (Zambia)	39	5
ZIANA (Zimbabwe)	47	6
ABP-BUR, ACAP, SAP, ARP, ADJI, SONNA, ABP-GUI, SUNA, ATP, GINS, ANTA, CABO PRESSE, CAP VERT, AMP.	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>100</b>

**6.3 Distribution of stories by World Region:**

As expected, African affairs and issues dominated in 90% of the stories in the sample. United States and Canada occupied

4%, Western Europe 3% and the remaining 2% was on all the remaining Third World countries of Asia and the Middle-East including the countries of South-East Asia. Not even one single news story reported anything about Eastern Europe. Table 6.2 highlights this point:

**Table 6.2 PANA's World Regional Coverage:**

Region	Number of stories	Percentage
Africa	673	90
W. Europe	27	3
USA/Canada	37	4
USSR/E. Europe	0	0
Others	13	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>100</b>

The dominance of Africa over other world regions can be explained in terms of the structure, purpose and scope of the agency, which is first and foremost Pan-African, whose stories mainly consist of the domestic news stories of African national agencies. Similarly, the slight edge in reporting events from USA and Canada, a little bit higher than those of Western Europe, may be connected to the location of the United Nations headquarters in New York (US) and the constant reporting of its meetings and deliberations during the Gulf crisis. Added to this is perhaps the increasing dominance of the United States in international affairs since the ascendancy of George Bush as president. This last assertion is evident in the American invasion of Panama and its overthrow and the taking of its President to America in

December 1989; its role in the Gulf crisis, and the "reform" taking place inside the Soviet Union.

Despite the massive world coverage which Eastern Europe attracted because of the breaking up of the Soviet Union, its absence in the reporting of PANA reflects a lack of PANA's presence or of its correspondent agencies in the region. It also indicates a growing decline of the region in global politics, due to the decline of socialist regimes in most countries of the region by the time the sample for this study was collected. One major reason for this decline is the domestic economic crisis facing the region.

The lack of reporting of the socialist region is also indicative of the comparatively higher level of contact between Africa and Western European countries than with the Eastern ones. Most African journalists are still influenced by their past colonial attachments through training and socialization, mainly Western, and are thus likely to show less interest in the former socialist bloc.

The low percentage (3%) of stories about Western Europe in the sample reflects the fact that PANA member-agencies send to the PANA newsroom only the stories they consider relevant to other African countries. Thus, the figure may not represent the entire coverage of Western Europe by all the African national agencies.

The totality of remaining developing countries outside Africa, including the 'NICs' of South-East Asia and the Middle-East, were represented in only 2% of the stories in the sample. Here two factors seem to be at work. One, it is the consequence of colonial orientation, through which all African and Third World countries have passed, which created division and apathy towards the potential for developing positive relationships among the developing countries. In Africa even today, after decades of independence for most countries, the infrastructure for communication between countries sharing common borders but with different colonial histories is still very rudimentary (Rodney: 1981).

The policy adopted by the colonial powers in building communication facilities in the colonies in line with their metropolitan interests, as noticed by Hachten (1971) and Harris (1981), did not nor was it meant to promote communication between the former colonies. Hence, the consequence of this policy may still be partially responsible for creating a near lack of interest in reporting other Third World countries outside PANA's primary zone of influence since most of its story originators, the national agencies, are less likely to report about those regions than about their former colonial powers. This is evident in Agbaje and Musa's observation at NAN where they noticed that even with regard to using the wire services available to it, NAN's foreign news editors were more likely to use Western sources than TASS or Xinhua (Musa: 1989, Agbaje: 1992).

Two, the possible cause of this trend is the lack of good communication links between not only African and other developing countries, but also within African nations themselves inspite of investment in telecommunication in recent years (Uche: 1990). These may have accentuated the low level of contact or interest by PANA and other African agencies in these vast range of developing and 'newly industrialising' countries.

#### 6.4 Distribution of Stories on Africa by Sub-region:

Unlike the sources of PANA news in which some national agencies were found to contribute more stories than others, the distribution of the agency's stories relating to the continent seemed to be relatively evenly distributed, particularly among the three top most reported sub-regions. For example out of 673 news stories that concerned Africa (from a total of 750), 38% were particularly about events and issues in West Africa - i.e more than  $\frac{1}{3}$ , of all the stories. North and Southern Africa were reported in 21% and 23% of the stories respectively while the remaining two sub-regions were comparatively under reported. However, both East and central Africa, with 10% and 7% of the news reports respectively, received a more or less equal number of news stories. Table 6.3 summarizes the points:

**Table 6.3 PANA's Coverage of African Sub-regions:**

Sub-region (Africa)	Number of stories	Percentage
West Africa	258	38
Southern Africa	157	23
North Africa	145	21
Central Africa	47	7
East Africa	66	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>673</b>	<b>100</b>

West Africa was reported more than the other sub-regions partially because of the active contribution of the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN), the relatively higher level of NAN's sophistication of equipment. Being the most populous among the sub-regions of Africa (with Nigeria alone having a population of 88 million people according to the recent 1992 census), it is not entirely surprising that West Africa was the most reported especially as several newsworthy activities were bound to take place there. But perhaps equally significant is that Nigeria, being the most politically influential or dominant country in black Africa, falls within this sub-region. Since NAN alone contributed slightly over one-fifth of PANA's entire output, it is not surprising that together with other active countries and their news agencies in the sub-region, such as Ghana and its agency, GNA, stories in the sample reported more issues in West Africa than the other continental sub-regions.

Added to all these, a number of events like the peace conference and initiatives vis-a-vis the Liberian civil war

and other professional meetings and seminars, such as the one by the African Medical Association; the Cancer Society; etc, have taken place in some countries of the sub-region particularly Nigeria and Ghana. Other examples of these news stories include the one on a meeting held between the executive secretary of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Ghana's Head of State, Jerry Rawlings, on achieving a cease-fire in Liberia, the visit to Nigeria by UNITA's rebel leader, Jonas Savimbi, and so on.

The Southern African sub-region has always been a melting pot of political activities because of the struggle engaged by liberation and freedom movements against South Africa's white minority apartheid regime. Apartheid's impact has always made the region a centre of attraction for African media. 'Progress' towards 'reform' such as the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990 and the abrogation of land and settlement acts, and other supposed reforms to the system, have sustained the attention of African media in the region.

The situation is also politically tense in Angola where, successive American administrations since 1975 have worked to destabilise the country. This was usually done through American support to Angola's rebel organisation, UNITA, due to the country's (Angola's) socialist inclinations and military co-operation with Cuba. In Mozambique, long sought peace was yet to be achieved, not least because of the support given to RENAMO rebel movement by some Western and South African

governments (Nilson: 1990).

Perhaps among the most important reasons behind the determined efforts of Western countries, especially the United States, to influence Southern African politics, and indeed international affairs, are what Luard (1988) called the short and long term motives of society (in this case Western or American society). These motives include survival, security, independence as well as the promotion of political values and ideology. This last motive is particularly important for extending influence by any nation seeking to dominate others. This explains why various strategies, including food are used to achieve foreign policy (which is a reflection of national interest) objectives.

In any case, the main point here is that it is the political scenario in Southern Africa that was likely responsible for the region's second position in news coverage among the other sub-regions.

North Africa, which is the third most reported sub-region, primarily because of Egypt's influence, was throughout the months from which the sample was drawn a centre of visits and diplomatic negotiations due to its proximity to the Middle-East during the Gulf crisis.

That nearly one-quarter of the stories on West Africa (7% out of 38%) were on the Liberian civil war and refugee crisis; 23%

on Southern Africa, regarded as the most 'hot' news centre in the continent; and 21% on North Africa, of which almost half was on Egypt's involvement in Gulf war diplomacy (11% out of 21%) indicate that PANA and its correspondent agencies were attracted to these 'negative' or crisis news spots. This is consistent with McQuail's (1977) findings in his study of British newspapers, which showed that half of their coverage (48%) was "negative". One different dimension though with respect to PANA's 'negative' news was that a number of stories were on the politics of the crises, such as reports on negotiations and plight of refugees, rather than directly about military and violent events.

Lastly, East and central Africa, the least reported regions by PANA, were at the time in question not engaged in any 'major' political role nor passing through extra-ordinary political transformation in their history, which probably explained why they received relatively less attention.

#### 6.5 Story Type and Location:

A large percentage of PANA stories were spot news stories - 94% of the overall sample. 'Spot' news stories are here defined as news stories which correspond to the criteria of novelty, timeliness, human interest, drama, etc, and which 'strictly' adhere to the '5-Ws' of news reporting. Spot news is distinct from feature or other specialized stories in that it aims to provide the latest news possible without including

editorial comments or personal opinions. Topics covered by this type of story may range from crime, politics or diplomacy, to a whole range of others.

In the spot news stories in the sample, 89% were reported by national agencies, 2% by NANAP and 9% by PANA staff. Even out of the entire news stories wholly reported by PANA's own staff reporters (95 stories in all), 69% were in the form of spot news stories. When compared with the national agencies, PANA seemed to have concentrated rather more on other types of stories such as features (97% of the national agencies stories were in spot news form and those by NANAP 100%).

In the entire sample, news origin notwithstanding, 94% of the stories were in spot news form. This suggests that most PANA news is composed of bits and pieces of information about given events, in contrast to indepth news reports in which occurrences are interpreted as part of a broader processes. Spot news stories prevail possibly because they are easier and quicker to report, and are often equated with professionalism in terms of adhering to the rules of 'objective' journalism.

This adherence to norms of 'objective journalism' may explain why both national agencies and PANA reporters concentrate more on spot than analytical news reporting. Such a conception cannot, however, prevent the news product from reflecting particular world views since even the professional values aspired to are not value free. Operational constraints, in

terms of time and research materials, manpower shortage and training, are also other possible reasons why PANA stories were more in spot than feature form. It requires training, sufficient editorial manpower and other research resources to produce a great deal of lengthy indepth feature stories, which neither PANA nor most of its member-agencies are capable of providing.

Like the major agencies, PANA does provide brief background information in some of its stories (side bars). As in the example that follows, such news is, however, merely informative and not analytical.

The following is an example of the type of story represented by PANA stories (94%), and it indicates how even spot stories are neither 'neutral' nor 'objective'.

LUANDA, NOV. 23 - (ANGOP/PANA) - THE ANGOLAN ARMED FORCES "FAPLA" KILLED 23 UNITA ELEMENTS AND CAPTURED ONE BETWEEN 19 AND 20 NOVEMBER DURING CLASHES IN THE CENTRAL PROVINCES OF BENGUELA AND HUAMBO.

A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE FAPLA GENERAL STAFF HEADQUARTERS IN LUANDA THURSDAY SAID THAT FAPLA ALSO SEIZED ASSORTMENT OF WAR MATERIALS.

HOWEVER, UNITA KILLED ON 20 NOVEMBER ELEVEN CIVILIANS AND DESTROYED TWO VEHICLES DURING AN ATTACK ON A SUPPLY CONVOY IN THE MUNICIPALITY OF CAMACUPA, BIE PROVINCE, THE COMMUNIQUE ADDED.

In the foregoing story which originated from the Angolan news agency and was re-transmitted by PANA (i.e considered passable by both agencies), implicit opinions can still be discerned. Though PANA only attempted to satisfy the what, where, when and why criteria in the story, the delay in re-transmitting the story three days after the event occurred being just a possible pointer to inefficient communication links between Dakar and Luanda, yet it inherently conveys some assumptions which are similar to those of the Angolan state in the following ways:

First, there is the labelling of UNITA forces as 'elements', a concept which is derogatory and which defines them as deviants (whether rightly or wrongly), and therefore unwanted by society. The story also arguably evokes an idea of a commendation to be given to 'FAPLA' who seized weapons from UNITA and 'captured' one of their members 'during clashes' with them. UNITA members are also portrayed (rightly or wrongly) as merciless-destructive rebels who attacked a supply convoy, destroyed two vehicles and killed eleven civilians.

Though relying on 'competent source' (the FAPLA communique) and adhering to the rules of 'professional reporting' by writing most of their news in spot story form, both ANGOP and PANA have in this news story conveyed the views of the Angolan state on its relationship with UNITA.

Feature stories, defined as news stories which contained

detailed interpretation or analysis of their subject matter, constituted 4% of the sample while the "others", the remaining 2%, comprised stories which do not neatly fall in either of the former two story types. These were contained in specialized bulletins like science and health. Because not all feature stories are necessarily 'developmental' in scope, not all the 6% for the 'feature' and 'other' stories was 'development' news<sup>1</sup>. But even when these last two story types are combined because of their similarity with each other more than with the former, they still amount to only 6% of the entire sample, in spite of their importance. Table 6.4 summarises the point:

**Table 6.4 Type of PANA Stories:**

Type	Number of stories	Percentage
News Stories	703	94
Feature	29	4
Others	18	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>100</b>

In terms of location, the story datelines showed that up to 89% of the sample reported events which occurred in urban locations. Both PANA's own correspondents and those of the national agencies reported about events in urban centres, particularly national capitals. In the case of NANAP, its proportion of urban-rural stories is even higher in favour of urban centres (up to 97%). Indeed, even among agencies with

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<sup>1</sup> Some 'development' oriented news may also be found in the spot news stories

the highest number of stories from rural locations, only 6% of their stories emanated from rural areas. Only a negligible percentage were from rural areas or made reference to them. Table 6.5 shows the distribution of stories by location:

**Table 6.5 PANA News Location Centres:**

Location	Number of stories	Percentage
Urban	671	89
Rural	46	6
Both	33	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>100</b>

As is shown later, because most actors in the sample belong to the upper social class in society, with most of its members residing in urban areas, it is not surprising that most of the stories were urban centred. In fact, most of the stories from rural areas were on outbreak of hostilities between rebel forces (e.g in Mozambique or Angola), outbreak of diseases, or on refugees crossing into other countries through bush paths. In few other news stories, the rural areas were reported only when a government minister or top official went on a visit to preside over an important public function. The following two stories may serve as examples:

"ZIGUINCHOR (SENEGAL), 15 OCT (APS-SEN/PANA) - LAST WEEKEND'S BLOODY INCIDENTS AT THE TWO SENEGALESE VILLAGES OF CAMARACOUNDA AND BAGHAGA LOCATED NEAR THE BORDER WITH GUINEA BISSAU, HAS ONCE AGAIN RAISE THE SUSPICION OF THAT COUNTRY BEING USED AS A BASE BY CASAMANCE SECESSIONISTS SEEKING TO

PULL OUT OF SENEGAL....."

and

"SOLWEZI (ZAMBIA), 15 OCT. (ZANA/PANA) - A RANKING MEMBER OF A GANG WHICH HAS BEEN TERRORISING PEOPLE IN NORTH-WEST ZAMBIA FOR SEVEN YEARS HAS SURRENDERED TO ZAMBIAN POLICE..... GWODWE WAS PRESENTED TO ZAMBIAN PRESIDENT KENNETH KAUNDA IN SOLWEZI TUESDAY BY KAMOLONDO (NORTH-WEST PROVINCE MEMBER OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE), AMIDST SHOUTS OF SHAME, SHAME FROM ONLOOKERS. KAUNDA SHOOK HANDS WITH GONDWE.

KAMOLONDO ALSO SAID THAT HEAVY FIGHTING HAD ERUPTED BETWEEN UNITA BANDITS AND ANGOLAN GOVERNMENT TROOPS ALONG THE ZAMBIA/ANGOLA BORDER IN ZAMBEZI, FORCING MORE REFUGEES TO CROSS INTO ZAMBIA. THERE ARE MORE THAN 37,000 REFUGEES SETTLED AT MAHEBA CAMP IN SOLWEZI."

Both two stories invoke images of violence and do not connote positive information about the news locations. But the motive for using them here is that they originated from and focus on rural locations, though with clear reasons. In the case of the first, rural location was the centre of the reported event because it involved 'bloody incidents' caused by a border crisis, and in the second because of a President's (Kaunda) visit to the area where 'a member of a gang....terrorising people in north-west Zambia....has surrendered' to the police.

It is possible that rural areas were less reported because political, economic and other decisions affecting them tend to be taken in the urban centres. Considering that the vast

majority of Africans reside in rural areas, 70% in sub-Saharan Africa or 67% in all underdeveloped countries as at 1988 according to a 1990 UNDP Report, it then seems that PANA stories give only limited information about events and activities on the continent. This bias in favour of urban located events and locations has the attendant consequences of neglecting the majority of citizens who reside in rural areas as well as the rural areas themselves. Thus, a problem (the neglect of rural related issues) which Western agencies and media were accused of has still persisted and found its way into PANA stories as evident in the data.

There were also reports of events of a general nature (comprising 4%) on such events as elections, which could take place in both urban and rural locations.

#### 6.6 Main Story Topics:

An attempt was made to find out the main topics covered by PANA stories. In all, 24 topic categories were designed and coded but for easy analysis, these topics were discussed under 15 broad themes. Over one-third of the sample, or (42%) concentrated on reporting domestic (foreign) politics and diplomacy between countries. As shown in Table 6.6, 31% of the recorded stories was specifically on domestic political activities in the countries in which the reports originated, while 11% were on diplomatic relations between African and other countries, excluding Eastern Europe.

**Table 6.6 Main PANA Story Topics (%):**

<u>Main Topic</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Foreign Domestic Pol.	31%
Diplomacy	12%
Negative	6%
Aid	7%
Economic	16%
Sports	7%
Human Right	1%
Crime/Legal	3%
Culture/Religion	1%
Education	2%
Sci/Tech/Medical	2%
Environment	2%
Development Matters	4%
Others	6%
<b>N = 750</b>	<b>100%</b>

That a little less than one-third of PANA's output were about domestic political matters of the contributing countries, dispels assumptions that PANA's news would be primarily about domestic political accounts of African countries. Many of the domestic political news stories reported were about political changes, statements and reform in the countries being reported. Some of the reports may be indirectly relevant to other countries on the continent.

That politics, diplomacy, economic and sport news are among the top four reported topics in the analyzed PANA bulletin, implies broad similarities in terms of item or topic ranking with Robinson's (1981) study of the top four news categories reported by Tanjug and AP. One glaring exception between the PANA news and the AP and Tanjug's news, in Robinson's study, is the replacement of 'war' news with 'sports' news among PANA's top four topic or subject categories.

The data has also shown that only 1% of the sample reported anything on human rights. Many of the countries contributing stories to PANA such as Nigeria, Ghana (until recently) and Zambia are either under military rule or non-military presidential dictatorship. Zambia (when the sample was taken) was a good example of civilian dictatorship where not only were opposition parties banned, but the president (Kaunda) also manipulated and controlled the only political party to his advantage. The situation may have changed a little since the lifting of the ban on opposition parties and an electoral victory by the opposition party in 1991/92.

It is possible that as government official agencies, many national agencies, from which 85% of PANA output was derived, were constrained by their political environment from sending news stories to PANA on human right matters in their own countries. Incidentally, this is also one of the 'controversial' or 'no go' areas which it would be 'risky' for PANA's own journalists or reporters to report on. As a result, most of the few stories on human rights did not report beyond pronouncements of 'experts' or political figures as in the following example:

DAKAR, 15 OCT (PANA) - PRESIDENT JUVENAL HABYARIMANA OF RWANDA HAS EXTENDED AN INVITATION TO THE PARLIAMENTS OF "FRIENDLY COUNTRIES" TO SEND MISSIONS OF INQUIRY TO HIS COUNTRY SAYING THAT HIS GOVERNMENT HAD NOTHING TO HIDE ON HUMAN RIGHTS. THE RWANDESE HEAD OF STATE ANNOUNCED THAT THE 1,500 PEOPLE OUT

OF THE 3000 TEMPORARILY ARRESTED DURING THE "SAD EVENTS" HAD BEEN RELEASED, REJECTING ACCUSATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AGAINST HIS COUNTRY.

IN A STATEMENT SENT TO PANA TUESDAY, THE RWANDA INFORMATION DEPARTMENT INDICATED....."

Being a statement from Rwanda's information department, the story did not say much about the country's human rights record. For Rwanda's president to extend an invitation only to 'friendly countries' to conduct human rights investigations in the country itself suggests that the state was not willing to allow independent inquiry on the matter because the definitions of 'friendly countries' which could take part in the investigations and 'unfriendly' ones, which could not, lie in its hand. Hence even some of the few human rights stories do not amount to much.

It was noticed from the data that direct negative news in the form of reports of war, crisis, disasters and conflict occupied only 6% of the sample. Such stories were in some cases reported with care. An example of PANA's 'carefully' reported negative story was on the influx of Chadian refugees into Niger republic. It says:

NIAMY, 4 DEC. (ANP/PANA) - THE NIGER GOVERNMENT ON MONDAY IN NIAMY, APPEALED TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO ASSIST IN PROVIDING FOOD AND HEALTH FACILITIES TO CHADIAN REFUGEES NOW IN THE COUNTRY. IN THE STATEMENT MADE AVAILABLE TO THE NIGER

NEWS AGENCY (ANP), THE GOVERNMENT SAID THAT IN KEEPING WITH THE POLICY OF GOOD NEIGHBOURLINESS, NON-INTERFERENCE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES AND UNIVERSAL HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES, IT HAD BEGUN TO PROVIDE FOOD ESPECIALLY TO CHILDREN, WOMEN AND THE AGED AMONG THE REFUGEES. IT SAID NIGER WAS TRYING TO COPE WITH THE INCOMING REFUGEES IN THE WAKE OF RECENT EVENTS IN CHAD...."

If the editors of this news report had wanted, they could have focused on the additional problems the Chadian refugee influx into Niger was bound to cause for Niger taking into consideration Niger's poor economic condition. However, either for fear of causing tension between the two countries or for the interest of promoting African unity, or both, the news story rather angled on outside assistance to enable Niger face up to the problem. Such a report seems positive in promoting African solidarity.

However, not all PANA disaster stories were written as the former. Some, such as the following one, reports a violent incident and appears to put blame on the victims, which seems a 'normal' media reporting trend. Such a story does not provide an 'alternative' perspective to crisis news reporting:

"KINSHASA, 4 DEC (AZAP/PANA) - FOUR PEOPLE DIED IN KINSHASA MONDAY DURING RIOTS BY PEOPLE PROTESTING AGAINST HIGH CONSUMER PRICES, A STATEMENT FROM THE MAYOR'S OFFICE SAID.

THE STATEMENT READ ON RADIO ZAIRE AND TELEVISION DID NOT GIVE THE CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH THE DEATHS OCCURRED BUT ONLY SPOKE OF ACTS OF VANDALISM PERPETRATED BY UNCONTROLLED PEOPLE IN SEVERAL PARTS OF KINSHASA, ESPECIALLY IN BINZA, MATONGE, SELEMBAO, NDJILI AND MATETE.

RELATIVE CALM HAD RETURNED IN KINSHASA TUESDAY EVEN THOUGH POLICEMEN COULD BE SEEN EVERYWHERE IN THE CITY.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS ORDERED THE IMMEDIATE AND SYSTEMATIC CONTROL OF VITAL CONSUMER STOCKS, THE STRICT OBSERVANCE OF LEGAL FIXED PROFIT MARGINS....."

The above story reports the negative news in four parts. First, it suggests the 'death' of four people (as if naturally) at an 'illegal' riot as was made known from a 'competent' source. Second, there was the image of 'spontaneous' vandalism by 'immoral' people in several parts of the town. Third, police have returned 'order' to the chaotic situation and fourthly, government is acting to curb the 'excesses' of profit mongers whose actions were implied to have led to the riots. Thus, rather than focus primarily on the inflationary situation which led to the riot, the victims were presented as the cause of the violence - what Ryan (1971) called 'Blaming the Victim'.

What seems more generally significant about PANA's negative news is the low percentage of stories in this category possibly because of putting more emphasis on political and diplomatic news, which were assumed to be always news worthy.

That 'only' 6% of PANA news were directly negative, is perhaps the result of deliberate policy by the African agency, and even its member agencies, to down play direct report of negative news, which the 'developing' countries accused the major Western agencies of 'over reporting'. Thus, the politics of negative events, for example stories about settlement talks between warring factions in Liberia or Angola, rather than reporting 'progress' on the crises, attracted more coverage.

A number of stories totalling up to 7% of the sample were on aid. Out of this, only 1% was on famine relief, economic and educational aid to Africa by a few Asian countries - Japan and India. A small number of African countries like Nigeria and Zimbabwe were also reported to have provided famine relief aid to some poorer countries in the continent in the other 1% of the stories.

The highest number of stories on aid, the remaining 5%, originated mainly by the national agencies, reported about different types of aid including disaster relief, military training, economic and other forms of aid granted to some countries of Africa by United Nations agencies and some Western countries. No single story was about aid from either any of the Eastern European countries or even the Soviet Union itself.

Since aid is an important indicator of a dependence relationship between a donor and recipient, the finding supports what had been revealed by several studies about the dependence of African countries on the Western world much more than among themselves or on countries in other regions of the world (for example Ake: 1981, Harris: 1981). By the same token, the point that 11 stories or 1% was on aid from Asia, and none from Eastern Europe, suggests that aid was received from Asian countries at the time the sample was taken and none from Eastern Europe, possibly due to the economic crisis that engulfed the former socialist bloc in the last few years.

Economic matters, like aid, were not as widely reported in the sample as political. Only 16% were on economic matters - 8% of which was on domestic and 8% multinational. Capital investment, trade agreements, meetings and trade fairs between business groups of different countries were the main issues reported in the multinational economic stories while the domestic were on monetary exchange rates and supply, inflation/prices of products, import/export trade and industrial labour relations. In fact, industrial labour matters were reported in only 1% of the domestic stories.

Having in mind that one of the objectives for establishing PANA is to assist African regional and sub-regional organizations like ECOWAS by publicizing and disseminating news that promotes economic integration of the continent, the attention given to economic news is less than its importance

deserves. This is even more so considering that labour matters, crucial as they are to the economy, were neglected and reported in only 1% of the stories.

At a broad level, issues such as Education, Legal/Crime, Culture/Religion and Sports occupied 13% of stories in the sample. The last sub-category (sports) was found to form nearly half the stories (7%) in this sub-total. A few of the stories on sports were in feature forms discussing the future role of 'key' Cameroonian players in the 1990 World cup and their Soviet coach who resigned. Most others were on national, bi-national and sub-regional sporting competitions such as on the Challenge Cup in Zanzibar, competitions between Ethiopia and Tunisia, winning of Africa's winners' cup by BCC Lions of Nigeria, and Nigeria's withdrawal from West African Football Union.

Because sports is an activity enjoyed by many people including professionals, to which senior journalists also belong, sports has received much attention particularly in stories which originated from the national agencies. This also probably explains why all news agencies and media organizations allocate a separate desk to sports, with its own exclusive editors and reporters.

Education matters were covered in 2% of the sample. Many stories on this addressed the state of education in a number of African countries, and the decline in the number of African

students overseas due to foreign exchange difficulties.

Crime and legal matters occupied 3% of the 750 stories examined. Some of these stories were straight accounts of criminal cases of arrests, prosecutions and court verdicts on particular cases. Others, for example, were to do with cross-border crime, and a meeting of police chiefs of Southern Africa's front line states - i.e. Botswana, Namibia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Zambia - which took place in Lusaka.

Some of the crime/legal stories were political in scope, such as a Zambian high court temporary injunction to restore Zambia's deputy president to his membership of the country's political party, the United National Independent Party (UNIP).

Culture and religion constituted nearly 1% of the sample. Stories in this category comprise reports about archaeological discoveries, cultural performances, religious meetings, celebrations and appointment of church leaders.

Only 2% of the sample was on environment, reporting mainly on efforts made by Zambia and Tanzania to conserve forestry and wildlife resources. Some dwelt on pollution and climatic changes. Perhaps the fact that only 2% (14 stories out of 750) of the total stories reported anything about the environment suggests that despite serious threats posed by desertification and drought, which are increasingly facing Africa, there appeared to be only a negligible concern for the

environment by African journalists. Even the few stories which reported on the environment were largely to do with meetings of 'experts', seminars, etc as in the following example:

"MUTARE, (ZIMBABWE) 14 OCT. (ZIANA/PANA) - BOTH DEVELOPING AND DEVELOPED COUNTRIES HAVE BEEN URGED TO ESTABLISH NATIONAL ORGANISATIONS FOR THE SOUND CONTROL OF FOREST FIRES, BECAUSE SUCH FIRES CONTRIBUTE TO THE DEPLETION OF THE OZONE LAYER. PRESENTING A PAPER AT A THREE-WEEK INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON FOREST FIRE CONTROL IN AFRICA, THE PROJECT MANAGER OF TANZANIA'S FOREST DIVISION, JOHN SALEHE, SAID THE GREENHOUSE EFFECT, WHICH RESULTED FROM THE DEPLETION OF THE OZONE LAYER DUE TO POLLUTANT GASES, HAD NO RESPECT FOR BOUNDARIES AND SHOULD THEREFORE BE OF GLOBAL CONCERN....."

The views and comments of 'experts' on specialised topics like the environment are doubtlessly essential. Indeed, stories containing expert analysis may even sometimes serve as examples of 'development journalism'. But it seems more reporting on action-oriented projects is required than the mere direct reporting of 'expert' speeches at seminars. The type of reporting required needs to clearly define the role of citizens in the design and implementation of environmental policies rather than only the "establish(ment) (of) national organizations", which may be an added bureaucratic burden to the state.

Science, medical and technological issues, despite the fact that PANA has specialized separate science and health bulletins, accounted for only 2% of the sample. Some of the science/medical stories seem useful and educative to African countries with similar problems. An example is as follows:

HARARE, 13 OCT. (ZIANA/PANA) - A ZIMBABWE GOVERNMENT WATER QUALITY SURVEY REPORT SAYS THE LEVELS OF FLUORIDE AND NITRATE IN THE COUNTRY'S GOKWE AND CHIMANIMANI DISTRICTS ARE UNACCEPTABLY HIGH AND POSE A SEVERE DANGER TO TEETH, ESPECIALLY AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN.

THE REPORT SHOWS THAT WATER FROM BOREHOLE AND ARTESIAN WELLS IN BOTH AREAS IS A HEALTH HAZARD.....SCHOOL CHILDREN IN BOTH AREAS .....(HAD) 60 PER CENT OF (THEIR) TEETH AFFECTED AND OVER 20% DAMAGED.

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION DESCRIBES SAFE DRINKING WATER AS THAT WHICH CONTAINS A MAXIMUM 1.5 PARTS PER MILLION (PPM) OF FLUORIDE.

'Development' or 'alternative' news, which PANA and most African national agencies were set up to provide, constitute only 4% of the total story sample. It may be argued that the percentage of 'development' news, in the form of rural and community, government or association funded projects such as hospitals, libraries roads and schools, is low. Reporting about such projects seems more 'process' than 'event oriented'. A higher percentage of this category of news should have been available since most of PANA's (foreign) news

originate as domestic agency reports in individual African countries. Perhaps because of the tendency of 'key' political or government figures to be present at the scenes of projects only during commissioning or foundation laying ceremonies, news about such 'development projects' were neglected despite PANA's aim of providing 'alternative' news. On the contrary, 'development news' seems to be perceived more as the actions and exchange of visits by political or government figures, which possibly explains the heavy reporting of politics and diplomacy more than any other topic category. This finding seems consistent with Galtung's and Ruge's (1965) assertion that news, and by extension the media, contains personification of "elite" people.

Finally, all other news stories whose topics appeared to be outside easy classification under the listed topics were coded under 'Others'. Example of these stories include news about appointments to particular positions, or tribute being paid to dead persons, child marriage and abuse problems. Stories of this 'other' category amounted to 6% of the 750 that were examined, of which about 1% had to do with women/children.

On the whole, it appeared that most of the stories were devoted to political news than other issues. For example even if economic, environmental and science/technological stories were to be combined together in a single category, they would still not be as much in number or percentage as those on political and diplomatic matters.

Even when it is considered that political leaders are important since their policies influence economic, social and scientific trends, yet both PANA and the national agencies seem to report their activities out of proportion. This seems to be the case even when the impact of the activities of the official and political figures is not much even in a national context perhaps as a consequence of the integration of the media into wider societal structures, which are equally influenced by the political elite (detailed discussion in chapter eight). An example of such stories is the following four-paragraph story:

"ACCRA, 12 OCT, (GNA/PANA) - THE IVORIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, SIMEON AKE, FRIDAY DELIVERED A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM HIS PRESIDENT, FELIX HOUPHPUET-BOIGNEY, TO GHANA'S HEAD OF STATE, JERRY RAWLINGS.

THE MESSAGE, WHOSE CONTENTS WERE NOT DISCLOSED, WAS RECEIVED ON BEHALF OF RAWLING BY KOJO TSIKATA, A MEMBER OF GHANA'S RULING PROVISIONAL NATIONAL DEFENCE COUNCIL IN CHARGE OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL SECURITY....."

THE MESSAGE COMES AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF ACCUSATIONS THAT COTE D'IVOIRE AND BURKINA FASSO ARE BACKING LIBERIA'S MAIN REBEL LEADER CHARLES TAYLOR.

COTE D'IVOIRE HAS ALSO ALLEGED THAT A GROUP OF PEOPLE WHO WANTED TO MURDER THE POPE DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO THAT COUNTRY WERE LED BY A BENIN NATIONAL BASED IN GHANA.

While from the last two paragraphs of the story (the side bar)

it is understood that there exists some 'tension' in the diplomatic relations between Cote D' Ivoire and Ghana, yet it did not seem important to report the delivery of 'special message' whose contents was not known. In fact, it was not certain or clear whether or not the 'special message' from the Ivorian President had anything to do with 'tension' between the two countries. What possibly made this story to be transmitted to PANA by Ghana News Agency (GNA) was the involvement of 'important' political actors in the event reported rather than its impact. Nonetheless, both PANA and GNA editors found it satisfactory for inclusion in the agency's bulletin.

Generally, the result of this elitist approach to reporting, as revealed by the content analysis, is that environmental or 'development' stories which may be 'educative' to ordinary citizens in their efforts to solve problems, which may equally be of benefit to others elsewhere, are not given much attention.

#### 6.7 Main Story Actors:

Similar to the topics which largely dominated PANA news stories, i.e political, so also are the categories of actors who were most reported in the stories. The category of Head of State/President took as much as 15% of the main story actors and that of Minister/Diplomats/Public officials 29%. This means that these two groups of important social policy

makers alone account for 44% of the main story actors in the sample as shown in Table 6.7:

**Table 6.7 Main PANA Story Actors:**

<u>Main Actor</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Head of State	15%
Public Officials	19%
Diplomats	6%
Intern. Civ. Servants	4%
Opposition/Rebels	5%
Labour Unionists	1%
Academics/Professionals	7%
Ordinary Citizens	3%
Students	1%
Women/Children	1%
Sports Figures	6%
Business Leaders/Officials	11%
Security Members	8%
Religious/Traditional Chiefs	1%
Non human (Assc., govts, etc)	12%
N = 750	100%

In 12% of the stories, non-human actors in the form of organizations, associations and nation states were reported as the main actors. Since it is always clear that political leaders, politicians, professionals and senior private or public officials are the primary actors behind the activities and policies of such organization or nation-state, this suggests that the actors behind non human actors are more likely to belong to the two groups of most reported actors, than to other actor categories, especially as nation-states or governments are sometimes directly reported as news actors.

Some stories reported other relatively influential members of the society as main actors. This comprise security chiefs - 8%; professionals/academics - 7%, traditional/religious

leaders - 1% and private sector chiefs - 11% of the main actors in the sample.

Sport figures were particularly one single group of actors outside government and diplomatic circles that have received relatively significant attention - as 6% of main actors. Perhaps this is generally because sports is viewed not only as a means of entertainment and promoting friendliness among countries but also something which a large number of people find interesting.

Only in 8% of the news stories, comprising students - 1% women/children - 1%; trade unionists - 1%; rebels and opposition members - 5%, were non influential groups of people reported as the main story actors, even though they constitute the majority in society. Neglecting these weak but important groups by the media means their exclusion from the fore front of social activity and by extension the whole political and economic processes. Despite the low coverage given them in PANA news, yet they seemed to make news when involved only in extra-ordinary situations. The following is an example:

"LIBREVILLE, 15 OCT (AGP-GAB/PANA) - A 20-YEAR OLD YOUNG MAN HAD HIS TESTICLE REMOVED AT A HOSPITAL IN LIBREVILLE AFTER BEING SHOT ON THE SCROTUM, INFORMED SOURCES IN THE GABONESE CAPITAL SAID MONDAY.

THE YOUNG MAN, GUY-ROGER MOUSSAVOU, WAS ON THURSDAY NIGHT MISTAKEN FOR A THIEF BY A GROUP OF PEOPLE....."

Although this story is possibly of 'human interest', it is not clear how it contributes to African co-operation, peace or 'development'. What is however more obvious is that if the 'actor' (or is it the victim), 20-year old Mr Guy-Roger Moussavou, was not involved in an incident he may not have 'qualified' to make news for the Gabonese news agency and PANA. Such a story demeans ordinary citizens by implying that what happened to Mr Moussavou was because he was mistaken for a 'thief'. This subtly projects the view that such treatment was proper to thieves. Completely silent was the story on why even thieves should 'justifiably' be subjected to such treatments, or in highlighting the socio-economic conditions that largely produce thieves.

Generally, there didn't appear to be much, if any, difference between news stories originating from PANA and those from other sources with regard to the category of actors that were given priority or neglected. For example each of the three sets of agencies from whose stories PANA's bulletin was composed, i.e PANA; national agencies; and NANAP, separately devoted between 81% - 86% of their stories to reporting mainly top public, business sector and diplomatic officials and professionals. Only in the remaining stories (14% - 19%) were other actors including sports figures, who incidentally are the majority in society, reported as news actors.

If exchange of news between African countries is to contribute to societal advancement in general, then attention ought to be

focused to events and issues affecting different and lower social groups in society. The groups need to be reported more, and be presented as the main and important news actors. That way experiences can be gained and solutions shared on the common problems facing the majority of African people.

#### 6.8 Sex of Story Actors:

Men were found to dominate most of the stories sampled. Being a male dominated world, men are directly reported in 61% of the stories. Women were reported as main actors in only 2% of the 750 stories constituting the sample.

In 18% of the stories, non-human actors such as nation states and organizational bodies, also well known to be dominated by men, were reported as main actors. Both sexes, men and women, were reported in another 4% of our stories, while in the remaining 15% of the stories the sex of the actors was not clear. See Table 6.8

**Table 6.8 Sex of PANA's Story Actors:**

Sex	Number of stories	Per centage
Males	459	61
Females	15	2
Both	27	4
Non human actor (assoc., states, etc)	134	18
Unclear	115	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>100</b>

Combining together those stories in which non-human actors and men were reported, men alone would have been reported in 79% of the stories. This is beside the 4% in which inference was made to both sexes, and the 15% in which it was not clear from the stories the main sex (of actors) that was reported. All the three different sources of PANA news had also clearly reported more men in comparison to women in about 85% of their stories.

One consequence of all these characteristics found in the sample is that the stories do not seem to provide a radically alternative perspective on the realities of African citizenry. Rather, by processing and transmitting the stories it generated with its own staff and those it received from other sources, PANA seemed only to be engaged in helping to recreate male dominance over women and the glorification of male elites in society, and in that way re-affirming the old news order.

### 6.9 Orientation/Direction of Stories:

Attempt was made to find out the extent to which PANA stories were critical, non-critical, or 'neutral' (coded as 'Others') of the subject matter they reported. Stories coded as 'Others' were defined as those which were written in spot news story form and in which no explicit attempt to include opinion in the content was made. They could therefore be advantageous or disadvantageous to the reported actor in their attempt to 'sell' a view, though without vividly appearing to do so. The following is an example of stories in the 'Others' (neutral) category:

LAGOS, 10 OCT. (NAN/PANA) - THE CENTRAL BANK OF NIGERIA (CBN) IS TO INCREASE THE CAPITAL BASE OF BANKS TO CONFORM WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS AND PROVIDE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THEM, CBN DEPUTY GOVERNOR VICTOR ODOZI HAS SAID.....IN THE CBN SPONSORED INTERVIEW, THE DEPUTY GOVERNOR SAID GOVERNMENT'S INTENTION TO PRIVATISE ITS HOLDINGS IN BANKS WAS TO FORCE THEM TO BECOME MORE EFFICIENT AND COMPETITIVE...."

Non-critical, on the other hand, were defined as stories which carried explicit opinion or views that are pro or supportive of the status-quo while critical were defined as those which are anti status-quo. Most of the critical stories in the sample were in form of features. Here is an example of a critical story, in which the government was accused of inefficiency in running its public transport system:

"HARARE, 13 OCT. (ZIANA/PANA) - ZIMBABWE'S URBAN DWELLERS CONTINUE TO SING MORE AND MORE "TRANSPORT BLUES" DESPITE GOVERNMENT'S AMBITIOUS PLANS TO IMPROVE THE SITUATION.

RISING BEFORE THE SUN TO CATCH A BUS WHICH MAY NOT COME AND RETURNING HOME IN THE EVENING LONG AFTER THE SUN HAS SET, HAS BECOME A WAY OF LIFE FOR MANY CITY DWELLERS WHO RELY ON THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM.

THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO COME UP WITH A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL TRANSPORT POLICY SEEMS TO HAVE REMAINED FOR TOO LONG ON THE DRAWING BOARDS...."

In accordance with the definitions, 85% of the sampled stories were found to be "Others" ('neutral'), 5% were non-critical and only 10% were thought to be critical. Many of the stories coded as 'critical' were in the form of features and other specialized bulletins. Table 6.9 summarizes the point.

**Table 6.9 Orientation of PANA Stories:**

<u>Orientation</u>	<u>No. of Stories</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Critical	75	10%
Non Critical	35	5%
Others	640	85%
<b>Total</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>100%</b>

That 85% of the stories were coded under 'Others', most of which comprise of spot news stories, containing 'no' criticisms or compliments, is suggestive of an extra caution by PANA not to select stories which offend member states contributing stories to it or which assist in its funding.

### 6.10 Conclusion:

PANA was set up to provide 'alternative' news to African media as part of efforts to provide a new information order in Africa. The analysis of the agency's news has shown that though most of its stories were on Africa (which was expected to be the case, anyway), the mental picture evoked by the news is not such that conforms to the agency's radical objectives of assisting in the liberation of peoples from dominant power groups in society. Also, the news does not portray groups of ordinary people such as women, students and workers as important in society. Equally, the agency concentrated on reporting urban rather than rural events, and on politics rather than education or development.

Though PANA has shifted focus away from reporting much direct or 'hard' negative news (i.e conflict stories), which constituted only 6% of the total stories in the sample, yet its emphasis on political and diplomatic stories (which constitute 43% of the sample) tends to re-assert the status quo. The portrayal of issues like politics and diplomacy, and diplomats and politicians as the most important actors in society can down play the significance and potential capability of other similar important issues and actors.

In addition, spot news stories, which do not provide in depth information, in contrast with features, constituted 94% of the agency's stories in the sample (against 4% for features).

Thus, although politics and political actors constitute the biggest category of PANA news, similar to the IPS and other agencies, PANA's focus on other categories of news and actors (such as women or labour groups) seemed less than that of IPS (see Giffard: 1983). Thus PANA did not seem to have provided the type of news which is useful to "liberation struggle of peoples against ..... all forms of exploitation and oppression". If anything, the news seemed to 're-affirm' the dominance of the ruling political elite over the ordinary citizens. Consequently PANA news stories were not found to provide 'alternative' news for African media or citizenry.

The next chapter (chapter seven) is also a content analysis of African and world news stories in the sampled Nigerian newspapers. As mentioned earlier, the aim is to compare the news focus and value perceptions of PANA and the newspapers.

## Chapter Seven

### Nigerian Newspapers: Content Analysis

#### 7.1 Introduction:

The previous chapter has examined the news chemistry of PANA with a view to understanding whether or not the agency can be said to provide 'alternative' news about Africa for the African media. This chapter surveys the main issues and focus of foreign news in Nigerian newspapers in general and comparative terms. A high level of convergence might indicate one or more of the following: shared news values, high degree of influence by PANA on Nigerian newspaper foreign coverage or high degree of market responsiveness by PANA. A low level of convergence would suggest that none of these apply. The aim of this exercise is to reveal whether differences exist between the newspapers in general on the one hand, and PANA on the other with regard to the type of news they consider important to their readers.

In order to achieve a high degree of success in the comparison of the news of the two sets of media at a broad level, the coding categories used for the analysis of the newspaper stories were the same as for PANA. The only exception was with respect to their story source(s) because it is not expected that the newspapers would receive their stories from the same sources, for example national agencies, as PANA.

While PANA's primary editorial aim is to provide 'alternative' or 'development' news, newspapers in developing countries are also generally expected by the state to contribute to development. Thus, if differences are found in the (foreign) news focus of the two media (PANA and the newspapers), what are the likely explanations for the differences?. If there are similarities, could it be because of other extra-African factors, for example synchronizing to Western journalistic practices by both PANA and the newspapers?

The foreign news published by the newspapers is generally limited to one page each day (the foreign news page), contrary to Western quality papers like The New York Times whose foreign news content has been found to constitute 16% of the total news space (Gerbner & Marvanyi: 1977). But sometimes sports news and foreign news features appeared in other pages, and also formed part of the foreign news stories in the Nigerian newspapers. All such stories were coded in the newspapers sample.

The newspapers tended to give more emphasis to political and diplomatic stories than economic or other types. This is despite the fact that Nigeria constitutes a big market for African and trans-national companies and opportunities for joint partnership businesses exist. But either because the newspapers do not receive a lot of those types of news from NAN, due to gatekeeping, or because the foreign news desks of the newspapers did not regard such stories as interesting or

important, they did not get as much coverage as political and diplomatic news or even sports. It may be that the trend towards greater emphasis to news other than political/diplomatic news, such as economic news, discernible in some Western countries, has not taken a firm root among Nigerian or African newspapers.

That even the private newspapers, two of which are owned by businessmen-politicians (Rtd. 'Yar aduwa's Reporter and Chief Abiola's Concord) did not seem to give much attention to economic news compared to politics, is indicative of the fact that most newspapers in the developing world are generally political rather than specialised because of their small base of readership. One likely general explanation for this trend is the question of serving the political interest of their ownership, whether public or private.

All newspapers published most of their foreign news stories in the form of 'news-in-briefs', which are short one or two-paragraph stories briefly summarising the main points, and in 'spot' news story forms. Fewer stories were in feature form. A number of the relatively few feature articles were written by outside writers. Perhaps because the newspapers generally concentrated more on political than economic news, more of the actors reported were also urban based political figures rather than businessmen or ordinary citizens. The latter group was reported mostly in instances in which its members were involved in conflict with authorities (drama).

## 7.2 Comparative Analysis:

For the purpose of identifying the main trends in the African and world news of the newspapers, a comparative analysis was undertaken. The newspapers were grouped into two, based purely on one factor, namely geographical scope of coverage - national and regional/local. Ownership was not considered significant in this classification because it is not expected that there will be broad differences in the ideological position of the ownership and management of both set of newspapers. Hence in each group could be found public and privately owned newspapers. Therefore one group comprised national newspapers, namely New Nigerian, National Concord and Punch and the other the local papers, i.e. Triumph, Gaskiya and Reporter.

As stated earlier, the aim is to discover possible general difference(s) and similarities in the foreign news landscape between the two groups of newspapers.

## 7.3 Volume of Stories Reported:

To begin with, there is a noticeable difference between the newspapers in the number of foreign news stories they reported during the period under study. While the national papers between them carried a total of 141 foreign news stories, the local ones reported a total of 216 foreign and international news events, a difference of 75 news stories or nearly 35% of

the stories published by the national newspapers. This significant difference in the number of the total foreign stories published by the two set of papers may be explained in two ways. First, the national papers did not give much attention to foreign news because of their concern with national politics and events whose agenda they play a prominent role in setting.

Secondly, the local newspapers have carried far more foreign news than the national papers because they think they do not need to devote as much space as national papers in discussing national events and issues since they do not enjoy equal prestige as the latter. Thus, devoting more space to foreign news may provide them additional materials to report. There is also the cheapness of the material, which is agency originated and made available in NAN bulletins (although this also applies to the national papers), to which they already subscribe - hence easy for the local papers to publish.

The local papers may have resorted to carrying a lot of foreign stories not only in order to fill space but also to provide variety in their news coverage. That the local papers do not have much to report compared to the national ones is disputable given the fact that there is a wide variety of local issues worth getting serious media attention but which go unreported or overlooked by journalists. However this may not be entirely surprising given the kind of socialization received by those working in the media, whose tendency in news

perception is more often event oriented, centering on the actions of the influential few in society. This is however not to say that this kind of orientation to news perception is limited to only journalists from the local newspapers.

#### 7.4 Coverage by World Region:

Proceeding a little further into the discussion, it is noted that of the total foreign news published by the national papers, 45% relates to Africa; 20% to Western Europe, 15% on USA/Canada; only 2% about USSR/Eastern Europe and 18% on Other countries. On the other hand, the local newspapers also have 45% of their foreign news stories centred on Africa; 13% on Western Europe; 12% on USA and Canada; 5% on Eastern Europe/USSR and 25% on others.

Therefore while both groups have attached more or less similar priority to Africa by each devoting 45% of its foreign news to the continent, which is considerably impressive (though the nature of the news also matters), they however differ with respect to the remaining global regions. In the case of Western Europe and USA/Canada, the national papers devoted 20% and 15% respectively, making a total of 35% for both regions. On the contrary, the West European and USA/Canadian news in the local papers were only 13% on Western Europe and 12% on USA/Canada, making a total of 25% for both. The higher percentage of Western news in the national papers suggests concern by them, more than the local press, to closely report

Western events which they define as relevant to Nigeria; in order to possibly guide the actions of public officials in foreign policy matters.

Another possible reason as to why the national papers carried more Western news may be due to their greater likelihood to employ 'better' trained and experienced journalist on their foreign news desk. Better trained and experienced journalists implies having received training from a Western or Western oriented institution in Nigeria, and/or having some years of working experience in the media. Because more Nigerian journalists appear to be trained in the West, its journalists would likely have more appetite for Western than non-Western news due to their professional training, experience and work socialization over time. This suggestion is possibly so considering that the local papers tended to publish more news about the 'Others' category, which mainly comprise of other developing countries (25% of the total news they reported), as against the national ones which devoted only 18% of their news largely to developing countries (Others category). In this regard, the local papers tend to report more about developing countries.

**Table 7.1 World Regional Coverage by Percentage (%):**

Region	Newspaper(s)	
	National	Local
W/Europe	20%	13%
USA/Canada	15%	12%
E/Europe	2%	5%
Africa	45%	45%
Others	18%	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

N = 141                      N = 216

As Table 7.1 shows, the national papers also carried only 2% of their foreign news on Eastern Europe. This is a low figure compared to the percentage of their reports on Western Europe and USA/Canada, or what the local newspapers have reported about the same region (5% of their news). It could be suggested that the percentage of Eastern European news in the national press is reflective of government policy towards the region, in which diplomatic and official contact is not as much as is the case with the West. This is evident in the number of trading and diplomatic missions exchanging visits between Nigeria and the Western countries. This may again be another evidence of the higher impact of the capitalist system relative to the socialist one in Nigerian society. Though none of the government owned papers (in both groups) reported a single event from the region (this does not suggest ownership influence), this does not imply a direct one-to-one relationship between government policy and newspaper coverage.

The local newspapers also carried more news about the region

perhaps because, as already suggested, journalists from the local newspapers were not as Western oriented as those in the national newspapers due to their relatively lower exposure and professional socialization. Hence they may tend to entertain more general interest in events from other regions (including Eastern Europe).

It was possible that the normal pattern of attention to the region was diverted by the Middle-East crisis which was considerable during the sampled week, which incidentally was the week preceding the beginning of the Gulf war.

#### 7.5 Intra-African Regional Coverage:

With regard to African news, the West African sub-region received the highest coverage by both newspapers when compared to the others. 55% of the African news reported by the national papers was on West Africa while for the local newspapers it was 39%, which is still the highest for any single sub-region published by them. One factor likely to be responsible for this news dominance of West Africa among all the sub-regions is proximity.

The proximity of Nigerian newspapers to the West African sub-region may be said to have demonstrated itself as an element of news reporting, hence its dominance over others. Whether by coincidence, design or otherwise, the remaining sub-regions shared between them a comparatively similar degree of

importance at least from the number of reports relating to them by each of the two groups of newspapers.

In the national papers Southern and East Africa equally came second in the number of news reports. But Southern Africa is second with 30% and East Africa is third with 18% of the total African news published in the local newspapers. Also in the local newspapers Central and North Africa were the fourth most reported with equal percentages of news (6% each). There were slightly more stories about North than Central Africa, 8% and 6% respectively, in the national press.

What seemed to have happened is that attention was a little more focused on North Africa, which is geographically close to the Gulf region. With some African states in the sub-region (like Egypt) even directly taking part in the then on-going Gulf crisis, North Africa was considered a more important news spot than Central Africa by the national papers.

However what is more clear in the attitude of both papers is that even if North (because of the Gulf war or crisis) and Southern Africa (regarded as the political crisis centre of the continent) were to be combined together in each of the two cases, the percentage of news from both regions would still be only 23% in the case of the national papers and 36% in the case of the local ones. This means that contrary to reporting Africa in terms of crisis events, the newspapers on the whole did not seem to emphasize this news angle since only 23% of

the news relating to Africa published by the national newspapers was on the two regions most involved in a political transition or crisis. The figure for the same two regions in the local newspapers was also 36%.

Similarly, the percentage is even less for news on Central Africa in each of the two sets of newspapers - 6% in either case - despite the famine threat and civil wars taking place in Somalia and Ethiopia. However, this is not to suggest that such events went unreported by the newspapers. Table 7.2 illustrates the pattern of coverage by region by the papers.

**Table 7.2 African News Coverage by sub-Region (%):**

Sub-region	Newspaper(s)	
	National	Local
E/Africa	15%	18%
W/Africa	55%	39%
N/Africa	8%	6%
C/Africa	6%	6%
S/Africa	15%	30%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

N = 141                      N = 216

#### **7.6 News Location Centres:**

Most of the news events reported by the two sets of papers were urban based such as official, political and diplomatic visits which usually take place in urban settings. For example 86% of the foreign news events reported by the

national papers were urban located, 6% rural and 8% were on issues that could take place in both rural and urban locations, such as elections. This trend is not much different in the news reports of the local newspapers which reported 84% urban based stories, 6% rural and 10% in both rural/urban centres.

What seems clear is that even the local papers, similar to the national ones, publish more news about urban than rural news centres. Hence the data do not suggest that the local papers are more concerned with rural news than the national ones possibly due to the general perception among journalists that activities in rural areas are not worthy of being reported. This view may have been acquired due to bias for urban events as a consequence of Western value socialization.

As in the example on page 257, where an ordinary citizen, a 19-year old Indian made news because of 'unusual' ability, rural locations also mostly featured in the sample when they involved 'dramatic' or 'unusual' news events. Table 7.3 summarizes the news location centres in the sample.

**Table 7.3 News coverage by location of events (%):**

News Location	Newspaper(s)	
	National	Local
Urban	86%	84%
Rural	6%	6%
Both	8%	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

N = 141                      N = 216

**7.7 Source(s) of News:**

Though the majority of the news reports did not mention their source(s), they varied for the two sets of papers. For example, 49% of the stories published in the national papers did not specify their news source(s) while the percentage for the local newspapers is even higher - 54%. Since Nigerian newspapers often tend not to identify their source(s) as far as international news or agency reports are concerned, except when they are interested in guarding themselves against libel charges (Ugbuajah: 1985, Musa: 1989), a similar explanation may well apply in this context. This is likely given that most stories published by the newspapers were diplomatic/political - comprising political statements, exchange of visits, etc - thus less likely to attract charges of libel from the state.

Staff reporters accounted for 23% of foreign news stories in the national papers while the figure for the local papers is lower - only 9%. While none of the papers has an overseas

correspondent to justify such a wide difference between them, yet this suggests the advantage of the national papers in having better quality staff writers who could write and comment on international issues/affairs in form of features and editorials. This is likely given that the national papers published almost twice the number of features published by the local newspapers as will be seen later in the chapter. It may also relate to the volume of rewritten news stories from Western sources.

Western broadcast sources, like CNN and BBC, and excerpts from the London Guardian or New York Times accounted for 9% of foreign stories in the national papers and 8% in the local papers. Both seem to turn to Western sources at the peak of international crises like the Gulf war. In fact some of the wealthier newspapers from both groups, Concord and Reporter, are directly linked to CNN via satellite. Similarly, NAN/Western agencies, through NAN's news exchange agreement with Western news agencies, was the source of another 4% of the stories in both papers.

Despite NAN's gatekeeper role on all stories going into Nigeria, Western sources were responsible for 13% or more of the foreign news published in the national papers and 12% or more in the case of local newspapers but more stories in both papers could possibly have emanated from Western sources among those (stories) whose source was not identified. Moreover, foreign stories are difficult to monitor because they could

easily be obtained from different sources including monitored broadcasts.

According to the data, NAN did not seem to have as strong an exchange agreement with non-Western agencies as it does with the Western ones. For example, China's Xinhua, a non-Western agency, was quoted as the source of only 1% of the stories in the national papers and even less in the case of the local papers. This indicates a low usage of non-Western sources, similar to the findings of other studies (Ugboajah: 1985, Agbaje: 1992). Despite the relatively high percentage of African news in the overall stories reported by both sets of papers - 45% by each group, PANA/NAN was only mentioned (in the case of each group of newspapers) as the source of only 1% of the published stories. This possibly suggests that either the newspapers receive their stories about Africa from news sources quite different from PANA, or that the papers do not simply bother to credit PANA for using stories emanating from it.

But since NAN, from which Nigerian newspapers receive both foreign and local news, regards PANA as an important source of news on Africa by allocating a special desk in its news room to process PANA stories, the latter suggestion is more likely to be correct. This is particularly so in view of the fact that NAN does not distribute PANA's stories in a separate bulletin from its own. This may further explain why some foreign desk reporters of some newspapers were unaware of the

continental agency.

Though NAN's procedure of distributing PANA's stories is similar to the one for other agencies with which NAN has news exchange relationships, the major Western agencies were better known by the journalists. Hence, the procedure places PANA at a disadvantage because, being a relatively new agency, it is not well known to the newspapers since it does not have direct dealings with them, and may not have been consistently credited as a source even in cases where stories may have emanated from it.

**Table 7.4 Percentage of Newspaper stories by source (%):**

Story source	Newspaper(s)	
	National	Local
Staff Reporters	29%	9%
NAN/Western source	13%	12%
NAN	2%	7%
NAN/PANA	1%	1%
NAN/Non Western	1%	>1%
Others	11%	16%
Unclear	48%	53%
	N = 141	N = 216

As shown in Table 7.4, another source of foreign stories for the newspapers is NAN itself. With few foreign offices abroad (Britain, USA, Zimbabwe), NAN itself reports and disseminates foreign stories to Nigerian newspapers. The national papers mentioned NAN as the source of 2% of their foreign stories, mainly from South Africa where the agency has a resident

correspondent in Harare. For their part, the local papers mentioned NAN (as their source) in 7% of their foreign stories. While the percentage of news emanating from NAN in the national papers was more likely to be correct than that of the local ones, it was possible that the local papers mentioned NAN as the source of even other foreign stories found in the agency's bulletin (NAN's), but which were not necessarily directly reported by its correspondents. This could easily happen in the case of agencies whose names were not very familiar to the foreign desk reporters of the newspapers, and who therefore played down the name of the agency which may have originated the report.

Still, among the categories of news sources there is a general category for 'Others', meaning news sources outside any of the ones so far mentioned. This was the source of 11% of the stories in the national papers and 16% for the local ones.

On the whole, it could be argued that as high as 77% of stories in the national papers (29% by staff reporters and 48% Unclear) may have originated from Western sources because of the latter's dominance in foreign news production. The same may be said for 72% of stories in the local papers. In both cases, these stories or a large part of them may have been simply re-written by staff writers of the newspapers.



ALHAJI IDI JIMETA, ALHAJI MOHAMMED MUSTAPHA, VICTOR AIKHOMU AND LAWRENCE EDEH.

and in Reporter:

ZIMBABWE PAID OUT 68 MILLION DOLLARS (ABOUT 230 MILLION NAIRA) IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE TO ITS EXPATRIATES AND EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS BOTH IN PRIVATE AND PUBLIC SECTORS BETWEEN 1982 AND 1989. ACCORDING TO A PARLIAMENTARY REPORT, THE EXPATRIATES EARNED 32.23 DOLLARS (109 MILLION NAIRA) IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE IN 1987. THE COUNTRY'S RESERVE BANK, THE EQUIVALENT OF NIGERIA'S CENTRAL BANK, PROVIDED 36.55 MILLION DOLLARS (ABOUT 124 MILLION NAIRA) IN FOREIGN EXCHANGE BETWEEN 1985 AND 1988 WHICH WAS USED TO PAY THE EXPATRIATES.

As noted earlier, the local papers carried fewer feature stories, 7% of their total stories as against the national papers whose feature stories totalled 13% of their overall foreign coverage.

Factors like lower quality of staff writers in the local newspapers, who are more likely to be less informed about international affairs, were among possible explanations why there was a higher percentage of foreign feature articles in the national press. There is also the question of having access to newsprint, which the national papers enjoy easy access to than the local press, due to their relatively stronger financial base. This explanation also probably applies to the remaining category of stories tagged 'Others', mainly comprising editorials and other specialised comments like Concord's 'thinking corner', in which the national papers

published 2% of these type of news and the local press only 1%.

### 7.9 News Topics:

Similar to the PANA content analysis, the topics reported by the newspapers were discussed under broad sub-categories, 11 in the national and 12 in the local, for easy analysis. The categorization relates to the topic categories covered by each of the two sets of newspapers. In the national papers, political and diplomatic issues were on top of the list, taking 31% of the entire issues reported, while direct report of negative news in the form of crisis and conflict stories top the list of the local newspapers with 26%. In the national papers, these issues (crisis and conflict) were reported in 22% of the news stories. This finding suggests that the national newspapers did not tend to report the outside world in a manner which emphasized conflict, to the same extent as the local papers. In the local newspapers, political and diplomatic stories - with 23% of the coverage - were second to the direct negative news stories.

Compared to PANA therefore, the direct negative news reported by both sets of newspapers was higher. Conversely, PANA and its correspondent agencies tended to focus more on so-called 'development' news, manifested in the form of exchanges of visits between political leaders and government officials, and more generally as political news. The finding on the negative

category of news reflects an IAMCR study (Sreberny-Mohammadi et al: 1985) which found that conflict/crises events were 'hot' news wherever they occurred. One possible cause of the higher emphasis on negative news coverage among newspapers is that the press is not as constrained from focusing on conflict as the 'alternative' news agencies by formal principles of 'development', promotion of 'peace', etc.

Many of the political (foreign) news stories reported, like PANA's, were personality centred. Cases include warning against 'dissidents' by Kenya's president, Bush's warning to Saddam or Saddam's warning to Bush on the eve of the Gulf war, the civil war in Somalia focusing on the ousted President, Siad Barre, the warring factions in Liberia's civil war, Lebanon's rival militia groups spokesmen, etc. The focus on military developments in these wars, rather than on settlement talks, perhaps accounted for the higher level of direct negative news than PANA's.

In terms of quality, many of the diplomatic or political stories published by the newspapers, largely in the form of spot stories or 'news briefs', were merely statements made by political figures. Some of the statements appeared to have been published not because of their impact but more because of the personalities who made the statements. The following is an example from the New Nigerian of 8/1/91:

"ADDIS ABABA: AFRICAN UNITY AND CO-OPERATION IN THE ECONOMIC,

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FIELDS ARE NOW NECESSARY FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE CONTINENT IN THE LIGHT OF CHANGES TAKING PLACE IN EASTERN EUROPE AND ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD. OAU SECRETARY-GENERAL SALIM AHMED SALIM HAS SAID IN AN INTERVIEW WITH TANZANIAN JOURNALISTS VISITING ADDIS ABABA.

HE SAID IT WAS BECOMING INCREASINGLY CLEAR THAT AFRICA COULD NO LONGER AFFORD TO DEPEND ON CHARITY OR GOOD WILL FROM EUROPE AND OTHER COUNTRIES".

The above story, while it may be relevant to the strengthening of cooperation in Africa in the context of political changes in Eastern Europe, only repeats many similar calls made at the OAU and other forums since the 1960s when many African countries attained political independence. One even wonders why only 'now' was such cooperation needed.

Comparatively, the local papers have marginally reported a larger quantity of topics than the national ones. A similar explanation to the one earlier given, i.e more concentration on politics and diplomacy in the national press, seems tenable. Consequently, the national newspapers did not cover as broad a range of issues like environmental.

Sport constituted 30% of the topical coverage in the national papers and 23% in the local papers. The percentage of sports news in both papers looks high. In the national press, this was because of Punch's special concern for sports. If Punch, well known for its interest in sports, had not been included

in the study (since it alone reported about 61% of the total sport news in the national newspapers), the percentage for the national papers could have been less. Punch also devotes the whole of its back page to sports, in addition to the 'traditional' inside back-page devoted to sports in Nigerian newspapers. The back page is considered a prominent place that is only second to the front page in newspaper design. Examples of the sport news reported by the newspapers include stories on Cameroonian top player during the 1990 World Cup, Roger Milla, Tyson vs Hollyfield in boxing, etc.

Among the local newspapers, sports was also highly reported because The Reporter devotes its last three pages, including the back page, called 'Reportersport', to national and international sports coverage.

The dominance of sports and politics, is a possible indication of the interest of readers. It is also consistent with the findings of other studies which showed politics and sports to be among the highly reported topics in news (see Weaver et al: 1983, Hunt: 1992, Robinson: 1981).

Economic issues in the national press took up 3% of stories in the national papers and 6% in the local ones. Some of the economic stories also comprise labour news, constituting 2% of the news coverage by the national press and twice as much (4%) in the local press. Most of these news stories were about meetings of multi-national labour union leaders or union

strikes in foreign countries.

Because of the close relationship between economics and politics on the one hand, and the proximity of the national press to centres of political power, it was expected that the national press would have carried more stories on this, although it did not, possibly due its pre-occupation with politics and diplomacy.

Human rights in other foreign countries attracted equal coverage of 1% of the stories reported by the local and national newspapers. As in the PANA human right stories, (in chapter six), some of the stories on the same topic in the newspapers were mere reports of statements by officials on the pardoning of political prisoners. The few which went beyond that were reports of investigations by human rights groups in particular countries. The following two examples are from Triumph and Concord respectively:

**SENEGAL: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, THE HUMAN RIGHTS ORGANISATION HAS INDICTED SENEGAL FOR INCREASED TORTURE AGAINST ITS OPPONENTS IN THE SOUTHERN PART THE COUNTRY WITH AT LEAST 11 PRISONERS REPORTED TORTURED TO DEATH IN PAST SIX MONTHS. A CORRESPONDENT REPORTS THAT AMNESTY SAID IN A FRESH RELEASE ON THURSDAY THAT DETAILS OF EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTION HAD ALSO EMERGED FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE 1983, INDICATING THAT SOLDIERS HAD ALSO ESCALATED THEIR VIOLENCE AGAINST INNOCENT CIVILIANS IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS. (Triumph, 10/1/91)**

and

**ZAIRES:** ZAIRIAN MINISTER OF CITIZEN'S RIGHTS AND LIBERTIES MR SABI NGAMPOUM MUBIEM SAID IN KINSHASA ON WEDNESDAY THAT 130 PEOPLE ARRESTED DURING FIGHTING IN THE CITY IN DECEMBER 1990 HAD BEEN RELEASED HE SAID ANOTHER 20 DETAINEES HAD BEEN REFERRED TO COURTS BECAUSE OF THE SERIOUSNESS OF THEIR CRIMES. THE 130 RELEASED INCLUDED YOUNG MEN BETWEEN THE AGES 15-20. THE PEOPLE OF KINSHASA WAGED A GRAND PROTEST MOVEMENT ON DECEMBER 3, LAST YEAR, AGAINST THE GENERAL PRICE HIKE. IN THE COURSE OF THE DEMONSTRATION, SOME RANSACKED AND ATTACKED VEHICLES. (Concord, 10/1/91).

While such stories may at least highlight human rights conditions in the countries reported, they do not present a full picture of the situations existing in such countries. However, this is not to suggest a conspiracy by the Nigerian press to cover up human rights abuses in other countries. On the contrary, it more possibly reflects the type of stories made available by the sources from which the stories originated, usually official news agency sources.

**Table 7.6 Topics Reported by Newspapers:**

<u>Main Topic</u>	<u>Newspaper(s)</u>	
	<u>National</u>	<u>Local</u>
Foreign Domestic Pol.	7%	4%
Diplomacy	24%	19%
Negative	22%	26%
Aid	4%	4%
Economic	3%	6%
Sports	30%	23%
Human Right	1%	1%
Crime/Legal	1%	2%
Culture/Religion	-	-
Education	-	-
Sci/Tech/Medical	2%	2%
Environment	0%	2%
Development Matters	-	1%
Others	6%	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>N = 141</b>	<b>N = 216</b>

As shown in Table 7.6, Science/Technology/Medical news was reported in 2% of the stories in the national press, while they did not report any story on Environment. These two categories of stories took 2% each of the local and national press samples. Like comparable PANA stories, many were about reports of meetings and conferences by 'experts' as in the following example from Reporter:

ACCRA - THE SECOND CONGRESS OF AFRICAN SCIENTISTS IS TO OPEN IN ACCRA MONDAY TO DISCUSS HOW TO MOBILISE AFRICAN SCIENTIST AND TECHNOLOGISTS FOR THE CONTINENT'S DEVELOPMENT. ABOUT 400 SCIENTISTS, ENGINEERS, TECHNOLOGISTS AND RESEARCHERS FROM THE CONTINENT AND TOP EXECUTIVES FROM THE OAU AND UN AGENCIES ARE ATTENDING THE CONGRESS. THE FIVE-DAY CONGRESS, ORGANISED BY THE PAN-AFRICAN UNION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (PUST), IS UNDER THE THEME "CONCRETE ACTIONS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFRICA" (Reporter, 10/1/91).

Such a story was too brief to elaborate on the relevance of this Conference to Africa's 'development', or whether it was more likely to be a mere gathering of what Galtung (1980) called "deformation professionnelle", whose perceptions are more external than African. The story also took for granted the problems associated with the concept 'development'. However not all the stories were on conferences or meetings of experts. Some seemed more promising, reporting results of research, for example about the relationship between smoking mothers and the brain growth of the foetus.

Another two story categories, Culture/Religion and Education, were not reported by any of the newspapers.

Aid was reported in 4% of the sample of each of the two newspaper groups. Many were written by staff writers and commentators, and they focused on UN/Western emergency aid to Somalia and Liberia in the context of political changes in Eastern Europe.

Crime/legal news constituted 1% in the national newspapers, and 2% in the local ones. Cases include reports on the hanging to death of traffickers in Iran, and police charges of corruption against ex-Bangladesh's leader, Hussain Ershad. That Reporter, being a local paper based in the Muslim North, reported the Iranian story using phrases such as "Iran's draconian laws", suggests there was little or no editing of

the story and its external source, possibly Western. (The same phrase was also used by the Lagos based Punch in reporting the same story).

Broadly, two general points were noticed in the overall news analysis of the national and local newspapers. One, most of the stories reported by the newspapers on sports, politics and diplomacy were common to all the newspapers, suggesting the common source(s) from which they receive their foreign news. Two, most of the stories they reported, and this is perhaps general to all foreign or other news, focused a lot on individuals, personalities and events, with over two-thirds of the stories by each group focusing on four main items, namely negative events, sports, politics and diplomacy (83% in national and 72% in the local papers). This means that only a small percentage in either case was left to reporting other categories of news including 'development' news. Concentrating on these main topics also has implications for the type of actors who are reported, the context in which they are reported and the news location.

#### **7.10 News Actors:**

The highest single category of story actors reported by both groups of newspapers were sport figures. In the national papers, they accounted for up to 26% of the total actors, and 20% in the local ones. The next highest category of actors in both set of papers were Public Officials/Diplomats,

constituting 31% of the actors in the national papers and 28% in the local newspapers. Non-human actors, in the form of nation-states, associations or organizations, constituted 8% of reported actors in national papers and 5% in the local newspapers. This is consistent with the findings of the analysis by topic, in which politics and diplomacy constitute between about one-quarter to one-third of the total sample.

While it is noted that sports figures as actors were reported more than any single actor category, the high coverage given them in the national papers, as high as 26%, was largely due to Punch's more than 'average' coverage of sports. Equally, among the local press, Reporter covers a lot of sports news.

Students and Academics/Professionals were story actors in 1% and 3% respectively in national papers, and 1% and 7% respectively in local press. That Academics/Professionals and Business leaders/Officials (the latter reported as 2% of actors in national papers and 6% in the local press) jointly constituted only 5% and 13% of actors in the national and local papers respectively, indicating a low coverage of actors in educational and business institutions. This seems to agree with Golding and Elliott's (1979) claims that the media focus more on institutions of visible power. As shown in Table 7.7, members of the opposition and labour unionists did not either receive much coverage as news actors.

**Table 7.7 Actors Reported by Sampled Newspapers (%)**

<u>Main Actor</u>	<u>Newspaper(s)</u>	
	<u>National %</u>	<u>Local %</u>
Head of State	6%	8%
Public Officials	10%	12%
Diplomats	15%	11%
International Civ. Servants	6%	5%
Opposition/Rebels	4%	5%
Labour Unionists	1%	1%
Academics/Professionals	3%	7%
Ordinary Citizens	14%	14%
Students	1%	1%
Women	1%	2%
Sports Figures	26%	20%
Business Leaders/Officials	2%	6%
Security Members	3%	3%
Religious/Traditional chiefs	-	-
Non human (Assc.)	8%	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	<b>N = 141</b>	<b>N = 216</b>

Women and Ordinary citizens also constituted only 1% and 14% respectively of the actors in the national newspapers, and 2% and 14% respectively in the local press. Although the percentage of stories occupied by this last group of non-influential actors in both sets of papers was high, it was a convergence of the newspapers' high coverage of negative news, 22% in national and 26% in local newspapers. In most of the negative stories, the ordinary citizens featured as victim-actors. Examples were stories in which people were reported killed in gas explosions in Guatemala or due to drinking unsafe water in Liberia (in Reporter of 10/1/91). In both papers, Ordinary citizens were more likely to feature in news when involved in extra-ordinary events. The following are two vivid examples:

**NEW DELHI: AN INDIAN BOY HAS COPIED ON AN ORDINARY POST CARD THE MATTER CONTAINED IN 39 PRINTED PAGES OF A BOOK IN TELUGU,**

LOCAL PRESS HAS REPORTED.

19-YEAR OLD C. KRISHNA TOOK 18 HOURS TO DO THE COPYING WORK WITH AN ORDINARY LEAD PENCIL. HE FILED 17,375 ALPHABETS ON ONE SIDE OF THE CARD AND THE REMAINING 8,125 ALPHABETS ON THE OTHER.

THE POSTCARD CAN BE READ ONLY WITH THE HELP OF A MAGNIFIED GLASS, THE REPORT SAID.

KRISHNA IS FROM POCHAMPALI IN NALGONDA DISTRICT OF THE SOUTH-EASTERN INDIAN STATE OF ANDRA PRADESH (Triumph, 9/1/91).

and

ALGIERS: DEMONSTRATORS SET FIRE TO A HOTEL IN WESTERN ALGERIA AND DAMAGED CARS IN PROTEST AT A NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY WHICH THEY JUDGED ANTI-ISLAMIC, A RESIDENT SAID. THIRTY PEOPLE WERE INJURED IN CLASHES BETWEEN THE DEMONSTRATORS THROWING STONES AND RIOT POLICE WHO TRIED TO DISPERSE THEM WITH TEAR GAS, ALGERIA RADIO SAID. THE OWNER OF THE HOTEL, LES CHASSEURS IN TELAGH, 400 KM SOUTHWEST OF ALGIERS HAD REJECTED THEIR DEMAND THAT HE CANCEL THE PARTY, THE RESIDENT SAID ON TUESDAY. HE GAVE NO DETAILS OF THE DAMAGE AND SAID HE DID NOT KNOW IF THE POLICE HAD MADE ANY ARRESTS (REUTER/NAN). (New Nigerian, 7/1/91).

Both examples show 'typical' cases in which ordinary citizens made news in most of the news reported by the papers. Equally, they also serve as examples of the majority of cases in which rural areas featured as news centres.

Comparing the two sets of newspapers in their news coverage by sex, male and female, the data revealed that men clearly had more edge over women by constituting 72% and 55% of the sex reported by national and local newspapers respectively. In yet another 3% of the news stories in the national newspapers and 6% in the local ones both the male and female sexes were presented jointly as the main actors; while in only 4% of the stories in each of the two sets of papers was female sex or women reported as actors. Non-human actors in the form of nation states and organisational bodies; which could not be categorized as male or female, though well known to be dominated by men, accounted for 15% and 20% of the actors by sex in the national and local newspapers respectively. In both the local and national papers, the sex of 15% and 6%, respectively, could not be identified from the stories. These stories were therefore coded 'unclear' as seen in Table 7.8



respectively published in the front and back pages of the national newspapers; and 10% and 8% respectively in similar pages of the local press.

**Table 7.9 Page Location of Stories in Sampled Newspapers (%):**

Stories Location	Newspaper(s)	
	National	Local
Front page	5%	10%
Back page	21%	8%
Inside pages	74%	82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>
	N = 141	N = 216

As shown in Table 7.9, the percentage of foreign stories which appeared in the back pages of the national papers seems higher because of the many foreign and multi-national sports news published in the back page of Punch. In fact, Punch alone was responsible for publishing 93% of the back page stories among the national newspapers. Finally, one likely explanation why between 5 and 10% of foreign news stories were published in the front pages of national and local newspapers, and 21% and 8% in similar pages of the papers respectively was the visit to Nigeria by Zimbabwean president, Robert Mugabe. This has attracted a lot of attention in Nigerian media in the week being studied. Indeed, this event was headline news for most Nigerian newspapers and media in general.

### 7.13 Conclusion:

The findings in this chapter show general similarities in the foreign news focus of Nigerian newspapers, both private and public owned, and local and national. They all seem to focus more on political and diplomatic news than, say, economic or human rights news. Equally, they report more urban than rural based events, and more men actors than females, etc. In this respect, the news values of the newspapers may be said to be broadly similar to those found in PANA news (chapter six) since they widely focus on common news location centres, type of story, themes or topics and main story actors. The main difference between the newspapers and PANA is with respect to news sources, in which not a single PANA story was found to originate from any Western sources.

The conclusion in chapter six and this one suggest that the trend of news reporting by both PANA and Nigerian newspapers are similar yet neither agency provides 'alternative' news for a new information order. The trend in both media (as discussed in chapter nine) seems to reflect the news outlook of journalists and the social power hierarchy in African societies in which the majority are dominated by a minority elite as well as the power imbalance between Africa and the Western world.

Having established the type of news and information circulated by PANA (in chapter six) and the sampled Nigerian newspapers

(in this chapter), the next chapter analyses the perception of PANA by Nigerian newspaper journalists. The aim is to understand their awareness about the agency (PANA) and its possible impact on African journalism.

## Chapter Eight

### Nigerian journalists' perception of PANA

#### 8.1 Introduction:

This chapter analyses the perception of PANA by Nigerian journalists and PANA's possible impact on journalistic practice. Interviews with foreign desk reporters and editors of the sampled newspapers in this study and the sub-editor of NAN's PANA-desk were the main source of data for this analysis. Given the much talked about PANA goal of providing 'alternative' and 'development' news in Africa, the chapter basically sets out to provide an insight into the level of knowledge about the agency (PANA) among journalists in newspaper organizations in Nigeria. This is considered important in the context of the decade of debate for a NWICO and the report of MacBride Commission, which recommended the setting up of agencies like PANA as part of the solution to African self reliance in news production. Being those who supposedly use PANA's services directly, surveying the views of the journalists about the agency is therefore considered vital.

For the purpose of comparison, the interviewed journalists were divided into two groups on the basis of the scope of news coverage of their newspapers - national and local, in order to provide understanding on whether either of the two groups of journalists (national or local) is more aware of PANA or uses

more of its services than the other. But first a brief introduction on the interviewed journalists.

## 8.2 The Journalists' Career Backgrounds and Work Tasks:

Broadly, all the respondents perform similar tasks in terms of news selection and editing in the newsrooms of their various newspaper houses. In four of the newspapers (New Nigerian, Gaskiya, Reporter and Triumph) the distinction between news and features desks was not as explicit as in Concord and Punch. The main possible reason for such a difference may have to do with inadequate staffing in the local and government owned newspapers when compared with the two privately owned national papers. However, what is perhaps more important is that only reporters and editors responsible for writing and processing foreign news were included in the interviews. Among the 30 respondents, 16 have spent between 1 - 5 years in journalism, 27 were men, 25 have university degrees or its equivalent, 19 have got prior journalism training before entering the job, and 18 were between the age of 23 - 30 years.

That over two-thirds of the journalists interviewed have university degree or equivalent, nearly two thirds were not above thirty years, and over half have spent only between 1 - 5 years in journalism suggest that the majority of the respondents were among the 'best' trained group of journalists in Nigeria. This perhaps reflects a general change over the

years in the educational qualifications of those joining the profession at middle and lower levels, due to a general expansion in the educational system in the country, in contrast with the situation in the 1960s (Rose in Hachten: 1971). It is likely that this 'improvement' in the quality of people in journalism does not cut across all the major mass media in Nigeria. Rather, it is more likely to be concentrated in the print and television media where journalists enjoy high exposure through by-lines or appearance on the screen.

Only three of the respondents were women and about two-thirds have had some training in journalism before joining their various newspapers.

Before delving into the results of the interviews, a brief discussion on the relationship that exists between PANA, NAN and the Nigerian newspapers is attempted.

### **8.3 PANA, NAN and Nigerian Newspapers:**

As mentioned by PANA's information Director in an interview, the agency does not, at the time this study is conducted, have direct access to its client media in African countries. In Nigeria, for example, PANA reaches the country's media organisations through NAN.

Not all the news stories transmitted by the agency are passed

by NAN to the media clients. As the government agency having sole right over the distribution of foreign news in Nigeria, NAN acts as a gatekeeper between PANA and Nigerian media houses. The 'gatekeeper' concept, to which studies on news selection take root, was first used by Kurt Lewin (in Tunstall: 1971), who conceived news as flowing through several gatekeepers with each making a decision about its passage. The role of NAN, therefore, as the selector of 'relevant' stories for the Nigerian media subscribing to it is a crucial one.

According to the sub-editor in-charge of the PANA desk at NAN headquarters, about 20 stories are selected every day from PANA's bulletins for inclusion in NAN's own daily bulletins. The main instrument of their news selection is the professional judgment of the sub-editor. The number of PANA stories included in NAN's bulletins, as claimed by NAN's PANA desk sub-editor, is far higher than the number which the newspaper journalists claimed they usually received from PANA through NAN. That stories are selected on the basis of the PANA desk sub-editor's judgement (in NAN) raises some interesting points.

First, there is the implicit assumption that any sub-editor posted to NAN's PANA desk is assumed to know Nigeria's interest in African continental politics. This means that the sub-editor alone defines which African news is 'relevant' and which is not.

Second, the sub-editor's professional values and training are likely to influence his/her choice of stories (on this see Golding: 1977). Because most journalists employed by NAN, as noted by Musa (1989), had either been on training attachment with one of the major news agencies of the West at one time or another, or were trained in Nigerian institutions, which Ake (1981) argued are oriented towards Western values, their professional world view and judgement may be said to be largely Western oriented.

Though this may imply that the selection of PANA stories for Nigerian media by NAN is done with a 'Western eye', it is likely that the sub-editor uses similar selection criteria as his PANA counterparts, thus making it possible for many of the stories 'relevant' to Nigeria to be passed on. Studies on editors' perception of readers' interest have shown that although cultural differences among journalists influence their selection of news, yet they share common preferences as to what is newsworthy (see for example Peterson: 1979).

One problem with NAN's gatekeeping of PANA stories is the restriction of the agency (PANA) from having direct contact with Nigerian media organisations. In fact according to the foreign news editor of Concord, NAN's gatekeeping role with respect to all news from foreign wire services going into Nigeria has made it "difficult for foreign news editors in the newspapers to easily differentiate the various sources of news distributed by the agency". This is more so as the services

are received as part of NAN's bulletins. This buffer created by NAN between PANA and the newspapers hinders PANA from creating an image and identity of its own within the Nigerian media houses.

#### 8.4 Respondents' Responses:

All respondents in both groups of newspapers, national and local, mentioned that their newspapers have a policy towards coverage of news relating to Africa. Generally, the policy was stated in terms of attaching high prominence to news which enhances 'African development' and 'unity'. It was clear from the interviews conducted and the content analyses of African and world news in the newspapers that African unity and development was defined and largely viewed in the context of news reports of visits between political leaders of different countries and sporting competitions and events. Whereas these may be among some of the ways of promoting co-operation and unity between African countries, it is nonetheless elitist in approach by taking it as given that the interest of the people are always represented in sporting, political and diplomatic events.

Out of all the newspapers, New Nigerian seemed to be having the strongest news policy on Africa, though not entirely different from that of the others. According to its editor, New Nigeria's policy towards African news is built upon a pan-

Africanist policy<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, the New Nigerian has several times radically identified itself more with the left of centre in matters of foreign and especially African policy than the Nigerian government itself. Examples of periods when the newspaper took a 'radical' stand in foreign coverage and features were during Angola's independence and the struggle against apartheid in Southern Africa. This 'radical' policy, however, does not suggest that the newspaper's African and world news stories were generally different from those of the remaining papers. But generally, all the editors of the newspapers in the study mentioned that their organizations, as a matter of policy, attach importance to news on Africa due to what most saw as Nigeria's "strong policy" and "leadership role" in Africa.

The question of having a news policy relating to Africa in the newspapers is vital to the investigation about the perception of PANA by the journalists. This is presumably because journalists in newspapers which have no clear policy towards African news may be less concerned about PANA and much less have views about it.

Having established the policies of these newspapers with regard to news about Africa at a general level, respondents were asked whether or not they were aware of PANA. Out of

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<sup>1</sup> The philosophy of pan-Africanism itself arose out of and in response to the oppression of African peoples both within and outside Africa (Campbell, H., in Africa World Review, April 1991). It basically relates to the political and social emancipation of Africa.

thirty respondents, twenty-eight said they were personally aware of the existence of the continental agency. Only two respondents, one of whom was a foreign page editor of a local newspaper, were not aware of PANA at all. In terms of distribution between local and national journalists, all of those asked in the national papers were aware of PANA's existence while twenty-six knew about the agency in the local newspapers. Irrespective of ownership, there was more awareness about PANA among national than local journalists. In all, twenty-four out of thirty respondents said PANA's service is received by their newspapers and only a fifth answered they "didn't know". When divided across the newspapers, thirteen out of fifteen journalists from the national papers said their papers receive PANA services, and two said they "didn't know". Four out of fifteen journalists in the local newspapers said they "didn't know" whether or not their newspapers receive PANA services and eleven said it is received.

It is possible that PANA is known and used more by the national papers - where more respondents said it is received - than in the local papers because of their relatively better organised foreign news desks, which have more staff than those in the local papers, hence more likely to notice the agency's stories. The content analysis of the newspapers did not show evidence of this claim as both the local and national papers credited only one per cent each of their news to PANA, from 45% of news about Africa in the case of each group of

newspapers. But this may have been due to the non crediting of the agency whenever its stories are used, and does not therefore indicate its actual usage or awareness.

Journalists from both groups of papers who knew about the reception of PANA stories provided similar reasons as to why the agency's service is received. Reasons given were that PANA, being an African organisation, provides "accurate and comprehensive information about the continent of Africa". In fact, some of the respondents argued that (though also applicable to all agency materials) because their newspapers cannot afford the cost of covering events in other countries as PANA would, their papers receive the agency's service. These views imply that PANA's services are not regarded as special or different in value terms from those of other agencies, and are simply used to save coverage costs. On the other hand, it is also likely that reporters who expressed this latter view did so only in order to provide a general explanation for the use of PANA service, as for any other agency.

Asked to explain how PANA's services are received by the various newspapers, almost all respondents from the national papers said it is through NAN; while six journalists from the local papers, including two foreign page editors, said their papers receive PANA news directly from the agency. Since it was impossible for the papers to directly deal with PANA, the answer given by these respondents must have been out of

ignorance, which itself indicates their lack of awareness about the African agency.

There were also some inconsistencies in the frequency with which journalists from the two sets of papers claimed PANA's materials are received. For example even in the national papers one-third (five respondents) did not know how frequently - whether daily, weekly or monthly - PANA stories were received in spite of the claim by over two-thirds of them that they were received by their newspapers. In the local papers, nearly half of the respondents did not know the frequency with which PANA materials are received (7/15). It is possible for journalists to know that a particular agency's services are received by their newspaper and not to necessarily know the frequency with which such services are received; but as professionals working on the foreign news desk, the respondents could be expected to be a little bit more familiar with how frequent PANA's stories are received if the agency is seriously known and used. However, these seeming inconsistencies and demonstrations of unawareness about PANA are an indication of a low level of familiarity with the continental agency and of its journalistic value priorities.

Another explanation for the inconsistent and ignorant answers given by the respondents is the gatekeeping exercised by NAN with respect to all PANA materials. As argued earlier, this may confuse journalists in the newspapers by making it

difficult for them to recognise PANA materials very easily. Consequently, in spite of claims about increased usage of PANA stories by the Nigerian press (Ansah: 1986), it is possible that NAN's gatekeeper role may have only increased the passage of more stories to the newspapers on some issues (and not others) or at certain times (e.g when they have less foreign stories) and not others, resulting in an inconsistent reception of PANA's services. Such a situation could affect the respondent's judgement of how frequently materials are received.

Responses also varied on the type of services received by the newspapers. In the national papers, a little over two-thirds ( $^{11}/_{15}$ ) identified general news, features and sports stories, and the remaining four didn't know. In the local papers, on the other hand, nearly one-third ( $^4/_{15}$ ) said only general news was received; six journalists said it was news and features; two said it was only features that were received; while the remaining three didn't know the type of services that were received. Similarly, there appeared also to be confusion in the answers given with respect to the media through which the agency services were received.

It was possible that respondents answered the questions they were being asked from the point of view of the desks to which they belong, particularly in the local papers such as Gaskiya, where the distinction between the main news desk, foreign and features desks was not very clear. Therefore respondents

perhaps mentioned those services which they were familiar with. Equally, they may have answered incorrectly because they didn't want to seem unable to answer questions they probably thought related to their daily official tasks.

Questioned further to estimate the average number of words of PANA originated materials their newspapers publish, nearly two-thirds ( $9/15$ ) of those interviewed in the local papers didn't know, and the remaining six ( $6/15$  of the local journalists), who claimed to know, said about 300-500 words are published whenever the materials are used. Among the national journalists, a little over half ( $8/15$ ) said that the length "depends on the relevance or interest of the material to readers". The remaining half ( $7/15$ ) didn't know. What seems clear is that as the questions become more specific such that they required well informed knowledge about PANA, the number of respondents able to answer tended to decrease. Indeed, given that the questions asked did not require senior editorial ranking to be answered, the nature of the responses given indicates how well PANA is known and used, or its influence felt in the newspapers.

Respondents were also asked to explain their degree of satisfaction with respect to two of PANA's services - namely news and features (satisfaction was categorised into different degrees such as poor, fair, good, very good and excellent). With respect to news,  $6/15$  of national journalists judged the service as good,  $2/15$  believed it was fair and the remaining ( $7/15$ ) said they could not comment. On the other hand, in the

local papers, only six journalists out of fifteen believed the quality of PANA's news service was good while the rest of the nine journalists said they were not sufficiently familiar with the service to be able to judge it.

As for features, two ( $2/15$ ) of the respondents in the national newspapers believed it was fair, one-third ( $5/15$ ) thought it was good and the remaining eight journalists did not judge the agency's features service. In the local papers, only one-third ( $5/15$ ) of the journalists commented on the standard of PANA's features. The remaining two-thirds ( $10/15$ ) could not. Of those five who commented, one believed it was good, three said it was excellent while the remaining one said it was poor.

It was clear from the data that in the case of both news and features more national journalists were able to judge PANA's services than the local respondents respectively - i.e  $8/15$  against  $6/15$  (for news) and  $5/15$  against  $10/15$  (for features). If these claims were correct, this could suggest greater familiarity with PANA news than its features in the newspapers. Indeed, this seems likely if it is considered that even PANA itself disseminates more news stories than features (see chapter five for PANA news content analysis). Equally, this may re-affirm the earlier expressed view that the criteria used by NAN in selecting 'suitable' PANA stories for Nigerian media were similar, possibly allowing more news stories than features to pass through to the newspapers, which

may be why more respondents commented on the news than the feature service.

One interesting finding in the study relates to an attempt to ascertain whether having access to PANA stories has led the newspapers to report more African stories. Though this perhaps could be more accurately known by undertaking a comparative content analysis of African news in the newspapers before and after the establishment of PANA, nevertheless as people who daily process African and world news in their respective newspapers, their professional judgement was also sought.

Half ( $8/15$ ) of the national journalists said "no" to the question (of whether or not having access to PANA news has made them report more stories about Africa), two said "maybe", and the remaining one-third ( $5/15$ ) didn't know. In the local newspapers, almost two-thirds of the journalists ( $9/15$ ) said access to PANA stories has led to the reporting of more stories about Africa. Within both the local and national newspapers, more journalists from the government than the private newspapers seemed to hold the view that access to PANA stories has contributed to more reporting about Africa.

Asked to explain whether the newspapers credit PANA whenever stories originating from the agency are used, three journalists from the national papers said "sometimes", four said "yes", and the remaining eight journalists said they

"don't know". On the other hand, in the local newspapers, one-fifth of the respondents ( $3/15$ ) said "yes", two said "sometimes", while the remaining two-thirds ( $10/15$ ) said they "don't know".

The main reason given for crediting PANA by both national and local journalists was that all the newspapers regarded it a matter of policy and fairness to give credit to story sources which are not part of the newspaper establishments concerned. Those who said PANA is only credited "sometimes", argued that in most cases PANA is not credited for using its stories due to, in the words of one who subscribed to this position, "negligence or carelessness of sub-editors". This view does not relate to the findings of the content analysis of the newspapers (see chapter six), in which it was found that both the national and local newspapers collectively credited PANA in not more than 1% of the foreign stories they reported, out of which 45% was on Africa. Indeed, this strongly suggests that either the newspapers don't use PANA as much as the interviewed journalists claimed, or they do not credit the agency for using its stories as much as is suggested here.

On the sources respondents would turn to for news about Africa if PANA were to stop functioning, over two-thirds ( $11/15$ ) of them from the national papers said they would turn to various foreign sources like Reuters and AFP. In the local papers half ( $8/15$ ) also said they would turn to the major agencies while two said they would make use of NAN. The remaining four

of the national journalists and seven of the local ones didn't give any alternative source. One interesting point here is that over half of the journalists from both newspapers (8 local and 11 national journalists) mentioned that they would turn to the major agencies as alternative sources to PANA for news about Africa.

With the exception of Reporter, which was established in 1988, all the other five newspapers have directly or indirectly (in the case of Gaskiya) received the services of the two mentioned Western agencies before the take-off of NAN or the beginning of its gatekeeping of foreign news going into Nigeria. That over half of the journalists in both papers see the much criticised Western agencies as alternatives to PANA (and not radically different) suggests that the respondents perceived the two sets of agencies - PANA on one hand and the Western ones on the other - as similar.

Though the respondents were clear about PANA's aims and role in providing 'alternative' news for African media, as professionals commenting on the agency's services they possibly did not see them differently from those of the Western agencies, hence the reason for mentioning the latter as alternatives to PANA. In fact, even with PANA in service, all the six newspapers still do monitor and use foreign broadcast stories from BBC or VOA, with the richer ones like Concord having satellite dish antennas which receive CNN, implying that they still regard the Western sources as good

news sources. This particular finding compares with Roser and Brown's (1986) study of African newspaper editors in which they found that despite widespread dissatisfaction (69%) with Western wire services reporting on Africa and their support for establishing a Pan-African news agency, the editors still regarded national and regional agencies with "some ambivalence". These doubts centred on the capacity of the agencies to simultaneously serve as "objective sources" of news about Africa and as "sources of government propaganda", a factor which explains why the newspapers still regard the Western sources as 'good' sources of news about Africa.

As for the  $\frac{2}{15}$  of the respondents in the local papers who said they would turn to NAN as an alternative to PANA, their position perhaps only confirmed how unaware they were of the type of agencies NAN and PANA actually represent (i.e national and regional). Though NAN has three foreign offices in London, Harare and New York, which send to it foreign stories of relevance to Nigeria, by itself NAN is not capable of being a sufficient source of news for African stories. Again, the mention of foreign embassies by some of the national journalists among the sources to turn to, also either re-emphasises the regard given to official sources as "good" sources of news, or the proximity which the papers published in Lagos have with the foreign embassies resident in Nigeria.

### 8.5 Usage of Development journalism approach:

Like the concept 'development', 'development journalism' is problematic. While development is a function of a broad range of variables comprising social, economic, political and cultural factors, proponents of development journalism tend to see it as an independent variable and a causative factor in development. Jayaweera (1987) and Odhiambo (1991), among others, have each argued that 'development journalism' has its theoretical foundation in the Western structural functionalist views of Rogers and Schramm in the 1950s and 1960s. It was developed in the confines of American administrative and effects research, from where it was "domiciled" in the Third World. Since then it has become a political and academic philosophy. According to Oreh and Tharoor development journalism is assumed to achieve two goals (Oreh: 1978, Tharoor: 1977). These are:

- (i) to give publicity to the efforts and achievements of governments and
- (ii) draw the attention of leaders to the problems of the majority in society.

One of the main criticisms against development journalism is its assumed legitimate role to publicize even 'illegitimate' government activities without questioning the class interest the government actually serves or represents, under the guise of using the media for developmental purposes. It is the

contention here that though development journalism is supposed to be a special kind of journalism which accepts activism and partisanship in journalism due to the need to involve the media in developmental processes, yet it is poised with problems because of the failure to reach a definition of 'development' which is acceptable to all.

Because criticisms directed against the major Western agencies were largely on their reporting of Africa in the context of crises news and 'disregard' for a 'development journalism' approach, respondents' professional judgement was sought on PANA's usage or non-usage of the approach (i.e. development journalism) in its news reporting. This question attracted a high response because out of the 30 journalists interviewed, only two (from the local papers) did not comment on their understanding of 'development journalism'. Some likely reasons for this high response include the age group to which most of the respondents belong (23 - 30 years), the high level of training which most of them had (<sup>25</sup>/<sub>30</sub> had university degree or its equivalent) and exposure to journalism which perhaps made them interested in commenting on issues of development as this one.

Respondents' main idea of development journalism centred around the point that it is an approach in journalism which provides, in the words of one, "fearless constructive criticism". Generally, it was defined as "using the powerful effects of the media to galvanise people, create awareness

among them about their social, cultural life, and how they can participate to make it better" (quoted from respondents' own definition of the concept).

While it is widely accepted that one of the goals of development journalism is to make 'constructive criticism' of the activities of both leaders and people in society and use the media to create awareness, the tasks of creating awareness among people and of encouraging them to participate in the activities of their governments can at times be contradictory. Some Third World governments are not legitimately elected by the people they govern. Likewise many government policies and programmes do not benefit or represent the interest of most citizens. For example, Nigeria's economic policy of structural adjustment programme (SAP), has so far only worsened the social conditions of most ordinary citizens and the country's balance of payments (Analyst: June 1986). For development journalism, under such situations, to encourage citizens' participation in governmental programmes rather than promote the change of the system that operates the programmes is necessarily contradictory and pro status-quo.

Nearly half of all those interviewed ( $14/30$ ) commented on PANA's usage of development journalism approach in its general news reporting and less than that number ( $12/30$ ) on its usage of the same approach in features. Distributed according to newspapers, with respect to general news, six of the local journalists argued that the usage of development journalism

approach by PANA was 'good', and the remaining nine didn't know, while in the national papers two journalists suggested it was fair, six said it was good and the remaining seven didn't know. With regard to features, three of the local journalists said usage of the approach by PANA was good, one said it was poor, and another one thought it was excellent. In the national papers, on the other hand, five respondents suggested it was good and two thought it was fair.

It seems that more journalists agreed to comment on news than features, just as in the question of receiving PANA's stories. Taken as a whole, over two-thirds ( $^{22}/_{30}$ ) of the interviewed journalists had confidence in PANA's potential in establishing a new information order in Africa. A little over half ( $^{18}/_{30}$ ) feared that the control of the agency by African governments may have restricted its ability to disseminate 'objective information' directly to its clients. One loophole in this position is that it contradicts the earlier given explanation of why PANA's service is taken, namely "accurate and objective information".

The concern about "objective information" among the journalists contradicts the view of nearly half of the respondents who commented on PANA's usage of development journalism approach. The fear expressed by over half ( $^{18}/_{30}$ ) about PANA's ability to provide 'objective' news necessarily contradicts its expectation to use 'development' approach in its news reporting, which was commented on by nearly half of

the respondents because the usage of this latter approach does not disagree with active journalism.

This also raises the question of their conception of objectivity as being tied to "accurate" and "impartial reporting", which they thought was important for a news agency's reputation. It is important to note that the training which the respondents received, largely Western, may have had an impact on their notion that news should be objective.

The concept of objectivity is itself a construct rather than a reality. In Gans's study of American television and news magazine media (Gans: 1979), he showed that although journalists try to be objective, which according to him they define as "value exclusion" in news selection, some of their enduring values still find their way into news judgments. This is necessarily so because all individuals, including journalists, operate with certain ideological assumptions of what constitutes a 'normal' behaviour and a 'good' society. Thus, even if based on the respondents' understanding of the concept - i.e "accurate" and "impartial reporting" - PANA cannot offer "objective" alternative news on Africa and its developmental issues largely because of 'in-built' enduring and professional values of those who report and process its news stories. These values subtly tend to uphold and glorify the dominance of the upper social elite over the majority lower social groups in society even in news products.

It is obvious that despite the inconsistency of the answers given to some of the questions, there was much enthusiasm to show support to PANA. This readiness to support the agency, which was thought to be providing development news, was perhaps borne out of admiration for radicalism and the desire to be seen as radical journalists. This view is shared by Tunstall (1971) who equally thinks "a minority" among journalists and sociologists "mislead outsiders with their rhetoric into believing that they are revolutionaries, socialists and reformers". Moreover, taking into cognisance that two-thirds or more of those interviewed had university degrees or its equivalent and were young (23-30 years), it is not surprising they wanted to be seen as radicals due to the prestige associated with radicalism among journalists in Nigeria.

Again, a majority of the journalists (<sup>18</sup>/<sub>30</sub>) from both the local and national newspapers believed that PANA has provided a mechanism for news exchange among African countries despite worries about its being controlled by various governments. Asked to explain what they understand by 'regional news exchange', a representative reply from these journalists defined it as "close co-operation and exchange of information at a regional level among news agencies of various countries." Though this sounds correct at a glance, it is still deficient in that it takes the concept "information" for granted. That it does not make explicit the type of information that should form the basis of the news exchange and the type of actors who

should primarily make news has made their conception of news exchange, whether knowingly or complacently, a given and static one that continues to focus on urban centres, presidents and official sources at the expense of ordinary citizens.

Finally, it can be argued that although conceptually nearly all the journalists interviewed ( $^{24}/_{30}$ ) share PANA's goals, that about two-thirds ( $^{19}/_{30}$ ) of them said they could turn to the major Western agencies as alternative(s) to PANA suggests that most of the journalists in question do not practically regard PANA as a special source of news on Africa different from the criticised Western agencies. As deduced from the data, very low familiarity with the agency's services by the respondents and the concern about its lack of objectivity due to its ownership and control by African governments are the two main possible explanations for this.

#### 8.6 Conclusion:

The materials analyzed in this chapter suggest that awareness about PANA among most of those interviewed was low. The data suggests there was little detailed knowledge about PANA or sufficient awareness on which many of the journalists felt confident to express opinions. Yet many were willing to show support for the principles of 'development news' exchange among African countries.

The point that over half of respondents in each of the two sets of newspapers (i.e  $11/15$  in the national and  $8/15$  in the local newspapers) have said that they would turn to Western news agencies for news on Africa as an alternative to PANA itself indicates that the agency's services would not be missed if they were to be stopped, therefore suggesting they were not regarded as special. But comparatively, it may be argued that more local journalists regarded PANA (even if only notionally) to be a better source of news on Africa than the national journalists because of the lower number of respondents from those newspapers (local) who believed that Western agencies are an alternative to PANA on African news. On the other hand, that may only be an indication that the national journalists were more comfortable with Western news agency stories than the local ones.

On the whole, the data seem to say that the level of awareness and impact of PANA on the respondents, and by extension Nigerian journalists, is at best negligible. But this in itself is indicative of the low impact of PANA on Nigerian journalists. It seems the agency needs to introduce other effective measures to make its presence felt among Nigerian media practitioners. This is necessary if it is to play an important role in the efforts towards establishing a new order in the continent.

The next chapter (Chapter Nine) discusses the findings in this chapter and especially the results of the content analyses of

the last two chapters (six and seven) within the framework of the value socialization of African journalists and societal context drawing examples particularly from Nigeria.

## Chapter Nine

### News Imbalance: PANA and the Nigerian Press

#### 9.1 Introduction:

The organization of the news is not ordained by reality, nor necessarily a complete description of it, but instead is artificially and fully mediated by the culture it supports (Kotch: 1991: 1).

....By identifying centralized sources of information as legitimated social institutions.... sites of news gathering are objectified as the legitimated and legitimating sources of both information and governance....information (or news) is transformed into objective facts - facts as normal, natural, taken-for-granted description.... And through the sources identified with facts, news create and control controversy; they contain dissent (Tuchman: 1978).

Using Kotch's and Tuchman's description of news as a starting point, the chapter attempts to relate what Tuchman called "power in the outside world" and imbalances and inequality with respect to certain story actors, story types, locations, topics and themes in the news content of PANA and the examined Nigerian newspapers.

That mass media content is a reflection of social power has since been argued by Hachten (1971) and Golding and Elliott (1979), among others. This implies that mass media content in most cases explicitly and implicitly reflects the views of dominant social groups in society. The media are systematically selective in the voices and views they project because they are subject to the control of particular social groups and classes in society. The chapter also attempts to explain the factors that have made possible a convergence of the main news reporting values of the

two news media studied, PANA and Nigerian newspapers, as shown in the analyses of their news content, with respect to news actors, topics, location, etc.

In this concluding chapter, it is argued that the similarities in the criteria of news selection demonstrated by both PANA and the Nigerian press are reflective of existing realities in Africa and Nigeria. These realities relate to imbalances in economic structures within Nigeria and Africa, and more generally between Africa and the West. A number of explanations such as domestic and international political and economic inequality within and between nations, media ownership patterns, organizational routines and professional value socialization of journalists and their link with power structures in society may be identified as explanations for imbalances in the news of both PANA and the Nigerian press. Because the context in which the media operate are set by international and 'local' factors, which are influenced by societal structures and by a few influential power groups, focus on those groups by the media or its news output helps to legitimise the status quo and perpetuate their hegemony over the majority in society.

### 9.2 Political and Economic inequality in the news of PANA and Nigerian Press:

As part of the attempt to explain why particular groups of news actors, news topics and news locations figured more prominently than others, for example political figures, politics and urban areas respectively, though without implying undue economic

determinism, the dialectical connection between politics, the economy, and culture is discussed. The importance and relationship between economy, politics and culture have been well discussed by neo-Marxist structuralists like Galtung and Ruge (1965), Schiller (1976), Murdock and Golding (1977), Matterlat (1979), Golding and Murdock (1979) and Garnham (1990). Murdock and Golding (op cit) rightly believe that "culture producing industries can be understood primarily in terms of their economic determination", thus emphasising economic relations and the way they (economic relations) structure the processes and results of cultural production (emphasis added). However, like the position of Murdock and Golding, the contention here does not imply a one-to-one relationship between the economy and the media, nor even to deny in general terms the "relative autonomy" of production practices in the cultural sector.

Political 'independence' did not seem to have substantially changed the Western economic dominance of the world. African and Third World economies still have complex and dependent linkages with the economies of the West, especially the United States.

Since the 1940s, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have become two important Western international agencies through which the West tightens its control over the 'developing' countries, and by extension their institutions like the media and the economy, under the guise of 'modernization' and 'development'. Mowlana and Wilson (1990) have traced the origin of the two concepts to post second world war America's attempt

to 'transform' countries defeated in the war, Germany for example, and other non-industrialised non-Western countries into 'Western style' democracies through peaceful stages of 'reconstruction' and 'reform' processes. The establishment of the United Nations system and its sister agencies at that period of US ascendancy (1940s) to a world power position helped popularise the concepts internationally, together with the values, largely American, they inherently contain.

As rightly pointed out by Ghai (1991), the failure of the pursued economic policies of 'modernization' and 'development' by most Third World countries, their dire need for foreign exchange to maintain some level of imports, and strong pressure from international financial organisations and donor countries (see also Payer: 1991) have all 'forced' a large number of them, including those in Africa, to initiate a process of economic 'reform'. These economic 'reform' policies, mainly in the form of 'Structural Adjustment Programmes' (SAP) designed by the IMF and the World Bank, differ largely from those of the post-war period. According to Anyaoku (1989), 22 out of 34 low income countries in sub-Saharan Africa had or were about to enter into 'adjustment' programmes with the World Bank or IMF by late 1980s. Through the 'reform' programmes, the economies and other institutions of those countries are made to conform to international capitalist needs.

The foreign debt of sub-Saharan Africa is currently around US \$150 billion, which is 100% of its annual GNP (UNDP: 1992:45).

Of this figure, one-fifth (US \$30 billion) was incurred by Nigeria alone in spite of its oil resources and membership of OPEC. Though some countries of OECD have announced plans to help low income African countries with the \$64 billion loan the countries of the continent owed them, only \$6 billion or less than 10% of the amount was cancelled by the end of 1989. The World Bank has also introduced a Debt Reduction Facility (IDA) in 1989 to enable poorer countries to 'buy back' their commercial debt for a small percentage of its face value. Despite such 'assistance', UNCTAD has argued that "the economies of most African countries are still dominated....and confront hostile economic environment, problems of external indebtedness and, in a number of cases, political and social unrest" (UNCTAD: 1991:9). Indeed, the UNDP has maintained that "there has been no significant progress" as far as cancelling Africa's private debt from commercial banks or other lenders, including the World Bank, are concerned as at June 1991. In this respect, it (UNDP) concluded that "Africa's experience contrasts sharply with that of Poland which, despite a Per capita income four times the African average, has successfully had its bilateral debt reduced by 50%" (UNDP: 1992:46).

Only recently, the influential London Financial Times reported that the Western creditor governments have warned Nigeria at a Paris Club meeting to reduce its debt arrears or the country would be refused new loans (Financial Times of 25/3/93).

Implicit in the ADB and UNDP reports is the premise that African

economies, and by implication other institutions such as the media, are not free of Western influences due to increasing foreign debt and control by international institutions.

In spite of the IMF and World Bank engineered policies, the African Development Bank (ADB: 1989) argued that "African countries are probably further (away) from their declared goal of self sustaining development than they were two decades ago" (ADB: 1989). It maintained that the general socio-economic and cultural situation of the continent is "one of stagnation and decline" despite what, according to the bank (ADB), appeared to be "remarkable progress" in such areas as education, transport and communication.

Similar to the IMF and World Bank, the TNCs, usually Western, also exert influence on Africa's economy, politics and culture. Taking the example of Nigeria, the TNC's influence usually takes place through their (TNCs) subsidiaries, whose top managers, shareholders, dealers and directors (being influential Nigerians) are well co-opted and integrated into the organizational, financial and structural control of the parent TNCs. By controlling policy, research and training, the TNCs maintain firm control over the subsidiary companies, and especially their directors and shareholders, who either directly or indirectly influence government policy at whatever level because of their social status. Examples of the several Western TNCs operating through their subsidiaries in Nigeria include ITT, John Holt, Glaxo, UAC of Nigeria and so on.

Wilmot (1979), for example, argues that Western TNCs operating in Nigeria continued to behave with the arrogance of slave masters and colonisers in their exploitation and domination of the ordinary people of the country. Although the country's military government had in 1977 promulgated an indigenisation decree which required local participation of at least 40% in all the business operated by foreign TNCs, participation of Nigerians still remains "formal (and) merely legal". This is largely because the TNCs "take all the major production, marketing and operational decisions" pertaining to their operation in the country (Abba et al: 1985:177).

To clearly demonstrate how TNCs can influence policies in an operating continent or country, the example of UAC of Nigeria seems relevant. UAC of Nigeria limited is a subsidiary of Unilever limited of Netherlands and Britain. Its trading links and contact go far back to the Royal Niger Company "which helped the British to colonise Nigeria". Through its many companies - Gottschalks; UAC Agricultural Ltd etc, UAC is involved in a wide range of activities including supply of building and electrical equipment; food distribution; etc. For instance, UAC's profit in 1985 was N38.6 million. It had a bank balance of N246.58m or about \$250 million, before currency deregulation in late 1986, despite the serious economic problems facing the country and Third World generally (see Analyst: 1986).

UAC's directors and shareholders are influential and important Nigerians from various walks of life who have either retired from

top government position or are high ranking traditional rulers and very rich businessmen. Indeed, Osoba (1977) and Onwuka (1986) have concluded that through the integration of rich and influential Nigerians, and more generally influential Africans, into their corporate and control structures, the TNCs penetrate into the economies of developing countries, make huge profits and influence their overall policies including cultural.

In Nigeria, as elsewhere in Africa, the "power elite", comprising the business and technocratic elites, whose members own private media and direct public ones like PANA, has since 1952, that is prior to independence, continued to play an increasingly important role in all major governments and ruling political parties. The concept of "power elite" was perhaps first used by C. Wright Mills in his study of power in American society in the 1950s, though the 'elite theory' was developed earlier by Italian sociologists, Vilfredo Pareto and Gaetano Mosca (Haralambos: 1985).

The conception of a 'power elite' is based on the idea of two main divided groups in society, the ruling minority and the ruled. According to Mills (1956) the centralization of the means of power and information in (American) society in the hands of the "power elite" enabled them to make decisions having major consequences on ordinary citizens. That the "power elite" - whom he defined as the men "in command of the major hierarchies and organisations of modern society" such as the state machinery, the military establishment and big corporations - occupy "pivotal

positions" itself has impact on society. Thus, the success or failure to make decisions by these power groups has consequences on the generality of society because the strategic command positions they occupy are those in which power and wealth are located (Mills: 1956:4).

While one of the main criticisms against Mills's "power elite" theory is its inadequacy in describing the complex structure of American society even at the time the analysis was made, by not taking into cognisance the influence of lobby and pressure groups like the labour unions, yet it seems relevant in explaining the power structure of dependent societies as those in Africa. Particularly relevant is the theory to Africa because of the privileges and influence enjoyed by the local elite as a consequence of their integration into the Western corporate structure, to which they serve as a link between their countries and the latter (Sussman: 1991, Hamelink: 1988, Onwuka: 1986).

In Nigeria, according to Osoba (1977), the growing control of fiscal policies from 1952 onwards by central and regional governments, whose parties were all committed to a 'free enterprise' economic system, led to the creation of conditions which favoured the rise of a local capital owning class, which was to emerge later as the local 'power elite'. The governments introduced many policies such as tax reliefs, credit facilities and technical advice to benefit (though not indiscriminately) prominent businessmen in the parties or to win over to the government side politically influential businessmen. Broadly,

self rule and political independence were instrumental to the rise of local power groups in Africa, as was the case in Nigeria.

As independence approached, big foreign businesses operating in Nigeria, which had before then discriminated against Nigerians, came to realise that they needed the co-operation of Nigerian decision-makers in order to continue to do business in the country after political independence. Soon, they entered into business 'partnership' with many politically influential Nigerians, whose active support they required. Influential Nigerians with small shares were appointed 'honorary' directors of foreign TNCs operating in the country. These 'directors' constituted ready tools in the hands of those who appointed them into their 'directorship' positions. (Osoba: 1977: 374).

Though a fraction of 1% of the wider society, these 'power elites', to which top mass media practitioners<sup>1</sup> and owners belong, constitute top military, political and business groups (Nwankwo: 1987:126). These groups link the larger society to Western values and lifestyle through their taste and aspirations for Western media and non media products.

Equally, the middle class - comprising educated and professional groups, including senior journalists - though relatively wider in relation to the former, also contributes in the linkage process of the dependent societies to Western value patterns.

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<sup>1</sup> According to Ugboajah (1978) the life styles of top media people in Nigeria classifies them as members of the upper social class. Their annual salary then was \$28,000, and were paid more than their counterparts in the civil service. This finding still seems valid.

Indeed, the impact of economic policies formulated by international (Western) institutions and the activities of TNCs in Africa, through the top local elite, concentrate economic and political power in the hands of the few top intermediary local elites, but who incidentally loose the power and initiative to the external institutions in the process. Implied here is the influence of external forces as an integral part of the features of neo-colonial societies, such as those in contemporary Africa, similar to Kalu's (1984) conceptualization of a "three-tier class structure", in which the 'domestic' power group is placed at the "second-tier" by loosing its power to foreign interests and TNCs.

This process creates and perpetuates gaps between the minority elite groups and the mass of the people, who had to be ruled by what Althusser (1971) called 'repressive' and 'ideological' apparatuses. The mass media, whether private or public, belong to the latter tools, and in this way, become incorporated into the power structures in society, with the attendant bias of its content towards "areas of negotiable compromise", mainly the central institutions of business and government, and their operators. Incidentally, it was the partial consequences of these inequalities and imbalances which reproduced themselves in the news of PANA and the Nigerian press, showing neglect for rural centres or women and ordinary citizens as actors in society in relation to urban areas or political and official figures.

### 9.3 Ownership Structure, Editorial Control and Power Imbalance in the News of PANA and Nigerian Press:

The ownership structure of the media, private or public, is related to its source of funding - whether direct grant, advertising or both. Though private ownership is sometimes equated with press (media) freedom and news quality, both public and private ownership patterns are capable of reproducing inequality and imbalances, as they did in the analyzed stories, because of the proximity of both to local and external power centres, which to some degree influence their output.

Among the early private media (newspapers) in Nigeria, the Daily Times is most commonly regarded as a 'success' because of its horizontal and vertical diversification into the Nigerian economy as well as its ability to make profits. This attraction has prompted many private newspapers of the post independent period such as Punch, Concord and Reporter to follow the example of the Daily Times.

Although a financially strong private press has its own problems, for example editorial integrity on certain issues, it equally has advantages by contributing with access to centres of power for non-political news makers and reducing dependence on alternative sources of finance. It also gives economic independence to its staff to risk the 'wrath' of politicians.

Modelled after the Daily Times, the Punch, for example, is a commercial popular-style newspaper established on the style of

British "popular" newspapers. Its effort to attract as many Nigerian readers as possible is perhaps best demonstrated by pictures of scantily clad females (titled page three girl) which it constantly publishes in the paper; in addition to other entertaining materials like cartoons, games and horoscopes. The Punch is also involved in a number of commercial activities beside publishing (including advertisements). These include having shares in KUPIC Ltd - a property and estate Development company; Jal Ltd - an American cosmetics manufacturer; Pusky Ltd - a clearing and forwarding company; Wick oil Ltd - distributor of oil and lubricants; etc.

In the same manner, the Concord Group is interlocked within the Abiola business empire which undertakes a wide range of businesses ranging from commercial printing; books selling; farming (Abiola Farms Ltd); bakery; and shipping. The situation of the Reporter is also similar to that of Concord, being a member of 'Yar Aduwa business group, attaching priority to advertisements, commercial printing and other diversified ventures in order to make profit.

The objective of profit making by newspapers has implications for their news coverage. According to Murdock (1982) advertising, being an important source of revenue for private newspapers (and indeed some public ones), affects news and features presentation in a number of ways. Firstly, because the space in which advertisements are published has to be selected even earlier than editorial material, the positioning of advertisements highly

influences the overall page design of newspapers, thus "structuring the options for (news and features) presentation".

Secondly, the number of advertisements also to some extent squeezes the space made available for editorial material. Whatever the size of editorial material that is at the disposal of the editorial desk, it has to be used in the most economical way possible. This means that either few stories are chosen and told in full detail or more stories are selected for presentation at the expense of some relevant details. Either way, it seems advertisements influence the physical layout, volume of editorial materials, and to some degree the nature of the editorial material itself. One way in which this last factor is likely to be influential (though perhaps rarely) is where a news story is compromised for fear of its likelihood to offend an advertiser (Gans: 1979).

In a study of how space is divided between advertising and editorial matter in Nigeria's two leading newspapers, New Nigerian and Daily Times, Onu (in Ayu: 1984) came to the conclusion that more space is devoted to advertisements than to news and comment. His findings showed that whereas the Daily Times devoted 77.5% of its space to advertisements and only 22.5% to news; the New Nigerian devoted 56% to advertising and 44% to editorial matter. Brynin (1987) also found out that over 40% of Punch's total space was filled up with advertising. Because of the desire by Nigerian newspapers to always find more advertisers to enable them expand their revenue base, these findings still

remain valid with respect to news-advertising ratio, and the possible impact of the latter on the former's (news) location on page and overall newspaper quality.

However, advertising revenue is not all together a negative factor for editorial quality. It could be important for both private and public owned newspapers by reducing or subsidizing the high cost of news production, editorial expenses and the cover price. This way, it helps expand readership to members of the middle social class, whom advertisers want to have access to due to their large number and high purchasing power.

Among the public owned media, the New Nigerian group, of which Gaskiya is a member, is a good example of public owned press. Whereas government subvention constitutes the major and perhaps most important source of revenue for public media in Nigeria, the newspapers are nonetheless encouraged by government to find their own source(s) of generating revenue. As a result, both the New Nigerian and Triumph have their own commercial divisions. These divisions produce and supply exercise books; calenders, letter headed papers, books, etc.

Similar to privately owned newspapers, some public owned ones like the New Nigerian Group (NNG) have vertical investments in areas not directly related to printing. In 1979, for instance, the New Nigerian Group incorporated a subsidiary company, the New Nigerian Packaging Company, for the production of general labels, cartons and light packaging for assorted lines of product. It

owned 55% of the shares in the company, with the remaining sold to private companies and members of the public. It also has investments in properties which it rents out to boost its revenue (Ibrahim: 1983).

Whereas PANA and its member national agencies do not have investments in areas outside news production, PANA in particular strongly believes in the principle of increased self dependence through commercialization, by diversifying its revenue sources. This is evident in the UNESCO-PANA 'rescue' plan adopted by OAU information ministers in Dakar in July 1992, which agreed that PANA was to be made more 'commercially viable' whilst simultaneously retaining its objectives.

The main patterns of operation and control of both the private and public media organizations basically remain the same. Analyzing the control structure in press organisations, a one time journalist, editor and General Manager of a government owned newspaper in Nigeria, the Daily Sketch, Dayo Duyile commented thus:

The Board.... dictates the proprietors' tunes, the General Manager trumpets it loud to the ears of his staff, the editor marries the music to synchronise with the board's editorial policy with the assistance of the editorial manager.....these are the three principal actors who really matter in directing editorial policy of a newspaper (Duyile: 1979).

The foregoing first hand information by a journalist who rose through the ranks and reached the peak of his profession is an important testimony to how senior editors, government, and indeed

top elites in society, who constitute Board members and directors, influence the operations of the media in general. This control structure could also apply to the private press, whose owners share similar interests with the directors of the public press, belong to the same social groups and jointly dominate society. One quick example is the proprietor of Reporter, retired General 'Yar Aduwa, who was Nigeria's number two military and political officer between 1976-79 in the Obasanjo administration, the chairman of 'Yar Aduwa Group, to which the Reporter newspaper is a member, and a disqualified aspirant to Nigeria's presidency in late 1992.

The combination of all the highlighted factors - media ownership and control patterns, advertising, sources of funding, editorial and policy controls - and their relationship to centres of power, have contributed to influencing the news content of the Nigerian press and PANA, and the implicit and explicit biases they contained. Above all, these factors need to be extended beyond individual or organizational decision makers. They need to be located within national and supra-national economic, cultural and other societal structures.

#### 9.4 Transnational Media Values, PANA, Nigerian Press and News Bias:

The news values of the transnational (Western) media emerged with the rise of news agencies in the West in the 19th century, and especially with their expansion into providing 'general' news in addition to commodity and financial news, which Boyd-Barrett

(1980) and Golding and Elliott (in Harris: 1981) argued was related to a widening interest in news. Because the early agencies, such as Reuters, Havas and Wolff were privately owned, their approach to news collection and distribution was based on its utility as a merchandise and the interest it has for consumers. As suggested by Righter (1978), news stories were selected for their 'impact', 'exoticism' and entertainment value.

With the advent of the telegraph and news agencies, the need to save costs and produce quick and 'clear' reports led to the development of 'professional' news reporting style presently in use. This style demands journalists to respond to the 5-Ws (who, what, when, where, why) in order to reduce personal opinions to the minimum (Desmond: 1980).

According to Golding (1981) whereas the mass media (and by extension its values) must necessarily reflect the wider interests of their audience in order to stay in business, yet their values still reflect the interests of powerful groups in society through the beliefs and occupational routines of the media practitioners. These factors create a smokescreen for the media and how its values reflect the interest of privileged groups partly because of the internalization of 'societal' or what Gans called 'enduring' values by journalists (as members of society), whose definitions of issues were constrained by the former groups.

Since the 19th century, the world news leadership has remained

in the West, although interchanging locations between Europe and North America. Currently, the United States has maintained its position as the world's entertainment leader while news leadership has returned to Europe (Tunstall: 1992). Europe presently has the strongest news agencies and news broadcast operations in the world (Reuters and the BBC respectively). The values of the Western agencies, which came to be used as international news values, inherently contain definitions about the type of events, personalities and places which produce 'good' news stories.

The process by which the news media reached Africa, largely via the colonial and neo-colonial process, brought with it the news production values of transnational (Western) media. Those values, which tend to favour powerful groups became transplanted in African journalism despite the role played by the nationalist press, in countries like Nigeria and Ghana, in the struggle for independence.

In consistence with Stevenson's (in Sreberny-Mohammadi: 1985) observation some elements of news like politics remain permanent and negative events like natural disasters are always considered newsworthy while some events, topics and actors are covered more than others. This tends to explain why, for example, politics and political actors were the most reported topic and actors by PANA, while politics and hard or 'raw' negative news were the two most reported by the newspapers. The 'preference' to cover some particular type of event, institution and actor in response to,

and partly as a consequence of the historical circumstances, and 'local' and international power ratio explain the imbalances found in the news equation of PANA and the Nigerian press.

While it may be argued that the prevalence of similar news production values across a large number of countries signifies a 'healthy' internationalization of media values, these are not responsive to universal needs. On the contrary, they represent transnational media values which spread through the comparative advantage of Western media and the incorporation and socialization of African journalism into the former's (Western) news production patterns. Sreberny-Mohammadi (1991) has referred to this Western global media influence in the Third World as "global in the local", a process which Jameson (1984) described as the consequent extension of global capitalism.

The rise of the global market and of bigger and more powerful transnational media companies which diversify into information related and other businesses primarily for profit making has an impact on global generation and production of information. In their planning and agenda, the northern global corporate actors have in mind media audiences and products of the North, with highly limited attention devoted to the audiences of the South. Corporations like Time-Warner incorporated, have emerged as the world's largest media companies with asset value of \$18 billion; nearly 340,000 staff; and a head office in the United States. It also has subsidiaries and operations in Australia, Europe, Latin America and Asia. Time-Warner company has investments in

publishing of magazines and books, music recording, video, cable television, film production, distribution and screening (Sreberny-Mohammadi: 1991).

Africa is not included among those continents in which Time-Warner has subsidiaries perhaps because of low literacy rate and media poverty compared to the other continents (factors which are important to the company's profit making drive). But still, Africa is not excluded from the impact of the international and global news agencies because they (INAs) still have to maintain their presence there in order to satisfy their clients' needs of news about the continent (Africa).

In 1990, Time-Warner launched a new logo with a motto titled "The world is our audience". This shows the extent to which the company is seriously thinking of getting as large a share as possible of the world media audience.

Of the 78 biggest media firms operating in the world listed by Unesco (Unesco: 1989), not a single one is based in the Third World. In fact, 10 among the top 15 are American; two are German; two are Japanese and one is Australian.

Therefore despite claims about "reverse cultural imperialism" (Antola and Rogers: 1984), the Third World's biggest television producer and exporter, Globo of Brazil, is placed as number 301 in Unesco's ranking table of major communication and information producing companies in the world (Sreberny-Mohammadi: 1991).

Although Globo is still a world major exporter of television programmes, exporting to over 100 countries including Portugal, in Western Europe, and its 'poor' world ranking may have been due to inflation in its base country, Brazil, whose currency, the peso, exchanges very low against international currencies, yet it was bound to be influenced by 'global' (Western) production patterns. The concentration of production, and distribution of media products in particular media-rich areas of the world, usually the West, and a few others in the Third World, by global firms can at best produce a mixture of 'local' and Western form of cultural products in the Third World production centres (McNeely & Soysal: 1989:142). This is likely to distort the 'authenticity' of 'local' non-Western (cultural) products (Tunstall: 1977). This way, imbalances between the former and media-poor countries may continue to manifest themselves.

According to Ferguson (1992), one of the myths and important contradictions of the structural transformation associated with 'globalization' is the extent to which its linkages are confined to one-third of the World's population and the member countries of G7 and OECD. Being a North-North dialogue, not a North-South one, globalization (or internationalization) necessarily carries with it an ideological package which has cultural and other consequences on the 'developing' countries. Equally, its impact has implications for controlling the media indirectly through synchrony.

One of the main reasons for the dominance of the global, mainly

North American, corporations is economic. Hamelink (1986a) develops this point further by noting the enormous size of the media market in the United States and the "active collaboration between the communications industry and the North American political, financial and military circles" as the factors which combined to put the US transnational communication industries ahead of others.

In concrete terms, Western news values and reporting practices are still important criteria of newsworthiness for African national media and agencies (see chapter on PANA). Indeed, while the arrival of satellite technology has no doubt compressed the physical distance that had earlier separated various countries of the world through instant communications, yet this may have created the conditions for a new phase of "media imperialism" through the latest communication technology (Hamelink: 1986b).

The "globalization of electronic journalism" and especially of American Cable Network News (CNN), being the channel that is received by a large number of foreign countries including those in Africa, has serious implications for regional and national media in Third World countries, though not fundamentally different from the patterns previously established by Reuters, AFP, etc.

The CNN uses a lot of pictures from the video news agencies, which according to Tunstall (1992) originated from the film newsreels of the major news agencies. This implies a close

relationship between even the video and the traditional wire agencies, and an influence in the operations of the former by the latter in line with the professional values of the wire services.

The two world major video news agencies are Reuters Television (formally Visnews) and Worldwide Television News (WTN). Reuters Television is 100% owned by Reuters and claims that its pictures are seen on 89% of the world's television sets. Though it is difficult to verify this claim, yet its products are widely used by television organisations in most parts of the world. WTN, on the other hand, was formerly owned jointly by UPI and the British Independent Television News (ITN). Presently, it is 80% owned by ABC; 10% by ITN; and 10% by the Australian Nine Network.

Tunstall (op cit) contends that both Reuters Television and WTN share many operational similarities with the general news agencies. For instance, both the video and wire news agencies do not have direct outlets of their own, and only deliver their services through other media organisations. Similarly, they also schedule their products to suit the news times and deadlines of major television news customers in particular regions of the world. Because of the operational similarities between the general and video news agencies, and the full or part ownership of the latter by the former, it could be argued that by using the services of the video agencies even CNN materials contain some elements of the reporting values of the general agencies.

Two important areas in which the general agencies are still

capable of continuing to influence African national and regional media (through such media as Visnews or CNN) relate to defining news values and agenda setting, especially for international news. One of the Western news values which organizations like CNN itself vividly represents and continues to demonstrate is "immediacy" in news presentation. "Speed" or "immediacy" has led international or global media to vigorously compete in order to be the first to break the news largely for reasons of attracting a high audience share, which means more advertising revenue or, much less directly, a better claim for government grant in the case of public media like BBC.

Immediacy as a news value, particularly for electronic media, seems to have assumed more importance because of the tendency to report events as they happen as was evident in the Gulf war of 1990/91 or Eastern Europe in late 1989. Of course, the reporting of events live has its own implications for the outcome of the events themselves (Gurevitch: 1991), but their consequences are not directly relevant to the concern of this study. However, what is of concern here is the effect of this "globalization of electronic journalism" in the passing of Western values to the supposedly independent national and regional African news media. According to Reyes-Matta (1992), for example, the effect of modern electronic journalism through the CNN (particularly during the Gulf war) is "tremendous" on journalistic practices in Latin America especially with respect to some specific news values like 'immediacy'. The main reason for this is the growing concern to follow events as they happen.

The use of satellite technology by global media (both printed and especially electronic) itself re-affirms "immediacy" as an important element of (Western) newsworthiness which African media practitioners tend to emulate. 'Immediacy' or 'timeliness' is an old news value which according to Robinson (1981) has been among the most important criteria for news selection by the North American and Western press. The prestige associated with news electronic technology may intensify the value attributed to "immediacy". Indeed, this claim is supported by the observations and interviews conducted at both PANA and Nigerian newspapers, where it was noted that financially stronger newspapers like Concord do receive CNN service. Others which did not have it, for example The New Nigerian, rented a luxury hotel room in order to have access to the facility, and to monitor the latest reports on the Gulf war. Either way, relying on the 'global' media may re-establish 'immediacy' as an element of newsworthiness for African media.

Another level in which media globalization could affect African or Third World media, especially with respect to foreign news, is agenda setting. Because of the taken-for-granted assumption by African media practitioners that the very latest events are those which make the best news stories, the possibility for media like CNN, which uses satellite technology to report events as they unfold, to further exacerbates the setting of the agenda of foreign news for African media is intensified. Again, the several references made to the station (CNN) by Nigerian newspapers in their reporting of the Gulf crisis lends credence

to this point.

In the case of Nigeria's national news agency, which is PANA's biggest news contributor, Musa (1989) has shown that it also relies on the reports of the international wire services to know which events it would ask its correspondents abroad to report on. This way, the international agencies set the news agenda for NAN in more or less the same way as CNN is capable of doing (or even does) for African media since editors monitor the station and write their stories on the basis of its hourly news update, especially at times of 'big' crisis events. In a way, this may also give the dependent media a feeling that it is unnecessary to send their own correspondents to report directly since it would cost more resources and therefore they continue to be dependent on the 'global' media<sup>2</sup>. At this stage, however, linkage between the CNN and African media must remain tentative as more evidence is certainly required to support it.

Globalization by a few media (such as CNN, VISNEWS, WTN, Time magazine) also has the possible effect of re-emphasising other typical Western indicators of newsworthiness (for example conflict; prominence; oddity; etc) to newsrooms around the world by portraying such values or news production practices as "the model". In fact, the spread and influence, if not total dominance, of these few 'global' media projects incorrect

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<sup>2</sup> The New Nigerian, for example, felt tempted to send a reporter to cover the Gulf war but did not do so partly because of the hazards involved and partly because it was felt the event was covered by the CNN.

impression of their internationality, and consequently of their professional practices. According to Gurevitch (1991), not only are CNN newscasts the outcome of domestic American news practices in which "editors working within the culture and meaning systems of their own societies select and present stories" but they (i.e. CNN newscasts) also "provide inevitably an American perspective on domestic as well as 'foreign' (i.e. non-American) events". The risk and tendency of these American journalistic perspectives to continue to be perceived as "the model" of news reporting by African media practitioners and organisations, despite differences of culture and socio-economic priorities in the two societies, are a negation of Morris's (1992) claim of a so-called advancement towards "News From Nowhere".

That particular (i.e. Western) news values set a standard for "international" or "global" journalism does not take into cognisance key points relating to what constitutes "international" or "global" cultural practice. According to Smith:

a global culture is in principle not only universal, but it also has "no source and no frontiers". A global culture is singular; it embraces the planet; it does not separate people into groups of social classes by being either an elite or popular one (culture) alone. It appeals to every one and has no roots in time or place (Smith: 1992).

While this conception of global culture or cultural practice (in this context journalism) is too ideal, and has been criticized by Robertson and Lechner (1985) for reducing globalization to 'idealistic reductionism', the contention is that a cultural pattern may only become international if it is 'willingly'

accepted by (i.e not 'forced' upon) a recipient group through the process of 'equal' or 'fair' interaction and negotiation. Indeed, this has not been the case with the mass media in Africa.

With regard to news values generally, Shoemaker et al<sup>3</sup> (1991) believes American, and by extension Western indicators of newsworthiness (loose concepts whose definition Gurevitch argues is left to the discretion of journalists) can be categorised into three general theoretical dimensions, namely:

- (i) Deviance dimension: this comprises reports about unusual, odd or novelty events which deviate from "societal" norms and behaviour
- (ii) Conflict/controversy/sensationalism dimension: these are about stories or events which have the tendency of threatening the status quo like corruption; immoral behaviour; etc
- (iii) Prominence dimension: this relates to reports about events which are regarded as important and which supposedly have a big impact on people's life

If the first two categories are merged, i.e (i) and (ii), and together with the prominence dimension (iii) are applied to the African context, particularly the results of the study's content analyses, some similarities in news values between American (or

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<sup>3</sup> Already Shoemaker et al (op cit) have pointed out that news about events belonging to categories (i) and (ii) are a major part of every day's American news coverage, in addition to those in category (iii).

Western) and African media are easily discernible. With respect to PANA, for example, while only 6% of its stories had anything to do with conflict and deviance (categories i and ii); over 50% centred on prominent personalities (category iii). Like PANA, some newspapers (national) also published fewer stories related to deviance and conflict (categories i and ii comprising negative news) than they did stories about prominent personalities (category iii).

Generally, journalism and the African mass media institutions reached most African countries, including Nigeria, as part of the colonial or neo-colonial cultural apparatus. Since then they have continued to operate using Western technology and professional procedures. They, the media and journalists, have always looked upon the West for guidance in new practising trends. Hence this negates claims to the 'globalization' or 'internationalisation' of the profession. On the contrary, it subtly transfers foreign (mainly Western) professional values to African media (Golding: 1977), together with the inherent ideological values and connotations (which hide social inequality and reality) they contain. Not surprisingly, these were reproduced in substantial measure in the news of PANA and the Nigerian press.

#### 9.5 Value Socialization, Daily Routines, PANA, Nigerian Press and News Imbalance:

All the reporters, editors and executives interviewed at PANA and the Nigerian newspapers, 40 in all, have had some form of Western

training. In PANA, all those interviewed were at least holders of university degrees either directly from Western institutions or from their own English and French speaking countries, whose institutions are modelled after those of the West. In the newspapers, over two-thirds of the journalists had university degrees or equivalent from various Nigerian institutions. All the respondents have also been socialized into the news production 'culture' of their various, though broadly similar, organizations, whose culture is influenced by the political and economic environment in which the news organisations are located.

While few media practitioners in Africa, though not among the respondents, may have been trained in Eastern Europe or countries other than Western ones, the majority, who dominate the Nigerian media scene, and perhaps Africa's, were either directly trained in the West or have learnt their journalism from trainers who were educated in the West.

That PANA and particularly the newspapers do not keep news diaries to 'plot' or 'mark' events for "manufacture" into news stories, being mainly processors rather than gatherers of foreign news, did not negate the emphasis they attach to certain institutions, events or news actors. Routine procedures in their newsrooms, such as the weekly editorial co-ordination meeting at PANA or the daily desk editorial conference in the newspapers, help 'regulate' the stories that finally get selected as (foreign) news by the two media.

The bureaucratic and command structure of media organizations, and the newsroom in particular, into which the media practitioners are socialised, reflect and resemble the social hierarchies in the wider society.

Similarly, the training, socialization, newsroom structure and routine procedures, on balance, are shaped by and reflect powerful group interests through various control and regulation measures. These generally 'guide' the professional thinking of journalists by giving them 'a priori' assumptions about the 'world' of journalism, which consequently affect their news production output. All these factors manifested themselves in the analyzed news stories of PANA and the Nigerian press, in the higher attention given by the two media to 'ceremonial' actions and pronouncements of urban based 'prominent' actors, whose roles and functions in society were subtly implied as 'given'.

#### 9.6 The News of PANA and Nigerian Press: Towards a Hegemonic Model:

It has consistently been argued that the imbalances and inequality manifested in the news of PANA and the Nigerian press are the consequence of a number of factors relating to power relationships in society. Example of these factors are economic and political inequality, ownership and managerial control patterns and news values. That media news, and specifically the news of PANA and Nigerian press, generally reflect 'power in the outside world' implies that their content is ideological. The news output of both sets of media reflects the history and

geography of power structures in Africa and Nigeria.

Golding and Elliott (1979) have observed three ways in which ideology is manifested in news, albeit having the same objective with any ruling ideology - i.e the undesirability of change. These are as follows:

- (i) Focusing attention on the institutions and events in which social conflict is managed
- (ii) Drawing on broadest social values and beliefs in an attempt to avoid partiality or controversy by following the professional rule of 'objectivity' in news reporting
- (iii) The portrayal of a world which is 'unchanging', 'unchangeable' ('normal') due to its inability to reveal patterns of power in and between societies.

Though the contention here is not to claim that each news story item published by PANA and the Nigerian papers passively reflects or aims to reproduce the status quo, over half of their stories focused on the events and institutions which 'resolve' or manage social conflict, drawing on professional values and broad social beliefs. Both media present power imbalances and its attendant distortion of social relations as 'normal' and not requiring radical change. Such images have ideological implications for the maintenance of the hegemony of power holding groups over the majority in society.

The use of ideology as a subtle means of enforcing hegemony by the power elite is perhaps as old as 'state societies'. For Gramsci "hegemony is characterised by the combination of force and consent, which balance each other reciprocally without force predominating excessively over consent" (Gramsci in Hoare & Smith: 1971:80). Alrabaa (1986) believes the imbalance of power resources (and access), among other elements, justifies the use of the concept "hegemony" in the study of media. Inherent in the hegemonic enterprise is the use of the news media as a non-forcible state control apparatus for the 'manufacturing' of consent and consensus in society, as a part of ensuring the continuity of the status quo. That in some cases the news, or the media as a whole, appear to support the views of non-powerful groups, or focus on non-traditional 'news provinces' is part of the very process of reproducing the hegemony of the power elite in society (Agbaje: 1992). This way, the media contributes in creating what Galbraith (1983) called "conditioned belief", in order to ensure an unrecognised submission to authority or power by the people.

### 9.7 Conclusion:

The main focus of this chapter was to attempt to show that imbalances in the news of PANA and Nigerian newspapers reflect social and economic inequality within, and between Africa and Western countries, and the dependency of the former on the latter. It is shown that the effort by African countries, through PANA, to set up an independent system for the

production and exchange of 'alternative' news is not itself liberated from global (Western) transnational media news values, and is even less in a position to 'develop' those of other African agencies by training their journalists, which is among the objectives of PANA.

It was maintained that globalization, largely by a few Western, Western/Japanese or Western/Australian TNCs like WTN, has both the real and potential additional consequences of re-echoing old and new dominant values of news production for African and Third World media. Equally, the training, socialization and routines performed by journalists as well as ownership and editorial control structures were argued to have impact on the news of PANA and the Nigerian press, as manifested by the analysis of news stories of the two sets of media. Finally, all these organizational, national and international factors were argued to work for the continuity of the status quo through the media and the hegemony of the power holding groups over the majority in society.

The next chapter (chapter ten), which is the general conclusion of this research, discusses the prospects of PANA in the context of the NWICO debate, summarizes the main findings and concludes the study.

## Chapter Ten

### General Conclusion

#### 10.1 Summary of findings:

This study began by looking at the NWICO debate and MacBride Commission as part of the background activities which influenced many national and regional news agencies in developing countries, including PANA, in the 1970s and 1980s. It was argued that the failure to have 'effective' control of economic and information resources by the new Third World political elites, after attaining political independence, led to their demands for NIEO and NWICO particularly from the early 1970s. The NWICO demand was pursued at two levels, the Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations via Unesco. With Senegalese Amadou Mahtar M'Bow at the head of Unesco Secretariat from the mid 1970s through to the mid-1980s, Unesco served as the 'battle ground' for the NWICO demand between Third World and Western delegates and representatives.

At successive Unesco General Conferences since 1972, the NWICO became a key concept on the Organisation's agenda. In 1976, a mandate was given (by members) to the Unesco Secretariat at the Organization's 19th General Conference in Nairobi to set up an international commission for the study of global communication problems. In December 1977, the MacBride Commission was established with 16 members under the chairmanship of Sean MacBride, an Irishman. A final report

was submitted to the 1980 Unesco General Conference at Belgrade. Predictably, there were recommendations concerning news agencies since the dominant role of the major Western news agencies was among the main issues of concern during the debate. For example recommendation no. 6 suggested, as part of the efforts for establishing a new order, the setting up of national and regional news agencies to "improve" national and international reporting and increase news flow within and between (developing) countries (MacBride: 1980: 255). The intention to set up PANA was first discussed at an OAU Conference in 1963; but PANA has aims similar to those outlined in the MacBride Report, and in this study that similarity is considered as an outcome of the overall efforts to establish a NWICO.

The NWICO debate produced harsh criticisms between Third World, former socialist and Western capitalist countries and the Unesco Secretariat, culminating in the withdrawal of the United States from Unesco in 1984 followed by Britain in 1985. But it was suggested that the issues of class and national elites had been omitted in the debate. Indeed, one of the main manifestations of class contradiction and of the problems of the NWICO was represented by the Third World national elites themselves, which Roach (1990) rightly argued were "not treated within the context" of the problem to be addressed by NWICO. Setting up Third world national and regional agencies like PANA was likely to lessen dependence by African countries on Western agencies like Reuters or AFP. Third World

countries could now obtain more news about one another, through the news exchange network, but this did not address the entire problem and the part which the national elites play in information imbalance. The call for self reliance in news, "cultural dissociation" or "cultural emancipation" from the satellite-metropolis relations as propounded by scholars like Hamelink (1988) or as contained in the MacBride Report (MacBride: 1980) are thus only a part of the solution to the problem. This is especially because, as already argued, cultural dissociation from the West is not necessarily synonymous with popular or mass national development due to the role played by Third World national elites in linking the latter societies to Western capitalism and value systems.

In more specific terms, this study attempted to answer three main questions<sup>1</sup>. Firstly, having situated PANA within a category of news agency groupings, i.e that of emerging 'alternative' agencies, its (PANA's) organisational and editorial structures; telecommunications network and financial position, among others, were examined with a view to illuminating whether or not the agency was capable of achieving its set objectives. Secondly, PANA's own professional news values and style of reporting Africa were studied through a content analysis of its news stories. Comparison was also made in terms of news geography and focus between the agency's news stories and those of selected

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<sup>1</sup> The fourth objective being more of an attempt to situate the media and its output into larger societal structures.

Nigerian newspapers. Thirdly, the perception of the agency among some Nigerian journalists was surveyed to find out their level of awareness of the agency, and by extension its possible impact on establishing 'alternative' journalism values with respect to reporting Africa.

On the first objective, the study has shown a number of limitations with respect to PANA's organisational and editorial structure, telecommunications network and financial and manpower resources. For instance, the conflicting political objectives and editorial guidelines of the agency define its role as both a government agency committed to the goals of 'development journalism' as well as an organization committed to the aims of value-loaded concepts (such as 'impartiality') of Western journalism. Equally, that PANA operates more as a news exchange pool (having limited editorial powers) for news from national agencies of Africa, whose news contributions form most of its news content, than as an independent agency solely gathering and processing its own news stories, seems to pose problems for the agency. All these factors were argued to militate against the effective operation of PANA, and consequently its effort to 'independently' produce 'alternative' news.

As for the second objective, the analysis has shown that the news values inherent in PANA stories did not seem to be substantially different from the dominant news perspective. PANA's stories, as well as those of the studied newspapers,

concentrated more on reporting urban based events, a confined group of privileged actors (politicians and government officials) and particular issues (politics and diplomacy) more than others. Issues related to development, which have considerable significance for weaker social groups like women; children; etc, seemed to be much neglected. Source wise, PANA journalists tend to rely excessively on official sources for their news stories (as in the several examples cited), like journalists elsewhere (Fishman: 1980). This establishes a link between those who report news for the agency and major bureaucratic organisations, especially governments, with representatives of the organizations providing a 'steady' source of news, though having inherent consequences for the quality of its news output.

The conclusion reached from this broad comparison of PANA stories and the foreign news of the Nigerian newspapers are similar to the study of news selection criteria in different newspapers, news agencies and radio broadcast stations in 20 Central and West African countries by da Costa (1980). The study concluded that though the media and their ownership were different, yet all of them have common patterns. They all give prominence to news which tends to give a good impression of government's management of public affairs; news which reports official statements made by Heads of State or government; news of conclusions reached at international meetings; news of visits by foreign delegations; news of brilliant performances by participants in sports events, and

news giving figures of successful economic schemes. Thus, if anything, PANA's news output tends to reinforce the dominant existing images in society.

On the third objective, the data gathered suggest that though there was some enthusiasm for PANA among the interviewed journalists, yet the respondents were not sufficiently aware of the agency's service to allow one to conclude that PANA has much impact on their reporting of Africa.

One 'pattern' firmly established by the major Western agencies to which PANA is now attracted is the diversification of its services, ostensibly for commercial reasons. A three-year Unesco 'rescue plan' was agreed in July 1992. Under the plan, PANA is to be divided into three companies - PANA Foundation, PANA Limited and PANA Communications Limited (PANACOMS). PANA Foundation is to remain as a non-profit making body responsible for promoting regional integration, news exchanges among African media and training. PANA Limited is to operate as a private company whose shares are to be offered to private media organizations, national news agencies and regional and sub-regional banks. On the other hand PANACOMS is also designed to be a private partnership involving telecommunications and banks. Already a Co-ordinator has been appointed to supervise the implementation of the new plan. This approach to commercializing PANA by involving banks and private media in its ownership structure is likely to be at the expense of the agency's political goals. This shift is bound to affect the type of services to be emphasised by the

agency as well as its final news product.

Thus, the failure of PANA's news output to reflect 'alternative' images in society seems to re-affirm the missing dimensions of the issues of 'class' and 'state' in the NWICO demand, discussed earlier in chapter one. One possible explanation for this, despite the intention of PANA and its correspondent agencies to be 'alternative', is the inherent weakness of the NWICO, within whose conceptual context the agency and similar so-called 'alternative' news agencies were established. It also suggests that the complexity of the problem - 'media' or 'cultural imperialism' - transcends any vaguely structured inter-national requests for 'national' or 'regional' autonomy. Solutions to the problem have to be in the form of major structural changes such that would redefine the role of vital societal institutions, being the conduit of global capitalist culture or "carriers of modernity".

## 10.2 African Journalistic Values and Western Synchrony:

Why does PANA news follow similar patterns or synchronize to 'international' (Western) news values in terms of news focus - news centres, topics, actors? Several levels of explanation were applied to this complex problem. For example the limitation of the political economy approach in looking at day-to-day journalistic practices, as opposed to the wider connection between key institutions in society, necessitated the use of other lower level explanations.

At the level of political economy, it was suggested that societal institutions influence the media and its output, whether private or public, through ownership, allocative and managerial control and advertising. As for PANA, with the majority of its news output being generated by news agencies from African countries, whose economies are dependent on the capitalist system of the Western world, it was argued that the imbalance and linkages within and between African and Western societies were manifest in the agency's stylebook and news stories.

The integration of African media into the global system, and the international spread of particular (Western) news production practices, led to the adoption of broadly similar news values by PANA and the studied Nigerian newspapers as "the model" of what constitutes news. It was suggested that PANA news reflected core Western wire agency news values such as their emphasis on "immediacy". But because of the criticism against restricting media analysis to the level of political economy as being vague and hypothetical (see for example Tomlinson: 1991), lower level explanations of the PANA and newspaper journalists and their news organisations were advanced.

The organizational structures of PANA and the foreign desks of the newspapers basically relates to their function as news (foreign) processors. With respect to foreign news, in the case of the newspapers, their journalists act mainly as

gatekeepers and the hierarchical pattern of their newsrooms (i.e both PANA and the newspapers), like that of other media organisations, reflect existing imbalances in the wider society. All the newspaper organizations have certain values, practices and routine procedures (such as the weekly editorial co-ordination meeting at PANA and foreign desk editorial conference in the newspapers) into which their reporters and editors are socialized. These newsroom values and working patterns in broad terms largely 'conform' with or reflect the values and interests of power holding groups and the political and economic context in which the news is produced (Golding: 1981, Gerbner quoted in Robinson: 1981:100).

That most of the news produced by PANA and the newspapers 'positively' focuses on those who hold power in society is itself suggestive of the importance attached to official bureaucracies and power holders by PANA and the newspaper organizations; these news priorities are assimilated by journalists.

Similarly the training received by the respondents at PANA and the newspapers (basically Western oriented) tends to influence their professional assumptions about the type of issues, centres, personalities and institutions which constitute 'good' news; news locations; news actors and news sources. Embedded in such training is a taken for granted acceptance of certain concepts, terms and practices, which Schudson (1989) referred to as "cultural givens". Cultural givens are part of

the societal symbolic system within which journalists, as members of society, conduct their official and other duties. The cultural givens may only be unfolded by detailed historical explanation.

In terms of life style, media owners/directors and senior professionals in Nigeria, and more generally in Africa, belong to the top elite. They tend to have similar aspirations and values. In Nigeria, for example, top mass media people were (and this is true even at the present) more highly paid than their counterparts in the civil service (Ugboajah: 1978).

All these factors tend to point in one main direction. The media in Africa are synchronized to Western news production patterns via colonial and neo-colonial processes, through the small top elite in society, and the wider professional or middle classes. Thus PANA and the media more generally, tend to serve and project the interests of the dominant power groups in society more than the (interests) of ordinary citizens, who belong to lower social groups.

It may perhaps be argued that the dialectical link between the media in Africa and the West is part of "the consequences of modernity" as a result of the globalization of capitalism and more particularly what Giddens (1990) called the "stretching process" of its institutions and values, including those of the media. Under this stretching process of capitalism, different social contexts or regions become networked across

the earth's surface as a whole. Practices in distant localities tend to be influenced by events occurring elsewhere and vice versa. Though the process seems to function more in a one-way direction, dictated by the situation in the home country in which the 'stretching process' originates, yet events or practices even in the home country may sometimes be influenced by trends in the countries co-opted into the global system.

However, in an assessment of the new regional agencies generally, Boyd-Barrett (1989) and Boyd-Barrett and Thussu (1991) believe that despite their apparent weaknesses (including the tendency to follow the examples of Western agencies), they may already have delivered "certain benefits". These "benefits" include making available communications infrastructure for multi-lateral news exchange, increasing the volume of the news being exchanged, and generating dialogue on the philosophy of news-gathering by Third World countries.

According to Boyd-Barrett and Thussu (op cit), news exchange mechanisms like PANA or NANAP have increased direct "horizontal communication" between the developing countries (though not across social groups inside the countries). Before PANA, there was no link between national news agencies in Africa. But with PANA's establishment, a network of African agencies emerged with PANA as the coordinator and processor of news written from an 'African' perspective.

In agreement, Martin (1988) also shares the view that the performance of CANA, and more generally the Third World regional agencies

is hardly enough grounds for comfort that change of any profound sort towards a new information order is immediately on the horizon, but it seems that some change is possible even by way of the exceedingly haphazard, and frustrating path now in evidence (Martin: 1988:79).

However, it is possible that even the major Western news agencies, long accused of negatively reporting the Third World, may have changed in line with the new demands of their latter (Third World) clients. But this requires more rigorous and more recent investigation of news reporting and distribution practices of the major agencies.

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ADB	African Development Bank
AFP	Agence France Press
AP	Associated Press
CANA	Carribean News Agency
CIDRC	Canadian International Development Research Centre
CNN	Cable News Network
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Aid or Assistance
ECOMOG	Economic Community Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEC	European Economic Community
FANA	Federation of Arab News Agencies
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	Gross National Product
G7	Group of Seven industrialised Countries
IAMCR	International Association for Mass Communications Research
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IPDC	International Programme for Development of Communication
IPS	Inter-Press Service
ITN	Independent Television News
KYODO	Japan News Agency
LAGFUND	League of Arab-Gulf Fund for Development
MENA	Middle East News Agency
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NAN	News Agency of Nigeria
NANAP	Non Aligned News Agency Pool

NEMS	News Exchange Mechanisms
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NIEO	New International Economic Order
NIIO	New International Information Order
NWICO	New World Information and Communication Order
OAU	Organization of African Unity
OIJ	Organization of International Journalists
PANA	Pan African News Agency
PTI	Press Trust of India
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SONATEL	Senegal Telecommunications Authority
TANJUG	Yugoslav News Agency
TNCs	Trans National Corporations
UANA	Union of African News Agencies
UGC	Unesco General Conference
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	United Nations Children's (Emergency) Fund
UPI	United Press International
XINHUA	China News Agency
WACC	World Association of Christian Communication
WANAD	West African News Agencies Dev. Programme
WPFC	World Press Freedom Committee
WTN	Worldwide Television News

# Appendix 1

## questionnaire on evaluating the success(es) achieved by PANA

### Section A:

1 Which of the following categories best describe your job in PANA?

- (a) News Reporter
- (b) Features Writer
- (c) News/features editor
- (d) Others (specify)

2 For how long have you been in journalism?

- (a) Under six months
- (b) Six months to one year
- (c) Over one year to under five years
- (d) Five to ten years
- (e) Over ten years

3 What professional or academic qualification do you hold?

- (a) primary school certificate
- (b) secondary school certificate
- (c) post secondary qualification (e.g. diploma, NCE, etc)
- (d) university degree
- (e) post graduate qualification
- (f) Others (please specify)

4 Kindly state your area of specialisation if your answer to question 3 is  
(c), (d), (e) or (f).

### Section B:

5 What in your opinion are the goals/objectives for which PANA was  
established?

6a What do you consider to be PANA's major achievements since it was established?

6b What do you consider to be PANA's major shortcomings since its establishment?

7a Do you think PANA has been any helpful in reducing the dependence of African media institutions on the major western news agencies (e.g. Reuters or AP) for news and features about African countries?  
Please tick any one

- (i) highly helpful
- (ii) moderately helpful
- (iii) helpful to a lesser degree
- (iv) not helpful at all
- (v) don't know

7b If your answer to question 7a is (i), (ii) or (iii) please explain your reason(s) in some detail.

8 By your job description, how do you collect and disseminate your material?

9. Which of the following categories of news would you prefer to see in PANA bulletins? Please mark them in rank order using 1-5 (1 = most preferred and 5 = least preferred)

(i) hot or spot news reports (eg news on dramatic happenings like coups, disasters, etc)

(ii) news about top government/private sector officials

(iii) detailed descriptive reports about economic, social and political conditions of African countries.

(iv) news about the conditions of ordinary African citizens (eg poor harvest, medical drug shortage, etc)

(v) Others (please specify).

10. What is your opinion about the intermediary role played by African national news agencies between PANA and its client media organisations?

11a In your opinion what do you consider to be PANA's main problems?

11b How do you think the problems could be solved? Please indicate the type of change(s) you would want to see introduced in PANA

12 Please comment freely on your understanding of "regional information exchange"?

13 Do you think PANA plays any role on the question of information exchange among African countries? Please comment freely.

Thank you.

## Appendix 2

### Questionnaire on evaluating the perception of PANA by Nigerian Newspaper Journalists

Dear Respondent,

Research

I am a student carrying out research on PANA and its services. All the information you give will be purely used for research purposes and will also be regarded as confidential. You may also note that no name or any form of identification is required from you.

Your cooperation will therefore be invaluable for the success of this study.

Thank you.

Section A: Personal information (please answer all questions in this section).

1 Sex: Male

Female

2 Age: (i) below 18 years

(ii) 18 - 22 years

(iii) 23 - 30 years

(iv) 31 - 35 years

(v) 36 - 40 years

(vi) Above 40 years

3a What professional/academic qualification do you hold?

(i) Primary school certificate

(ii) Secondary school certificate

(iii) NCE/Diploma or post secondary qualification

(iv) University degree or its equivalent

(v) Post graduate qualification

(vi) Others (please specify)

3b Kindly state your area of specialisation if your answer to question 3a is (iii), (iv), (v) or (vi).

4 Please tick any one of the following categories that best describes your job

(a) News Reporter

(b) Features Writer

(c) News/Features Editor

(d) Others (specify)

5 How long have you been in journalism career?

- (a) Under six months
- (b) Six months to one year
- (c) Over one year to under five years
- (d) Five to ten years
- (e) Over 10 years

6 How long have you worked for your present newspaper?

- (a) Under six months
- (b) Six months to one year
- (c) Over one year to under five years
- (d) Five to ten years
- (e) Over ten years

### Section B

The next set of questions concern information about your newspaper's usage of PANA materials.

7a Name of your newspaper

- (i) New Nigerian
- (ii) National Concord/Guardian/Vanguard
- (iii) The Triumph
- (iv) Gaskiya Tafi Kwabo

7b What is the number of copies published daily by your newspaper (your daily circulation)?

- (i) less than 20,000 copies
- (ii) Between 20,000 - 50,000 copies
- (iii) Between 50,001-100,000 copies
- (iv) Above 100,000 copies

8a Does your newspaper have any policy towards coverage of news about Africa?

- (i) Yes
- (ii) No
- (iii) Don't know

8b If your answer to question 8a is "yes", please explain the policy of your newspaper towards the coverage of news about Africa.

9 Are you personally aware of PANA (Pan-African News Agency)?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

10. Is your newspaper aware of the existence of PANA?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

(iii) Don't know

11. Does your newspaper subscribe to PANA's service(s)?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

(iii) Don't know

(if your answer to this question is "no" or "don't know", please proceed to question 25).

12 If your answer to question 11 is "yes", please give reason(s) for your newspaper's subscription to PANA.

13 Which type of service(s) does your newspaper receive from PANA?

(You may tick more than one)

(i) PANA general news

(ii) PANA features

13 (iii) PANA Sports

(iv) Others (please specify)

14 How does your newspaper receive the PANA's service(s)?

(i) Direct from PANA

(ii) Through the News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)

(iii) Others (please specify)

15 How frequent is or are news material(s) received from PANA?

(i) Once ● daily

(ii) Twice a week

(iii) Once a week

(iv) Once in two weeks

(v) Once every month

(vi) Others (Please specify)

16 Which type of PANA's service does your newspaper mostly make use of? Mark them in rank order using 1,2,3, and 4 (1 = most used and 4 = least used)

(i) PANA general news

(ii) PANA features

(iii) PANA sports

(iv) Others (specify)

17 For how long has your newspaper been receiving the following two PANA services(please tick for each service received)

(a) PANA general news

(i) Less than six months

(ii) Six months to one year

(iii) Over one year but less than five years

(iv) Five years and above

(b) PANA features

(i) Less than six months

(ii) Six months to one year

(iii) Over one year but less than five years

(iv) Five years and above

18a How often does your newspaper publish PANA originated material(s)?

- (i) Daily
- (ii) Two to three times a week
- (iii) Once a week
- (iv) Once in two weeks
- (v) Once a month
- (vi) Others (please specify)

18b What is the average number of words of PANA originated material published by your newspaper in relation to your answer in question 18a above?

19 Please mark the degree of your newspaper's satisfaction with regard to the following service(s). (0 = very poor; 1 = poor; 2 = fair; 3 = good; 4 = very good; 5 = excellent).

- (a) PANA News                                    0 1 2 3 4 5
- (b) PANA features                                0 1 2 3 4 5

20 Do you think access to PANA news has encouraged your newspaper to report more about events in African countries?

- (i) Yes
- (ii) No
- (iii) may be
- (iv) Don't know

21 Does your newspaper typically <sup>publish</sup> PANA originated material

- (i) as they were received
- (ii) rewritten to conform to in-house style
- (iii) only as a "background"
- (iv) a mixture of these
- (v) Others - please specify

22a Does your newspaper credit PANA for its originated stories when they are used?

- (i) yes
- (ii) no
- (iii) sometimes

22b Please briefly give reason(s) as to your answer in question 22a

*(use back page for space)*

23 Please mark 1,2,3,4 and 5 in rank order against the following type of news from PANA which your newspaper is most likely to publish (1 = most and 5 = least).

- (i) hot or spot news reports (eg disasters, coups, etc)
- (ii) news about top government/private sector officials
- (iii) detailed descriptive reports about economic, social and political conditions of African countries
- (iv) news about the social conditions of ordinary citizens of African countries, eg poor harvest, medical drug shortage, etc
- (v) Others, please specify.

24 Assuming PANA were to stop functioning, which other source will your newspaper turn to for news and features relating to Africa?

25 State which other agency(ies) your newspaper subscribe to for news and features relating to Africa (you may tick more than one)

- (i) Reuters
- (ii) Associated Press (AP)
- (iii) United Press International (UPI)
- (iv) Agence France Press (FP)
- (v) Tass (The Russian agency)
- (vi) Others - please specify

26a Which agency's service do you prefer for news about African countries? Mark them in rank order using 1,2,3,4,....6 ( 1 = most preferred; and 6 = least preferred)

- (i) Reuters
- (ii) AP
- (iii) UPI
- (iv) AFP
- (v) Tass
- (vi) Others -please specify.

26b Which agency's service do you prefer for features about African countries? Mark them in rank order using 1,2,3, ....6 as in question 26a.

- (i) Reuters
- (ii) AP
- (iii) UPI
- (iv) AFP
- (v) Tass
- (vi) Others - please specify

26c Please give reason(s) as to your first preference in questions 26a and 26b

27a Do you face any problem with the news reports of any of the following agencies (you may tick more than one)

Yes

No

- (i) Reuters
- (ii) PANA
- (iii) AP
- (iv) UPI
- (v) AFP
- (vi) Tass
- (vii) Others (Specify)

27b Do you face any problem with the feature reports of any of the following agencies? (You may tick more than one).

Yes

No

- (i) Reuters
- (ii) PANA
- (iii) AP
- (iv) UPI
- (v) AFP
- (vi) Tass
- (vii) Others(specify)

28 If your answer in questions 27a and 27b is yes in the case of any agency, could you please describe the nature of the problem(s) you face.

SECTION C: This section seeks information that is relevant to the evaluation of PANA on the basis of your professional judgement.

29 Please briefly explain the circumstances under which you became aware of PANA

30 What do you think is/are the main reason(s) for establishing PANA?  
Please specify

31 From your professional judgement how accurate is any or both of the following PANA service(s). (0 = very poor; 1 = poor; 2=fair; 3=good; 4=very good; 5 = excellent).

(i) PANA general news                    0 1 2 3 4 5

(ii) PANA features                    0 1 2 3 4 5

32 Using the same judgement as in question 31, how relevant is/are the following PANA's service(s)?

(i) PANA general news                    0 1 2 3 4 5

(ii) PANA features                    0 1 2 3 4 5

33 How would you grade the depth of coverage of the following PANA service(s)

(i) PANA general news                    0 1 2 3 4 5

(ii) PANA features                    0 1 2 3 4 5

34 From your professional judgement, how would you grade the news value of the following PANA service(s)

(i) PANA general news                    0 1 2 3 4 5

(ii) PANA features                    0 1 2 3 4 5

35 If you were in a position to make the decision, what kind of news would you like to see PANA provide that is not currently provided. Please specify

36 Please indicate the kind of issues or areas presently covered by PANA that you would like to see stopped or reduced?

37 Please comment on your understanding of "development journalism"?

38a Using 1,2,3 and 4 in the space provided, give an assessment of PANA's usage of "development journalism" approach in its news reports (0 = not at all; 1 = no; 2 = fairly used; 3 = used; 4 = highly used).

38b Using 1, 2, 3 and 4 as in question 38a, give your assessment of PANA's usage of "development journalism" approach in its feature reports

39a What do you understand by "regional information exchange"

39b Please give your opinion on the role played by PANA in regional information exchange in Africa

Section D: The next set of questions concern the role of NAN in the relationship between your newspaper and PANA.

40. Nigerian newspapers and other media usually receive PANA material through NAN. Do you think it is good for NAN to act as a mediator between your newspaper and PANA?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

(iii) Don't know

41 If your answer to question 40 is (i) or (ii), please comment on what you think your readers are losing or gaining as a result of NAN's mediatory role.

42 How does your newspaper pay for the service(s) received from PANA

(i) Direct from PANA

(ii) Through NAN

(iii) Don't know

43 Is the subscription fee charged by PANA for the service(s) your newspaper receives any of the following:

(i) High

(ii) Low

(iii) Reasonable

(iv) Competitive with those of other agencies

(v) Don't know

44 Is your newspaper satisfied with the amount it pays for PANA's service(s)?

(i) Yes

(ii) No

(iii) don't know

Thank you.

Appendix 3  
MacBride Recommendations

**Communication Policies**

*All individuals and people collectively have an inalienable right to a better life which, howsoever conceived, must ensure a social minimum, nationally and globally. This calls for the strengthening of capacities and the elimination of gross inequalities: such defects may threaten social harmony and even international peace. There must be a measured movement from disadvantage and dependence to self-reliance and the creation of more equal opportunities. Since communication is interwoven with every aspect of life, it is clearly of the utmost importance that the existing "communication gap" be rapidly narrowed and eventually eliminated.*

**We recommend:**

1. Communication be no longer regarded merely as an incidental service and its development left to chance. Recognition of its potential warrants the formulation by all nations, and particularly developing countries, of comprehensive communication policies linked to overall social, cultural, economic and political goals. Such policies should be based on inter-ministerial and inter-disciplinary consultations with broad

*men and societies aware of their rights, harmonize unity in diversity, and foster the growth of individuals and communities within the wider frame of national development in an interdependent world.*

2. As language embodies the cultural experience of people, all languages should be adequately developed to serve the complex and diverse requirements of modern communication. Developing nations and multilingual societies need to evolve language policies that promote all national languages even while selecting some, where necessary, for more widespread use in communication, higher education and administration. There is also need in certain situations for the adaptation, simplification, and standardization of scripts and development of keyboards, preparation of dictionaries and modernized systems of language learning, transcription of literature in widely-spoken national languages. The provision of simultaneous interpretation and automated translation facilities now under experimentation for cross-cultural communication to bridge linguistic divides should also be envisaged.

3. A primary policy objective should be to make elementary education available to all and to wipe out illiteracy, supplementing formal schooling systems with non-formal education and enrichment within appropriate structures of continuing and distance learning (through radio, television and correspondence).

4. Within the framework of national development policies, each country will have to work out its own set of priorities, bearing in mind that it will not be possible to move in all directions at the same time. But, as far as resources allow, communication policies should aim at stimulating and encouraging all means of communication.

**Strengthening Capacities**

*Communication policies should offer a guide to the determination of information and media priorities and to the selection of appropriate technologies. This is required to plan the installation and development of adequate infrastructures to provide self-reliant communications capacity.*

**We recommend:**

5. Developing countries take specific measures to establish or develop essential elements of their communication systems: print media, broadcasting and telecommunications along with the related training and production facilities.

\* 6. Strong national news agencies are vital for improving each country's national and international reporting. Where viable, regional networks should be set up to increase news flows and serve all the major language groups in the area. Nationally, the agencies should buttress the growth of both urban and rural newspapers to serve as the core of a country's news collection and distribution system.

7. National book production should be encouraged and accompanied by the establishment of a distribution network for books, newspapers and periodicals. The stimulation of works by national authors in various languages should be promoted.

8. The development of comprehensive national radio networks, capable of reaching

*should be encouraged where appropriate. Special attention should be given to areas where illiteracy is prevalent.*

9. National capacity for producing broadcast materials is necessary to obviate dependence on external sources over and beyond desirable programme exchange. This capacity should include national or regional broadcasting, film and documentary production centres with a basic distribution network.

10. Adequate educational and training facilities are required to supply personnel for the media and production organizations, as well as managers, technicians and maintenance personnel. In this regard, co-operation between neighbouring countries and within regions should be encouraged.

### *Basic Needs*

*All nations have to make choices in investment priorities. In choosing between possible alternatives and often conflicting interests, developing countries, in particular, must give priority to satisfying their people's essential needs. Communication is not only a system of public information, but also an integral part of education and development.*

### *We recommend:*

11 The communication component in all development projects should receive adequate financing. So-called "development support communications" are essential for mobilizing initiatives and providing information required for action in all fields of development — agriculture, health and family planning, education, religion, industry and so on.

12. Essential communication needs to be met include the extension of basic postal services and telecommunication networks through small rural electronic exchanges.

13. The development of a community press in rural areas and small towns would not only provide print support for economic and social extension activities. This would also facilitate the production of functional literature for neo-literates as well.

14. Utilization of local radio, low-cost small format television and video systems and other appropriate technologies would facilitate production of programmes relevant to community development efforts, stimulate participation and provide opportunity for diversified cultural expression.

15. The educational and informational use of communication should be given equal priority with entertainment. At the same time, education systems should prepare young people for communication activities. Introduction of pupils at primary and secondary levels to the forms and uses of the means of communication (how to read newspapers, evaluate radio and television programmes, use elementary audio-visual techniques and apparatus) should permit the young to understand reality better and enrich their knowledge of current affairs and problems.

16. Organization of community listening and viewing groups could in certain circumstances widen both entertainment and educational opportunities. Education and information activities should be supported by different facilities ranging from

the air".

17. Such activities should be aggregated wherever possible in order to create vibrant local communication resource centres for entertainment, education, information dissemination and cultural exchange. They should be supported by decentralized media production centres; educational and extension services should be location-specific if they are to be credible and accepted.

18. It is not sufficient to urge that communication be given a high priority in national development; possible sources of investment finance must be identified. Among these could be differential communication pricing policies that would place larger burdens on more prosperous urban and elite groups; the taxing of commercial advertising may also be envisaged for this purpose.

### *Particular Challenges*

*We have focused on national efforts which must be made to lead to greater independence and self-reliance. But there are three major challenges to this goal that require concerted international action. Simply put, these are paper, tariff structures and the electro-magnetic spectrum.*

### *We recommend:*

19. A major international research and development effort to increase the supply of paper. The worldwide shortage of paper, including newsprint, and its escalating cost impose crushing burdens upon struggling newspapers, periodicals and the publication industry, above all in the developing countries. Certain ecological constraints have also emerged. Unesco, in collaboration with FAO, should take urgent measures to identify and encourage production of paper and newsprint either by recycling paper or from new sources of feedstock in addition to the wood pulp presently produced largely by certain northern countries. Kenaf, bagasse, tropical woods and grasses could possibly provide alternative sources. Initial experiments are encouraging and need to be supported and multiplied.

20. Tariffs for news transmission, telecommunications rates and air mail charges for the dissemination of news, transport of newspapers, periodicals, books and audiovisual materials are one of the main obstacles to a free and balanced flow of information. This situation must be corrected, especially in the case of developing countries, through a variety of national and international initiatives. Governments should in particular examine the policies and practices of their post and telegraph authorities. Profits or revenues should not be the primary aim of such agencies. They are instruments for policy-making and planned development in the field of information and culture. Their tariffs should be in line with larger national goals. International action is also necessary to alter telecommunication tariffs that militate heavily against small and peripheral users. Current international consultations on this question may be brought to early fruition, possibly at the October 1980 session of the 154-nation International Telegraph and Telephone Consultative Committee, which should have before it specific proposals made by a Unesco-sponsored working group on "Low Telecommunication Rates" (November 1979). Unesco might, in cooperation with ITU, also sponsor an overall study on international telecommunication services by means of satellite transmission in collaboration with

study should also include investigation of the possibility and practicalities of discounts for transmission of news and preferential rates for certain types of transmission to and from developing countries. Finally, developing countries should investigate the possibility of negotiating preferential tariffs on a bilateral or regional basis.

21. The electro-magnetic spectrum and geostationary orbit, both finite natural resources, should be more equitably shared as the common property of mankind. For that purpose, we welcome the decisions taken by the World Administrative Radio Conference (WARC), Geneva, September–November 1979, to convene a series of special conferences over the next few years on certain specific topics related to the utilization of these resources.

## II. Social Consequences and New Tasks

### *Integrating Communication into Development*

*Development strategies should incorporate communication policies as an integral part in the diagnosis of needs and in the design and implementation of selected priorities. In this respect communication should be considered a major development resource, a vehicle to ensure real political participation in decision-making, a central information base for defining policy options, and an instrument for creating awareness of national priorities.*

We recommend:

22. Promotion of dialogue for development as a central component of both communication and development policies. Implementation of national policies should be carried out through three complementary communication patterns: first, from decision-makers towards different social sectors to transmit information about what they regard as necessary changes in development actions, alternative strategies and the varying consequences of the different alternatives; second, among and between diverse social sectors in a horizontal information network to express and exchange views on their different demands, aspirations, objective needs and subjective motivations; third, between decision-makers and all social groups through permanent participatory mechanisms for two-way information flows to elaborate development goals and priorities and make decisions on utilization of resources. Each one of these patterns requires the design of specific information programmes, using different communication means.

23. In promoting communication policies, special attention should be given to the use of non-technical language and comprehensible symbols, images and forms to ensure popular understanding of development issues and goals. Similarly, development information supplied to the media should be adapted to prevailing news values and practices, which in turn should be encouraged to be more receptive to development needs and problems.

### *Facing the Technological Challenge*

*The technological explosion in communication has both great potential and great danger. The outcome depends on crucial decisions and on where and by whom they*

*alternatives.*

We recommend:

24. Devising policy instruments at the national level in order to evaluate the positive and negative social implications of the introduction of powerful new communication technologies. The preparation of technological impact surveys can be a useful tool to assess the consequences for life styles, relevance for under-privileged sectors of society, cultural influence, effects on employment patterns, and similar factors. This is particularly important when making choices with respect to the development of communication infrastructures.

25. Setting up national mechanisms to promote participation and discussion of social priorities in the acquisition or extension of new communication technologies. Decisions with respect to the orientation given to research and development should come under closer public scrutiny.

26. In developing countries the promotion of autonomous research and development should be linked to specific projects and programmes at the national, regional and inter-regional levels, which are often geared to the satisfaction of basic needs. More funds are necessary to stimulate and support adaptive technological research. This might also help these countries to avoid problems of obsolescence and problems arising from the non-availability of particular types of equipment, related spare parts and components from the advanced industrial nations.

27. The concentration of communications technology in a relatively few developed countries and transnational corporations has led to virtual monopoly situations in this field. To counteract these tendencies national and international measures are required, among them reform of existing patent laws and conventions, appropriate legislation and international agreements.

### *Strengthening Cultural Identity*

*Promoting conditions for the preservation of the cultural identity of every society is necessary to enable it to enjoy a harmonious and creative inter-relationship with other cultures. It is equally necessary to modify situations in many developed and developing countries which suffer from cultural dominance.*

We recommend:

28. Establishment of national cultural policies, which should foster cultural identity and creativity, and involve the media in these tasks. Such policies should also contain guidelines for safeguarding national cultural development while promoting knowledge of other cultures. It is in relation to others that each culture enhances its own identity.<sup>(1)</sup>

29. Communication and cultural policies should ensure that creative artists and

(1) Comment by Mr. S. MacBride: "I wish to add that owing to the cultural importance of spiritual and religious values and also in order to restore moral values, policy guidelines should take into account religious beliefs and traditions."

*studied. Such experiments constitute a basis for continuing cultural dialogue, which could be furthered by agreements between countries and through international support.*

30. Introduction of guidelines with respect to advertising content and the values and attitudes it fosters, in accordance with national standards and practices. Such guidelines should be consistent with national development policies and efforts to preserve cultural identity. Particular attention should be given to the impact on children and adolescents. In this connection, various mechanisms such as complaint boards or consumer review committees might be established to afford the public the possibility of reacting against advertising which they feel inappropriate.

### *Reducing the Commercialization of Communication*

*The social effects of the commercialization of the mass media are a major concern in policy formulation and decision-making by private and public bodies.*

We recommend:

31. In expanding communication systems, preference should be given to non-commercial forms of mass communication. Promotion of such types of communication should be integrated with the traditions, culture, development objectives and socio-political system of each country. As in the field of education, public funds might be made available for this purpose.

32. While acknowledging the need of the media for revenues, ways and means should be considered to reduce the negative effects that the influence of market and commercial considerations have in the organization and content of national and international communication flows.<sup>(1)</sup>

33. That consideration be given to changing existing funding patterns of commercial mass media. In this connection, reviews could be made of the way in which the relative role of advertising volume and costs pricing policies, voluntary contributions, subsidies, taxes, financial incentives and supports could be modified to enhance the social function of mass media and improve their service to the community.

### *Access to Technical Information*

*The flow of technical information within nations and across national boundaries is a major resource for development. Access to such information, which countries need for technical decision-making at all levels, is as crucial as access to news sources. This type of information is generally not easily available and is most often concentrated in large techno-structures. Developed countries are not providing adequate information of this type to developing countries.*

(1) Comment by Mr. E. Abel: "At no time has the commission seen evidence adduced in support of the notion that market and commercial considerations necessarily exert a negative effect upon communication flows. On the contrary, the commission has praised elsewhere in this report courageous investigative journalism of the sort that can be sustained only by independent media whose survival depends upon their acceptance in the marketplace, rather than the favors of political leaders. The commission also is aware that market mechanisms play an increasingly important role today even in so-called planned economies."

*34. Developing countries should pay particular attention to: (a) the correlation between education, scientific and communication policies, because their practical application frequently overlaps; (b) the creation in each country of one or several centres for the collection and utilization of technical information and data, both from within the country and from abroad; (c) to secure the basic equipment necessary for essential data processing activities; (d) the development of skills and facilities for computer processing and analysis of data obtained from remote sensing.*

35. Developed countries should foster exchanges of technical information on the principle that all countries have equal rights to full access to available information. It is increasingly necessary, in order to reduce inequalities in this field, to promote cooperative arrangements for collection, retrieval, processing and diffusion of technological information through various networks, regardless of geographical or institutional frontiers. UNISIST, which provides basic guidelines for voluntary cooperation among and between information systems and services, should further develop its activities.

36. Developing countries should adopt national informatics policies as a matter of priority. These should primarily relate to the establishment of decision-making centres (inter-departmental and inter-disciplinary) which would inter alia (a) assess technological alternatives; (b) centralize purchases; (c) encourage local production of software; (d) promote regional and sub-regional cooperation (in various fields, including education, health and consumer services).

37. At the international level, consideration should be given to action with respect to: (a) a systematic identification of existing organized data processing infrastructures in various specialized fields; (b) agreement on measures for effective multi-country participation in the programmes, planning and administration of existing or developing data infrastructures; (c) analysis of commercial and technical measures likely to improve the use of informatics by developing countries; (d) agreement on international priorities for research and development that is of interest to all countries in the field of informatics.

38. Transnational corporations should supply to the authorities of the countries in which they operate, upon request and on a regular basis as specified by local laws and regulations, all information required for legislative and administrative purposes relevant to their activities and specifically needed to assess the performance of such entities. They should also provide the public, trade unions and other interested sectors of the countries in which they operate with information needed to understand the global structure, activities and policies of the transnational corporation and their significance for the country concerned.

## **III. Professional Integrity and Standards**

### *Responsibility of Journalists*

*For the journalist, freedom and responsibility are indivisible. Freedom without responsibility invites distortion and other abuses. But in the absence of freedom there can be no exercise of responsibility. The concept of freedom with responsibility necessarily includes a concern for professional ethics, demanding an equitable approach to events, situations or processes with due attention to their diverse*

*We recommend:*

39. The importance of the journalist's mission in the contemporary world demands steps to enhance his standing in society. In many countries even today, journalists are not regarded as members of an acknowledged profession and they are treated accordingly. To overcome this situation, journalism needs to raise its standards and quality for recognition everywhere as a genuine profession.

40. To be treated as professionals, journalists require broad educational preparation and specific professional training. Programmes of instruction need to be developed not only for entry-level recruits, but also for experienced personnel who from time to time would benefit from special seminars and conferences designed to refresh and enrich their qualifications. Basically, programmes of instruction and training should be conducted on national and regional levels.

41. Such values as truthfulness, accuracy and respect for human rights are not universally applied at present. Higher professional standards and responsibility cannot be imposed by decree, nor do they depend solely on the goodwill of individual journalists, who are employed by institutions which can improve or handicap their professional performance. The self-respect of journalists, their integrity and inner drive to turn out work of high quality are of paramount importance. It is this level of professional dedication, making for responsibility, that should be fostered by news media and journalists' organizations. In this framework, a distinction may have to be drawn between media institutions, owners and managers on the one hand, and journalists on the other.

42. As in other professions, journalists and media organizations serve the public directly and the public, in turn, is entitled to hold them accountable for their actions. Among the mechanisms devised up to now in various countries for assuring accountability, the Commission sees merit in press or media councils, the institution of the press ombudsman and peer group criticism of the sort practised by journalism reviews in several countries. In addition, communities served by particular media can accomplish significant reforms through citizen action. Specific forms of community involvement in decision-making will vary, of course, from country to country. Public broadcasting stations, for example, can be governed by representative boards drawn from the community. Voluntary measures of this sort can do much to influence media performance. Nevertheless, it appears necessary to develop further effective ways by which the right to assess mass media performance can be exercised by the public.

43. Codes of professional ethics exist in all parts of the world, adopted voluntarily in many countries by professional groups. The adoption of codes of ethics at national and, in some cases, at the regional level is desirable, provided that such codes are prepared and adopted by the profession itself — without governmental interference.

### *Towards Improved International Reporting*

*The full and factual presentation of news about one country to others is a continuing problem. The reasons for this are manifold: principal among them are correspondents' working conditions, their skills and attitudes, varying conceptions of*

*will require long-term, evolutionary action towards improving the exchange of news around the world.*

*We recommend:*

44. All countries should take steps to assure admittance of foreign correspondents and facilitate their collection and transmission of news. Special obligations in this regard, undertaken by the signatories to the Final Act of the Helsinki conference, should be honoured and, indeed, liberally applied. Free access to news sources by journalists is an indispensable requirement for accurate, faithful and balanced reporting. This necessarily involves access to unofficial, as well as official sources of information, that is, access to the entire spectrum of opinion within any country.<sup>(1)</sup>

45. Conventional standards of news selection and reporting, and many accepted news values, need to be reassessed if readers and listeners around the world are to receive a more faithful and comprehensive account of events, movements and trends in both developing and developed countries. The inescapable need to interpret unfamiliar situations in terms that will be understood by a distant audience should not blind reporters or editors to the hazards of narrow ethnocentric thinking. The first step towards overcoming this bias is to acknowledge that it colours the thinking of virtually all human beings, journalists included, for the most part without deliberate intent. The act of selecting certain news items for publication, while rejecting others, produces in the minds of the audience a picture of the world that may well be incomplete or distorted. Higher professional standards are needed for journalists to be able to illuminate the diverse cultures and beliefs of the modern world, without their presuming to judge the ultimate validity of any foreign nation's experience and traditions.

46. To this end, reporters being assigned to foreign posts should have the benefit of language training and acquaintance with the history, institutions, politics, economics and cultural environment of the country or region in which they will be serving.

47. The press and broadcasters in the industrialized world should allot more space and time to reporting events in and background material about foreign countries in general and news from the developing world in particular. Also, the media in developed countries — especially the "gatekeepers", editors and producers of print and broadcasting media who select the news items to be published or broadcast — should become more familiar with the cultures and conditions in developing countries. Although the present imbalance in news flows calls for strengthening capacities in developing countries, the media of the industrialized countries have their contribution to make towards the correction of these inequalities.

48. To offset the negative effects of inaccurate or malicious reporting of international news, the right of reply and correction should be further considered. While these

(1) Comment by Mr. S. Losev: This paragraph doesn't correspond to the Helsinki Final Act (see section 2 — information, point (c)), contradicts the interests of developing nations, and therefore is completely unacceptable and I object against it being included. I suggest to replace this recommendation by the following text: "All countries should take appropriate measures to improve the conditions for foreign correspondents to carry out their professional activities in the host countries in accordance with the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act and with due respect to the national sovereignty and the national identity of the host country".

that it would be neither expedient nor realistic to propose the adoption of any international regulations for their purpose. False or distorted news accounts can be harmful, but the voluntary publication of corrections or replies is preferable to international normative action. Since the manner in which the right of reply and correction as applied in different countries varies significantly, it is further suggested that: (a) the exercise of the international right of reply and correction be considered for application on a voluntary basis in each country according to its journalistic practices and national legal framework; (b) the United Nations, in consultation with all concerned bodies, explore the conditions under which this right could be perfected at the international level, taking into account the cumbersome operation of the 1952 Convention on the International Right of Correction; (c) media institutions with an international reach define on a voluntary basis internal standards for the exercise of this right and make them publicly available.

49. Intelligence services of many nations have at one time or other recruited journalists to commit espionage under cover of their professional duties. This practice must be condemned. It undermines the integrity of the profession and, in some circumstances, can expose other journalists to unjustified suspicion or physical threat. The Commission urges journalists and their employers to be on guard against possible attempts of this kind. We also urge governments to refrain from using journalists for purposes of espionage.

#### *Protection of Journalists*

*Daily reports from around the world attest to dangers that journalists are subject to in the exercise of their profession: harassment, threats, imprisonment, physical violence, assassination. Continual vigilance is required to focus the world's attention on such assaults to human rights.*

We recommend:

50. The professional independence and integrity of all those involved in the collection and dissemination of news, information and views to the public should be safeguarded. However, the Commission does not propose special privileges to protect journalists in the performance of their duties, although journalism is often a dangerous profession. Far from constituting a special category, journalists are citizens of their respective countries, entitled to the same range of human rights as other citizens. One exception is provided in the Additional Protocol to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, which applies only to journalists on perilous missions, such as in areas of armed conflict. To propose additional measures would invite the dangers entailed in a licensing system since it would require some body to stipulate who should be entitled to claim such protection. Journalists will be fully protected only when everyone's human rights are guaranteed.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Comment by Mr. S MacBride: "I consider this paragraph quite inadequate to deal with what is a serious position. Because of the importance of the role of journalists and others who provide or control the flow of news to the media, I urge that they should be granted a special status and protection. I also urge that provisions should be made to enable a journalist to appeal against a refusal of reasonable facilities. My views on these issues are embodied in a paper entitled *The Protection of Journalists* (CIC Document No. 90) which I submitted to the Commission; I refer in particular to paragraphs 1-17 and 35-53 of this paper."

...should convene a series of round tables at which journalists, media executives, researchers and jurists can periodically review problems related to the protection of journalists and propose additional appropriate measures to this end.<sup>(2)</sup>

#### IV. Democratization of Communication

##### *Human Rights*

*Freedom of speech, of the press, of information and of assembly are vital for the realization of human rights. Extension of these communication freedoms to a broader individual and collective right to communicate is an evolving principle in the democratization process. Among the human rights to be emphasized are those of equality for women and between races. Defence of all human rights is one of the media's most vital tasks.*

We recommend:

52. All those working in the mass media should contribute to the fulfilment of human rights, both individual and collective, in the spirit of the Unesco Declaration on the mass media and the Helsinki Final Act, and the International Bill of Human Rights. The contribution of the media in this regard is not only to foster these principles, but also to expose all infringements, wherever they occur, and to support those whose rights have been neglected or violated. Professional associations and public opinion should support journalists subject to pressure or who suffer adverse consequences from their dedication to the defence of human rights.

53. The media should contribute to promoting the just cause of peoples struggling for freedom and independence and their right to live in peace and equality without foreign interference. This is especially important for all oppressed peoples who, while struggling against colonialism, religious and racial discrimination, are deprived of opportunity to make their voices heard within their own countries.

54. Communication needs in a democratic society should be met by the extension of specific rights such as the right to be informed, the right to inform, the right to privacy, the right to participate in public communication — all elements of a new concept, the right to communicate. In developing what might be called a new era of social rights, we suggest all the implications of the right to communicate be further explored.

##### *Removal of Obstacles*

*Communication, with its immense possibilities for influencing the minds and behaviour of people, can be a powerful means of promoting democratization of society and of widening public participation in the decision-making process. This depends on the structures and practices of the media and their management and to what extent they facilitate broader access and open the communication process to a free interchange of ideas, information and experience among equals, without dominance or discrimination.*

(1) Comment by Mr. S. MacBride: "I urge that such a Round Table be convened annually for a period of five years; I refer to paragraphs 50-57 of my paper on *The Protection of Journalists* (CIC Document No. 90)."

55. All countries adopt measures to enlarge sources of information needed by citizens in their everyday life. A careful review of existing laws and regulations should be undertaken with the aim of reducing limitations, secrecy provisions and other constraints in information practices.

56. Censorship or arbitrary control of information should be abolished.<sup>(1)</sup> In areas where reasonable restrictions may be considered necessary, these should be provided for by law, subject to judicial review and in line with the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenants relating to human rights, and in other instruments adopted by the community of nations.<sup>(2)</sup>

57. Special attention should be devoted to obstacles and restrictions which derive from the concentration of media ownership, public or private, from commercial influences on the press and broadcasting, or from private or governmental advertising. The problem of financial conditions under which the media operate should be critically reviewed, and measures elaborated to strengthen editorial independence.

58. Effective legal measures should be designed to: (a) limit the process of concentration and monopolization; (b) circumscribe the action of transnationals by requiring them to comply with specific criteria and conditions defined by national legislation and development policies; (c) reverse trends to reduce the number of decision-makers at a time when the media's public is growing larger and the impact of communication is increasing; (d) reduce the influence of advertising upon editorial policy and broadcast programming; (e) seek and improve models which would ensure greater independence and autonomy of the media concerning their management and editorial policy, whether these media are under private, public or government ownership.<sup>(3)</sup>

### *Diversity and Choice*

*Diversity and choice in the content of communication are a pre-condition for democratic participation. Every individual and particular groups should be able to*

(1) Comment by Mr. S. Losev: "This whole problem of censorship or arbitrary control of information is within the national legislation of each country and is to be solved within the national legal framework taking in due consideration the national interests of each country."

(2) Comment by Mr. S. MacBride: "I also wish to draw attention to the provisions of Article 10 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights which I consider as wholly inadequate. I urge that Articles 13 and 14 of the Inter-American Convention on Human Rights (1979) are much more comprehensive and effective than the equivalent provisions of the European Convention. The matter is discussed in paragraphs 26-29 of my paper on *The Protection of Journalists* (CIC Document No. 90)."

(3) Comment by Mr. E. Abel: "Regarding (a) and (c), anti-monopoly legislation, whether more or less effective, is relevant only in countries where a degree of competition can be said to exist. It is a travesty to speak of measures against concentration and monopolization in countries where the media are themselves established as state monopolies, or operate as an arm of the only authorized political party. (b) Transnational corporations are expected to comply with the laws of the countries in which they do business. (d) Where it can be shown to exist, the influence of advertisers upon editorial content or broadcast programming would warrant careful study. But a sweeping demand that such influence be reduced, without pausing to examine or attempting to measure that influence in particular circumstances, is a symptom of ideological prejudice."

and opinions and have the opportunity to share these ideas with others. The development of decentralized and diversified media should provide larger opportunities for a real direct involvement of the people in communication processes.

We recommend:

59. The building of infrastructures and the adoption of particular technologies should be carefully matched to the need for more abundant information to a broader public from a plurality of sources.

60. Attention should be paid to the communication needs of women. They should be assured adequate access to communication means and that images of them and of their activities are not distorted by the media or in advertising.

61. The concerns of children and youth, national, ethnic, religious, linguistic minorities, people living in remote areas and the aged and handicapped also deserve particular consideration. They constitute large and sensitive segments of society and have special communication needs.

### *Integration and Participation*

*To be able to communicate in contemporary society, man must dispose of appropriate communication tools. New technologies offer him many devices for individualized information and entertainment, but often fail to provide appropriate tools for communication within his community or social or cultural group. Hence, alternative means of communication are often required.*

We recommend:

62. Much more attention be devoted to use of the media in living and working environments. Instead of isolating men and women, the media should help integrate them into the community.

63. Readers, listeners and viewers have generally been treated as passive receivers of information. Those in charge of the media should encourage their audiences to play a more active role in communication by allocating more newspaper space, or broadcasting time, for the views of individual members of the public or organized social groups.

64. The creation of appropriate communication facilities at all levels, leading towards new forms of public involvement in the management of the media and new modalities for their funding.

65. Communication policy-makers should give far greater importance to devising ways whereby the management of the media could be democratized — while respecting national customs and characteristics — by associating the following categories: (a) journalists and professional communicators; (b) creative artists; (c) technicians; (d) media owners and managers; (e) representatives of the public. Such democratization of the media needs the full support and understanding of all those working in them, and this process should lead to their having a more active role in editorial policy and management.

*Inequalities in communication facilities, which exist everywhere, are due to economic discrepancies or to political and economic design, still others to cultural imposition or neglect. But whatever the source or reason for them, gross inequalities should no longer be countenanced. The very notion of a new world information and communication order presupposes fostering international cooperation, which includes two main areas: international assistance and contributions towards international understanding. The international dimensions of communication are today of such importance that it has become crucial to develop cooperation on a world-wide scale. It is for the international community to take the appropriate steps to replace dependence, dominance and inequality by more fruitful and more open relations of inter-dependence and complementarity, based on mutual interest and the equal dignity of nations and peoples. Such cooperation requires a major international commitment to redress the present situation. This clear commitment is a need not only for developing countries but also for the international community as a whole. The tensions and disruptions that will come from lack of action are far greater than the problems posed by necessary changes.*

We recommend:

66. The progressive implementation of national and international measures that will foster the setting up of a new world information and communication order. The proposals contained in this report can serve as a contribution to develop the varied actions necessary to move in that direction.

67. International cooperation for the development of communications be given equal priority with and within other sectors (e.g. health, agriculture, industry, science, education, etc.) as information is a basic resource for individual and collective advancement and for all-round development. This may be achieved by utilizing funds provided through bilateral governmental agreements and from international and regional organizations, which should plan a considerable increase in their allocations for communication, infrastructures, equipment and programme development. Care should be taken that assistance is compatible with developing countries' priorities. Consideration should also be given to provision of assistance on a programme rather than on a strict project basis.

68. The close relationship between the establishment of a new international economic order and the new world information and communication order should be carefully considered by the technical bodies dealing with these issues. Concrete plans of action linking both processes should be implemented within the United Nations system. The United Nations, in approving the international development strategy should consider the communications sector as an integral element of it and not merely as an instrument of public information.

### *Strengthening Collective Self-reliance*

*Developing countries have a primary responsibility for undertaking necessary changes to overcome their dependence in the field of communications. The actions needed begin at the national level, but must be complemented by forceful and decisive agreements at the bilateral, sub-regional, regional, and inter-regional levels.*

We recommend:

69. The communication dimension should be incorporated into existing programmes and agreements for economic cooperation between developing countries.

70. Joint activities in the field of communication, which are under way between developing countries should be developed further in the light of the overall analysis and recommendations of this Report. In particular, attention should be given to cooperation among national news agencies, to the further development of the News Agencies Pool and broadcasting organizations of the non-aligned countries, as well as to the general exchange on a regular basis of radio, TV programmes and films.

71. With respect to cooperation in the field of technical information, the establishment of regional and sub-regional data banks and information processing centres and specialized documentation centres should be given a high priority. They should be conceived and organized, both in terms of software and management, according to the particular needs of cooperating countries. Choices of technology and selection of foreign enterprises should be made so as not to increase dependence in this field.

72. Mechanisms for sharing information of a non-strategic nature could be established particularly in economic matters. Arrangements of this nature could be of value in areas such as multilateral trade negotiations, dealings with transnational corporations and banks, economic forecasting, and medium- and long-term planning and other similar fields.

73. Particular efforts should be undertaken to ensure that news about other developing countries within or outside their region receive more attention and space in the media. Special projects could be developed to ensure a steady flow of attractive and interesting material inspired by news values which meet developing countries' information needs.

74. Measures to promote links and agreements between professional organizations and communication researchers of different countries should be fostered. It is necessary to develop networks of institutions and people working in the field of communication in order to share and exchange experiences and implement joint projects of common interest with concrete operational contents.

### *International Mechanisms*

*Cooperation for the development of communications is a global concern and therefore of importance to international organizations, where all Member states can fully debate the issues involved and decide upon multi-national action. Governments should therefore attentively review the structures and programmes of international agencies in the communications field and point to changes required to meet evolving needs.*

We recommend:

75. The Member States of Unesco should increase their support to the Organization's programme in this area. Consideration should be given to organizing a distinct

*Unesco's work — education, science and culture.* <sup>(1)</sup> In its communications activities, Unesco should concentrate on priority areas. Among these are assistance to national policy formulation and planning, technical development, organizing professional meetings and exchanges, promotion and coordination of research, and elaboration of international norms.

76. Better coordination of the various communication activities within Unesco and those throughout the United Nations System. A thorough inventory and assessment of all communications development and related programmes of the various agencies should be undertaken as a basis for designing appropriate mechanisms to carry out the necessary consultation, cooperation and coordination.

77. It would be desirable for the United Nations family to be equipped with a more effective information system, including a broadcast capability of its own and possibly access to a satellite system. That would enable the United Nations to follow more closely world affairs and transmit its message more effectively to all the peoples of the earth. Although such a proposal would require heavy investment and raise some complex issues, a feasibility study should be undertaken so that a carefully designed project could be prepared for deliberation and decision. <sup>(2)(3)</sup>

78. Consideration might be given to establishing within the framework of Unesco an International Centre for the Study and Planning of Information and Communication. Its main tasks would be to: (a) promote the development of national communication systems in developing countries and the balance and reciprocity in international information flows; (b) mobilize resources required for that purpose and manage the funds put at its disposal; and (c) assure coordination among parties interested in communication development and involved in various cooperation programmes and evaluate results of bilateral and multilateral activities in this field; (d) organize round tables, seminars, and conferences for the training of communication planners, researchers and journalists, particularly those specializing in international problems; and (e) keep under review communications technology transfers between developed and developing countries so that they are carried out in the most suitable conditions. The Centre may be guided by a tripartite coordinating council composed of representatives of developing and developed countries and of interested international organizations. We suggest Unesco should undertake further study of this proposal

(1) Comment by Mr. M. Lubis: "I strongly believe that the present set up in Unesco (Sector of Culture and Communication) is adequate to deal with the problems of Communication."

(2) Comment by Mr. M. Lubis: "I am of the opinion that the present communication potential of the UN system has not been effectively and efficiently used and managed. And I cannot foresee for a long time to come that the UN system will be able to speak with one voice on the really relevant issues of the world, disarmament, peace, freedom, human rights. However, I support the suggestion about a feasibility study, contained in the same paragraph."

(3) Comment by Mr. S. MacBride: "I would point out that the phenomenal growth of international broadcasting highlights the absence of a UN International Broadcasting System. Some thirty countries broadcast a total of 12,000 hours per week in one hundred different languages. I urge that the UN should establish a broadcasting system of its own that would broadcast 24 hours round the clock in not less than 30 different languages. See my paper on *The Protection of Journalists* (CIC Document No. 90, paragraph 46) and the paper on *International Broadcasting* (CIC Document No. 60)."

## *Towards International Understanding*

*The strengthening of peace, international security and cooperation and the lessening of international tensions are the common concern of all nations. The mass media can make a substantial contribution towards achieving these goals. The special session of the United Nations General Assembly on disarmament called for increased efforts by the mass media to mobilize public opinion in favour of disarmament and of ending the arms race. This Declaration together with the Unesco Declaration on fundamental principles concerning the contribution of the mass media to strengthening peace and international understanding, to the promotion of human rights and to countering racialism, apartheid and incitement to war should be the foundation of new communication policies to foster international understanding. A new world information and communication order requires and must become the instrument for peaceful cooperation between nations.*

### We recommend:

79. National communication policies should be consistent with adopted international communication principles and should seek to create a climate of mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence among nations. Countries should also encourage their broadcast and other means of international communication to make the fullest contribution towards peace and international cooperation and to refrain from advocating national, racial or religious hatred, and incitement to discrimination, hostility, violence or war.

80. Due attention should be paid to the problems of peace and disarmament, human rights, development and the creation of a new communication order. Mass media both printed and audiovisual, should be encouraged to publicise significant documents of the United Nations, of Unesco, of the world peace movements, and of various other international and national organizations devoted to peace and disarmament. The curricula of schools of journalism should include study of these international problems and the views expressed on them within the United Nations.

(1) Comment by Ms. B. Zimmerman: "Although I agree that a coordinating body in the field of communication development could serve a useful purpose, I cannot support this precise recommendation. All members of the Commission did not have the opportunity to discuss thoroughly the advantages and disadvantages of various objectives and structures for such a coordinating body. As a Unesco Intergovernmental Conference is to be held in 1980 to cover that topic, I feel the Commission should welcome the careful study that the Unesco Conference is in a position to give the matter, rather than offering any recommendation at this time."

Comment by Mr. E. Abel: "This proposal is premature, unnecessary and unwise. The design of an appropriate mechanism for promoting and coordinating communications development demands more time and resources than this Commission possesses. Essentially the same proposal here advanced was one of two submitted to a Unesco experts meeting in November; neither one was endorsed. The question is on the agenda for an intergovernmental meeting at Unesco in April. The UN General Assembly has now taken a strong interest in the matter and has requested the Secretary-General to intervene. As it stands, this proposal can only deter the necessary cooperation of both the competent UN bodies and the developed nations whose cooperation is indispensable to further progress."

Comment by Mr. S. MacBride: "I suggest that if any steps are taken in this direction prior consultation and accord should be reached with journalists' organizations and other NGOs involved in the mass media."

81. All forms of co-operation among the media, the professionals and their associations, which contribute to the better knowledge of other nations and cultures, should be encouraged and promoted.

82. Reporting on international events or developments in individual countries in situations of crisis and tension requires extreme care and responsibility. In such situations the media often constitute one of the few, if not the sole, link between combatants or hostile groups. This clearly casts on them a special role which they should seek to discharge with objectivity and sensitivity.

□ □ □

The recommendations and suggestions contained in our Report do not presume to cover all topics and issues calling for reflection and action. Nevertheless, they indicate the importance and scale of the tasks which face every country in the field of information and communication, as well as their international dimensions which pose a formidable challenge to the community of nations.

Our study indicates clearly the direction in which the world must move to attain a new information and communication order—essentially a series of new relationships arising from the advances promised by new communication technologies which should enable all peoples to benefit. The awareness already created on certain issues, such as global imbalances in information flows, suggests that a process of change has resulted and is under way. The power and promise of ever-new communication technologies and systems are, however, such as to demand deliberate measures to ensure that existing communication disparities do not widen. The objective should be to ensure that men and women are enabled to lead richer and more satisfying lives.

## Appendix 4

# International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems

### Origin and Mandate

1. Following the general policy debate which took place during the nineteenth session of Unesco's General Conference (Nairobi, October-November 1976) where a great emphasis was placed on fundamental issues of communication between peoples and nations — as well as following a difficult discussion of a draft declaration on the fundamental principles governing the use of mass media in strengthening peace and international understanding and in combating war propaganda, racialism and apartheid — many delegates felt that the discussion of such questions would have been facilitated and the controversies attenuated had a more thorough analysis of all communication and information problems been available.

2. After a lengthy debate, it was generally agreed that "the highest priority should be

given to measures aiming at reducing the communication gap existing between the developed and the developing countries and at achieving a freer and more balanced international flow of information" and that "a review should be undertaken of the totality of the problems of communication in modern society".

3. In the light of these considerations, the Director-General decided to entrust an international commission, composed of sixteen members with the task of carrying out a study of all communication problems in present-day society. The Commission was established in December 1977.

4. The Commission's mandate was defined by the Director-General. Its terms and main lines of inquiry are quoted in the Report itself (Part I, Chapter 3, Section 4).

### Composition

5. The nomination of Commission members was guided by demands of pluralism and the need for unity and homogeneity; by the need to ensure the experience and qualifications, involvement of currents of thought, intellectual trends, cultural traditions, and the diversity of economic and social systems in the major regions of the world.

International Peace Bureau, former Minister for Foreign Affairs, founding member of Amnesty International, United Nations Commissioner for Namibia, holder of the Nobel and Lenin Peace Prizes.

#### Members:

#### President:

Sean MacBride (Ireland), journalist, barrister and politician, President of the

Elie Abel (U.S.A.), journalist, and broadcaster, Harry and Norman Chandler Professor of Communication, Stanford University.

*President of the Centre de formation et de perfectionnement des journalistes, Paris.*

*Elebe Ma Ekonzo (Zaire), journalist, Director of National Press, Director-General of Agence Zaire-Presse.*

*Gabriel Garcia Marquez (Colombia), journalist and author.*

*Sergei Losev (U.S.S.R.) Director-General of TASS News Agency.*

*Mochtar Lubis (Indonesia), journalist, President of the Press Foundation of Asia.*

*Mustapha Masmoudi (Tunisia), Permanent Delegate of Tunisia to Unesco, formerly Secretary of State for Information, President of the Intergovernmental Coordinating Council for Information of the Non-Aligned Countries.*

*Michio Nagai (Japan), journalist and sociologist, former Minister of Education, editorialist of the newspaper Assahi Shimbun.*

*Research Professor, University of Benin, previously Commissioner for Information, Social Development and Sport, Bendel State.*

*Bogdan Osolnik (Yugoslavia), journalist, politician, member of the National Assembly*

*Gamal El Oteifi (Egypt), former Minister for Information and Culture, honorary professor, Cairo University, journalist, lawyer and legal adviser.*

*Johannes Pieter Pronk (Netherlands), economist and politician.*

*Juan Somavia (Chile), Executive Director, Instituto Latinoamericano de Estudios Transnacionales (Mexico City).*

*Boobli George Verghese (India), journalist and Gandhi Peace Foundation Fellow.*

*Betty Zimmerman (Canada), broadcaster, Director, Radio Canada International.*

6. The Commission was assisted during the course of its work by a small Secretariat of Unesco staff members. The Executive Secretary was Asher Deleon.

### Activities

7. The Commission had full intellectual autonomy in carrying out its mandate and it enjoyed complete freedom in the organization and execution of its work and in establishing the contents of its Report.

8. From December 1977 to November 1979, the Commission held eight sessions, for a total of 42 days: four of the meetings were in Paris, the others in Sweden (April, 1978), Yugoslavia (January, 1979), India (March, 1979), Mexico (June, 1979). In connection with the Stockholm session, an international seminar on the infrastructures of news collection and dissemination was organized in collaboration with the Swedish Government. Similarly, on the occasion of other meetings outside Paris, round tables were organized by the host Governments on major themes of particular importance relating to links between communication and

society, development, technology and culture.

9. During the course of its work, the President and other members of the Commission participated in numerous conferences, meetings, seminars and discussion groups organized by international organizations and professional associations and various regional and national institutions.

10. Additional substantive inputs into the work of the Commission were the papers prepared on specific aspects of communication by specialists from around the world (see list annexed) and numerous hearings, research findings, topical documentation and analytical commentaries generously provided by dozens of international, regional and national

*associations — research and documentation centres, journalism schools, universities, professional associations and similar bodies.*

11. The Commission also had the benefit of hundreds of individual, institutional and governmental comments on its Interim Report, which was published, circulated to

more than 7,000 addressees and submitted 1978 to the 20th session of Unesco's General Conference.

12. The President of the Commission transmitted the Final Report to the Director-General in February 1980.

# PAN AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY

P.O. Box 4056 ☎: 25.61.20 - 25.31.88 - 25.62.21

Telex: 21 647 - 21 648 SG Pana Dakar Senegal

ABP-BEN	BENIN	BOTSWANA	BOPA
ABP-BUR	BURUNDI	CAMEROON	CAMNEWS
ACAP	CENTRAL AFRICAN REP.	CAP VERT	CABO PRESSE
ACI	CONGO	ETHIOPIA	ENA
ADJ	DJIBOUTI	GAMBIA	GINS
ARW	RWANDA	GHANA	GNA
ABP-GAB	GABON	LIBYA	JARA
ABP-GUI	GUINEA	KENYA	KRA
AB	BURKINA-FASO	LESOTHO	LENA
AM	MOZAMBIQUE	LIBERIA	LINA
AP	COTE D'IVOIRE	MALAWI	MAMA
AMAF	MALI	EGYPT	MENA
AMP	MAURITANIA	NIGERIA	MAN
ANG	GUINEA-BISSAU	SEYCHELLES	SAP
ANGOP	ANGOLA	TANZANIA	SHIMATA
ANP	NIGER	SIERRA LEONE	SLENA
ANTA	MADAGASCAR	SWAZILAND	SNA
APS-ALG	ALGERIA	SOMALIE	SOMNA
APS-SEN	SENEGAL	SUDAN	SUNA
ATP	CHAD	TUNISIA	TAP
ATOP	TOGO	UGANDA	UNA
AZAP	ZAMBIA	ZAMBIA	ZANA
	ZIMBABWE	ZIMBABWE	ZANA

## NEWS ON AFRICA BY AFRICANS

# THE OBJECTIVES OF PANA

The objectives of PANA as defined in its Convention are as follows :

- \* Promote the aims and objectives of the OAU for the consolidation of the independence, unity and solidarity of Africa.
- \* Give more information about, and assist in the liberation struggle of peoples against colonialism, neo-colonialism, imperialism, apartheid, racism, zionism and all other forms of exploitation and oppression.
- \* Promote an effective exchange of political, economic, social and cultural information among Member States.
- \* Work for the sub-regional and regional integration of African countries and strengthen among them a bilateral and multilateral co-operation by ensuring a rapid and constant dissemination of objective and reliable information.
- \* Correct the distorted picture of Africa, its countries and

peoples resulting from partial and negative information published by foreign press agencies and portray its cultural values.

- \* Establish a Data Bank on Africa with a view to promoting the facilities of collection, processing and dissemination of adequate documentation.
- \* Contribute towards the development of already established national news agencies and promote in Africa the establishment of national news agencies and multinational training institutes of information and if need be in collaboration with competent International Organizations in the field.
- \* Ensure the preservation and promotion of traditional oral, written and visual communications.
- \* Co-operate with African News Agencies so as to have a greater impact on the Press, Radio, Television and Cinema.

# BRIEF HISTORY

When in the early 1960s, some apostles of Pan Africanism, Decolonization and the complete Independence of the continent mooted the idea of the creation of an African News Agency (Addis Ababa, 22/25 May 1963, 1st OAU Session), observers could not help but think it was a dream. This dream is today a reality. Here are the major stages (1):

## **OAU Constituent Assembly (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) 22-25 May 1963**

A resolution on the creation of an African News Agency was adopted by the Conference of Heads of State and Government of independent African States.

Soon after, the Union of African News Agencies (UANA) was established with the objective of preparing the ground for a Continental News Agency.

## **Unesco General Conference (Nairobi, Kenya) November 1976**

The General Assembly proclaimed the concept - « New World Information and Communication Order » (NWICO).

## **First Session of the Conference of Information Ministers (Kampala, Uganda) 7-11 November 1977**

The principle of creating a Pan African News Agency was adopted.

## **Second Session of the Conference of African Information Ministers (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) 4-9 April 1979**

The convention on the establishment

of an African news agency called the Pan African New Agency was adopted.

## **Conference of Heads of State and Government of the OAU (Monrovia, Liberia) - June 1979**

The Summit selected DAKAR as the main Headquarters of PANA.

The International Commission on the Study of Communication Problems chaired by Sean McBRIDE submitted its report « MANY VOICES ONE WORLD » to UNESCO in February 1980.

## **Unesco General Conference (Belgrade, Yugoslavia) 29 October 1980**

The debate on the « New World Information and Communication Order » (NWICO) entered its heated phase.

## **20th Anniversary of the OAU - 25 May 1983**

First news item of the Pan African News Agency transmitted from DAKAR.

## **First Extraordinary Session of the Conference of African Information Ministers (Cairo - Egypt) 23-25 November 1985**

After the pilot phase under Cheikh Ousmane DIALLO (NIGER), the first Director General of PANA - Auguste MPASSI-MUBA (CONGO) - was appointed.

(1) The events mentioned are indicative of the context in which PANA was created.

# MEMBER STATES OF PANA

Pana is a specialised institution of the OAU.

Member States of the OAU « shall be Member States of the Pan African News Agency » (Article 10 of the Convention); subject to the provisions of Article 24 of the said Convention: « Until the independence of their countries, Liberation Movements recognized by the OAU shall enjoy the Associate Member Status ».

## LIST OF OAU MEMBER STATES

- |                          |   |
|--------------------------|---|
| 1 - Algeria              | 27 - Madagascar                             |
| 2 - Angola               | 28 - Malawi                                 |
| 3 - Benin                | 29 - Mali                                   |
| 4 - Botswana             | 30 - Mauritius                              |
| 5 - Burkina Faso         | 31 - Mauritania                             |
| 6 - Burundi              | 32 - Morocco                                |
| 7 - Cameroon             | 33 - Mozambique                             |
| 8 - Cape Verde           | 34 - Niger                                  |
| 9 - Central African Rep. | 35 - Nigeria                                |
| 10 - Chad                | 36 - Rwanda                                 |
| 11 - Comoros             | 37 - Sahrawi Arab Democratic<br>Rep. (SADR) |
| 12 - Congo               | 38 - Sao Tome and Principe                  |
| 13 - Cote d'Ivoire       | 39 - Senegal                                |
| 14 - Djibouti            | 40 - Seychelles                             |
| 15 - Egypt               | 41 - Sierra Leone                           |
| 16 - Equatorial Guinea   | 42 - Somali                                 |
| 17 - Ethiopia            | 43 - Sudan                                  |
| 18 - Gabon               | 44 - Swaziland                              |
| 19 - Gambia              | 45 - Tanzania                               |
| 20 - Ghana               | 46 - Togo                                   |
| 21 - Guinea              | 47 - Tunisia                                |
| 22 - Guinea Bissau       | 48 - Uganda                                 |
| 23 - Kenya               | 49 - Zaire                                  |
| 24 - Lesotho             | 50 - Zambia                                 |
| 25 - Liberia             | 51 - Zimbabwe                               |
| 26 - Libya               |   |

## SIGNATORIES TO THE PANA CONVENTION AND THEIR NATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES

- |                   |               |                         |           |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Algeria        | (APS ALG)     | 23. Libya               | (JANA)    |
| 2. Angola         | (ANGOP)       | 24. Madagascar          | (ANTA)    |
| 3. Benin          | (ABP BEN)     | 25. Malawi              | (MANA)    |
| 4. Botswana       | (BOPA)        | 26. Mali                | (AMAP)    |
| 5. Burkina Faso   | (AIB)         | 27. Mauritania          | (AMP)     |
| 6. Burundi        | (ABP BUR)     | 28. Mozambique          | (AIM)     |
| 7. Cameroon       | (CAMNEWS)     | 29. Niger               | (ANP)     |
| 8. Cape Verde     | (CABO PRESSE) | 30. Nigeria             | (NAN)     |
| 9. Chad           | (ATP)         | 31. Rwanda              | (ARP)     |
| 10. Congo         | (ACI)         | 32. Sao Tome & Principe |           |
| 11. Côte d'Ivoire | (AIP)         | 33. Senegal             | (APS SEN) |
| 12. Djibouti      | (ADJI)        | 34. Sierra Leone        | (SLENA)   |
| 13. Egypt         | (MENA)        | 35. Somalia             | (SONA)    |
| 14. Ethiopia      | (ENA)         | 36. Sudan               | (SUNA)    |
| 15. Gabon         | (AGP-GAB)     | 37. Tanzania            | (SHIHATA) |
| 16. Gambia        | (GINS)        | 38. Togo                | (ATOP)    |
| 17. Ghana         | GNA)          | 39. Tunisia             | (TAP)     |
| 18. Guinea        | (AGP-GUI)     | 40. Uganda              | (UNA)     |
| 19. Guinea-Bissau | (AGP-BIS)     | 41. Zaire               | (AZAP)    |
| 20. Kenya         | (KNA)         | 42. Zambia              | (ZANA)    |
| 21. Lesotho       | (LENA)        | 43. Zimbabwe            | (ZIANA)   |
| 22. Liberia       | (LINA)        |                         |           |

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## SOURCES OF FINANCE

The sources of finance of the Pan African News Agency are made up of contributions from Member States and International Organizations. The Agency can, on the approval by the Conference or Council, receive any form of assistance from Governments, Public or Private Institutions or Individuals. PANA can commercialise its news productions.

**ASSESSMENT OF CONTRIBUTIONS EXPECTED  
FROM MEMBER STATES  
DURING THE 1988-1989 BIENNIUM (IN %)**

ALGERIA	6.28	GABON	6.42	RWANDA	0.51
ANGOLA	2.39	GAMBIA	0.63	SADR	0.51
BENIN	0.56	GHANA	3.27	SAO TOME & P.	1.04
BOTSWANA	2	GUINEA	0.68	SENEGAL	0.98
BURKINA FASO	0.56	GUINEA BISSAU	0.97	SEYCHELLES	1.09
BURUNDI	0.62	KENYA	2.31	SIERRA LEONE	1.4
CAMEROON	1.91	LESOTHO	0.56	SOMALIA	0.8
CAPE VERDE	0.56	LIBERIA	1.85	SUDAN	1.94
CENTRAL A. REP.	0.7	LIBYA	10.21	SWAZILAND	2
CHAD	0.62	MADAGASCAR	1.26	TANZANIA	1.68
COMOROS	0.51	MALAWI	0.84	TOGO	0.87
CONGO	1.38	MALI	0.56	TUNISIA	3.55
COTE D'IVOIRE	3.26	MOROCCO	3.67	UGANDA	1.2
DJIBOUTI	0.51	MAURITANIA	0.96	ZAIRE	2.19
EGYPT	7.72	MAURITIUS	1.58	ZAMBIA	3.32
EQUATORIAL		MOZAMBIQUE	1.98	ZIMBABWE	1.68
GUINEA	1.03	NIGER	0.73	TOTAL	100.00
ETHIOPIA	2.04	NIGERIA	7.78		

# ORGANS OF PANA

**\* The Conference of African Information Ministers**

The Conference meets every two years in ordinary session to determine the general policy of the Agency.

**\* Inter-Governmental Council**

The Council is composed of 14 States. Its members are elected for two years by the Conference according to a geographical distribution defined by the OAU covering the five regions of Africa.

- North Africa : 2 seats
- West Africa : 4 seats
- Central Africa : 3 seats
- East Africa : 3 seats
- Southern Africa : 2 seats

The country assuming the chairmanship of the Conference of Information Ministers and countries hosting the main headquarters and the Regional Pool Headquarters are ex-officio members with an advisory status.

During the interval between the sessions of the Conference, the Inter-Governmental Council is the guiding body of PANA.

At the operational level, PANA is administered by

**\* The Office of the Director General :**

The Director General is appointed by the Conference on the recommendation of the Inter-Governmental Council. The duration of his term of office is 4 years, renewable for not more than once (Article 15 of the Convention).

Three Directors of Department (Information, Technical, Administrative and Finance) assist the Director General in his task.

The Director of Information is assisted by an Editor-in-Chief and four Assistant Editors-in-Chief.

The Director General and the staff of PANA are international civil servants by status.

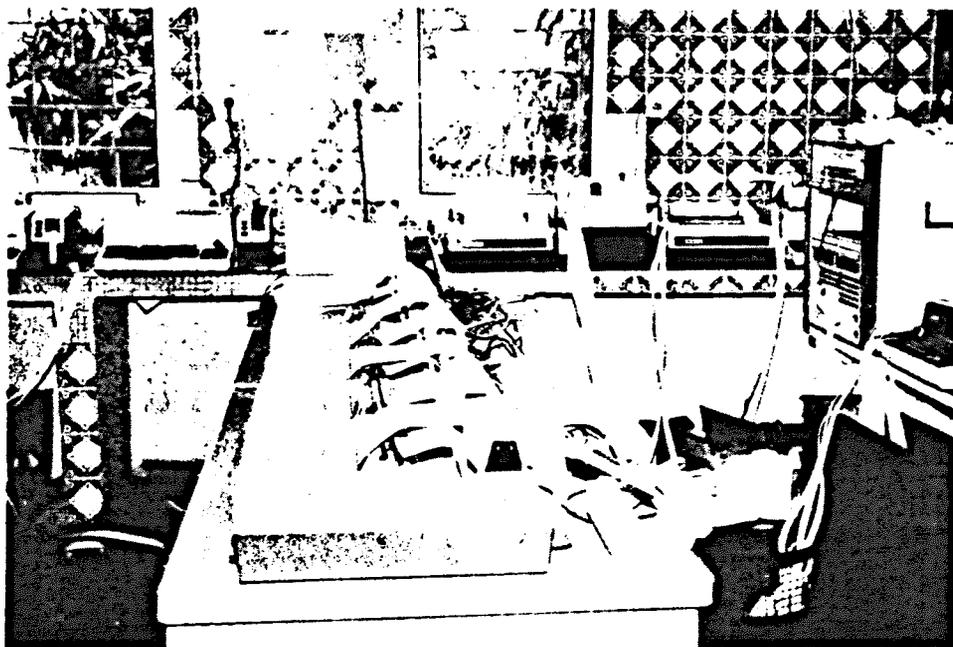
- They « shall not request and accept instructions from any government or any authority outside the Agency » (Art. 15b).

- Member States of the Agency « shall respect the international character of the functions of the Director General and staff and shall not influence the latter in the exercise of their duties ».



*Journalists at work in the PANA newsroom, Dakar*

**THE PAN AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY:  
« NEWS ON AFRICA BY AFRICANS »**



*Partial view of Telex Room*

The Pan African News Agency (PANA) is the information organ of the African Continent. Its objective is to promote the flow of news in Africa and contribute to the social and economic development of the continent.

Based in DAKAR, Senegal, the Agency has five (5) Regional Pools (See Table). It also has a Bureau in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) for covering events concerning the Organization of African Unity and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). Another Bureau based in Harare (Zimbabwe) treats and transmits

news related to the national liberation struggle in Southern Africa.

PANA is the youngest agency with international ambitions. Its structure is in this respect unique given that it is the only news agency operated with funds made available collectively by countries making up a whole Continent.

By conception and the objectives assigned it, PANA is a multi-functional Agency whose development is geared towards the following four areas:

- A Pool of African News Agencies

- A Classical-type News Agency
- A Data Bank
- A News Photo Wire Service.

**PANA :  
A POOL OF AFRICAN  
NEWS AGENCIES**

As a Pool of African News Agencies, the mission entrusted to PANA is to ensure the exchange of news between news agencies in African countries.

This function is by far the best performed today:

- About 45 countries from all regions of Africa are participating effectively in the PANA news system compared to 15 when activities were launched on 25 May 1983.

- PANA receives, treats, produces and transmits on its network about 25,000 words per day from a daily average of 20 news agencies. When it launched operations, it transmitted only 5460 words per day.

- As part of its training policy, PANA offers a programme whereby journalists from African national news agencies are seconded to the Agency on a rotational basis for up to three (3) months.

**PANA :  
CLASSICAL  
NEWS AGENCY**

This is a test case for PANA. Its ability to meet all the challenges of independence and credibility as a major news agency are inherent in its function. It is in line with activities related to the 2nd development phase of PANA.

To undertake this mission, PANA uses its own journalists (permanent

staff, freelance personnel and a number of external collaborators) for the production of Articles and Features of regional or continental interest. To this end, it covers major events (activities of the OAU, ECA, UN etc), and other events taking place in Africa and the world of interest to the African media.

To date, about 15 % of PANA's news services are produced in line with its mission as a Classical News Agency.

**PANA :  
A DATA BANK**

As a data bank, PANA is expected to gather, treat, stock and make available to a diversified clientele, and as a priority to the media, news on Africa.

To this effect, a documentation service on the various items produced by PANA has already been constituted. What is left to be done is only the final installation (already begun) of storage facilities (computer) to make this data bank operational.

**PANA :  
A NEWS PHOTO  
WIRE SERVICE**

This undoubtedly is a natural complement of the services provided by all major news agencies. The creation of a photo production unit is under study. It will help PANA to make available to its clientele (especially the media) news photos and audio-visual news materials.

These activities will make PANA one of the major news agencies in the world at the service of understanding between men in the spirit of the New World Information and Communication Order.

## A CONTINENTAL NETWORK

Divided into 5 major regions, the network of PANA today covers the whole African Continent. Besides, it completed this facility by establishing a Liaison Bureau (LB) to serve the OAU and the ECA in Addis Ababa and another Bureau attached to the LUSAKA Pool for the coverage of events in Southern Africa.

PANA endeavours to give to its users a vision of events taking place inside or outside the continent of interest to Africa. As far as possible, it attempts to provide information and interpret news on Africa prepared by Africans for Africans.

Most African countries with reception equipment can monitor the news items transmitted by PANA. In almost all African countries, PANA's news services are used by the media.

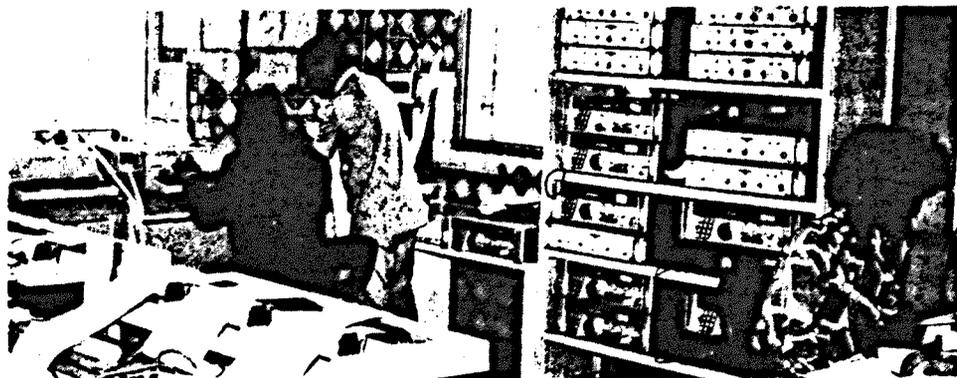
The computerization of news treatment and transmission as well as the

utilization of a satellite network will help increase both the volume of its production and the number of its clientele.

## PANA AND THE OTHER AFRICAN AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

A specialized agency of the OAU, PANA enjoys legal and financial autonomy. Relations between the two continental institutions are governed by a protocol agreement. Besides, PANA can cooperate with other specialized organizations and international institutions with the same objectives. To this end, the Agency can establish official or unofficial working relations with these organizations and institutions.

To this effect PANA maintains various working relations with UNESCO, ITU, UN, ADB, BADEA, WHO and PATU.



Radio Equipment

## SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGIONAL POOL (SARP) - LUSAKA, ZAMBIA (LAUNCHING OF OPERATIONS 1983)

Countries covered	Agency	Working Languages
Botswana Lesotho Malawi Mozambique	Botswana Press Agency (BOPA) Lesotho News Agency (LENA) Malawi News Agency (MANA) Mozambican News Agency (AIM)	English English English Portuguese/ English/French
Swaziland Zambia (*) Zimbabwe	Swaziland Government Information Zambia News Agency (ZANA) Zimbabwe Inter-African News Agency (ZIANA)	English English English

(\*) Regional Pool Headquarters : Lusaka

## CENTRAL AFRICAN REGIONAL POOL (CARP) KINSHASA, ZAIRE

~~(NOT YET OPERATIONAL)~~ 1988

Countries covered	Agency	Working Languages
Angola	Agence angolaise de Presse (ANGOP)	Portuguese/ Spanish/English /French
Burundi Cameroon	Agence Burundaise de Presse (ABP) Cameroon News (CAMNEWS) Departement de la Sopecam	French French English
Central African Rep.	Agence Centrafricaine de Presse (ACAP)	French
Chad Congo Equatorial Guinea	Agence Tchadienne de Presse (ATP) Agence congolaise d'information (ACI)	French French French
Gabon Rwanda	Agence Gabonaise de Presse (AGP) Agence Rwandaise de Presse (ARP)	Portuguese French French
Sao Tome & Principe Zaire (*)	Agence Zairoise de Presse (AZAP)	Portuguese Français

(\*) Regional Pool Headquarters : Kinshasa

**EAST AFRICAN REGIONAL POOL  
(EARP) - KHARTOUM, SUDAN  
(LAUNCHED OPERATIONS IN MAY 1985)**

Countries covered	Agency	Working Languages
Comoros Djibouti	Agence Djiboutienne d'Information (ADJI)	French
Ethiopia	Ethiopian News Agency (ENA)	French
Kenya	Kenya News Agency (KNA)	English/Amharic
Madagascar	Agence Nationale d'Information Tartara (ANTA)	English
Mauritius		French
Uganda	Uganda News Agency (UNA)	English
Seychelles	Seychelles Agence Presse (SAP)	English/French
Sudan	Sudan News Agency (SUNA)	Arabic/English
Somalia	Somalia News Agency (SONA)	English/Somali
Tanzania	Tanzania News Agency (SHIHATA)	Swahili/English

(\*) Regional Pool Headquarters : Khartoum .

**NORTH AFRICAN REGIONAL POOL  
(NARP) - TRIPOLI LIBYA**

~~NOT YET OPERATIONAL~~ 1988

Countries covered	Agency	Working Languages
Algeria Egypt	Algerie Presse Service (APS) Middle East News Agency (MENA)	Arabic/French Arabic/English /French
Libya (*) Morocco	Jamahariya News Agency (JANA) Maghreb Arabe Presse (MAP)	Arabic/English Arabic/French English/Spanish
Tunisia	Tunis Afrique Presse (TAP)	Arabic/French

(\*) Regional Pool Headquarters : Tripoli

**WEST AFRICAN REGIONAL POOL (WARP)  
LAGOS, NIGERIA,  
(LAUNCHED OPERATIONS IN JANUARY 1985)**

Countries covered	Agency	Working Languages
Benin	Agence Beninoise de Presse (ABP)	French
Burkina Faso	Agence d'Information du Burkina (AIB)	French
Cape Verde	Cabopresse	Portuguese
Côte d'Ivoire	Agence Ivoirienne de Presse (AIP)	French
Gambia	Gambia News Agency (GINS)	English
Ghana	Ghana News Agency (GNA)	English
Guinea	Agence Guinéenne de Presse (AGP)	French
Guinea Bissau	Agencia Noticiosa Da Guinea (AGP)	Portuguese
Liberia	Liberia News Agency (LINA)	English
Mali	Agence Malienne de Presse (AMAP)	French
Mauritania	Agence Mauritanienne de Presse (AMP)	French/Arabic
Niger	Agence Nigerienne de Presse (ANP)	French
Nigeria (*)	News Agency of Nigeria (NAN)	English
Sierra Leone	Sierra Leone News Agency (SLENA)	English
Togo	Agence Togolaise de Presse (ATOP)	French

(\*) Regional Pool Headquarters : Lagos

**PANA LIAISON BUREAU AT THE OAU AND ECA  
(LB/ADDIS ABABA)**

Since the Ethiopian capital, ADDIS ABABA, hosts the headquarters of major African Organizations especially, the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), PANA opened a Liaison Bureau for the coverage of various events taking place in this city.

**HARARE (ZIMBABWE) BUREAU  
FOR THE COVERAGE OF EVENTS  
IN SOUTH AFRICA  
AND THE PROBLEMS RELATED TO APARTHEID  
IN SOUTHERH AFRICA**

As part of the strategy launched in 1986 on the complete coverage of events in South Africa and in a general manner of problems related to the struggle against the policy of apartheid in the Front line States and to the colonization of South Africa and Namibia, PANA opened a bureau in Harare, Zimbabwe.

# Appendix 6

## PANA Content Analysis Coding schedule

1. Case Number (Write down) 1
2. Story Source 2
  - a. PANA Correspondent/Reporters
  - b. Western agency/source
  - c. NANAP
  - d. African National Agency (write name)
3. Story Dateline 3
4. Region In Which Main Event Occurred 4
  - a. Africa
  - b. W.Europe
  - c. USA/Canada
  - d. USSR/E.Europe
  - e. Others
5. African Sub-Region In Which Main Event Occurred 5
  - a. West Africa
  - b. Southern Africa
  - c. North Africa
  - d. Central Africa
  - e. East Africa
6. Story Type 6
  - a. Spot Stories
  - b. Feature
  - c. Others
7. Story Location 7
  - a. Urban
  - b. Rural
  - c. Both
- MAIN STORY TOPIC
8. POLITICS 8
  - i. Elections & Campaigns
  - ii. Legislative news
9. DIPLOMACY 9
  - i. Peace Moves
  - ii. Multinational Politics

10	AID	10
i	Aid between Africa countries	
ii	Aid from Western/UN Sources	
iii	Aid from Socialist bloc	
iv	Aid from 'Other' countries	
11	ECONOMIC	11
	Domestic Economic	
i	Industrial Projects	
ii	Industrial/Labour relations	
iii	Trade/Stock Exchange/Investment	
iv	Monetary Matters	
	Multinational Economic	
v	Industrial Projects	
vi	Industrial/labour relation	
vii	Trade/Stock Exchange/Investment	
viii	Monetary Matters	
12	Sports	12
i	Domestic Sports	
ii	Multinational Sports	
13	Crime/Legal/Judicial	13
14	Culture Religion	14
15	Environment	15
i	Wildlife resources	
ii	Climatic changes/Pollution	
16	Science/Technology/Medical	16
17	Education	17
18	Social Issues	18
i	Literacy	
ii	Social Problems, eg Housing	
19	Negative News	19
i	Earthquakes	
ii	Accidents	
iii	Horror Stories, wars	
20	Development News	20
i	Educational Projects (schools)	
ii	Health Projects (hospitals)	
iii	Public Amenities (transport, library, etc)	

21 Main Story Actors 21

- a Prime Minister/President
- b Minister/Top official
- c Political Party Members
- d Ambassador/Diplomats
- e International Diplomats
- f Military/Police/Security chiefs
- g Industry/Allied Executives
- h Traditional/Religious Leaders
- i Opposition Leaders
- j Legislators
- k Judicial/Legal Personnel
- l Musicians/Performers
- m National states
- n Non-human (organizational actors)
- o Women/Children
- p Students
- q Ordinary Citizens
- r Academics/Professionals
- s Persons on trial/Prisoners
- t Sportsmen/Women
- u Labour Officials
- v Other (Refugees, etc)

22 Sex of Stories Actor 22

- a Male
- c Female
- c Both
- d Non-Human (assc; state, etc)
- e Unclear

23 Story Direction/Orientation 23

- i Critical
- ii Non-Critical
- iii Others

# Appendix 7

## Newspaper Content Analysis Coding schedule

1. Case Number (Write down) 1
  2. Story Source (Write down) 2
  3. Story Dateline 3
  4. Region In Which Main Event Occurred 4
    - a. Africa
    - b. W.Europe
    - c. USA/Canada
    - d. USSR/E.Europe
    - e. Others
  5. African Sub-Region In Which Main Event Occurred 5
    - a. West Africa
    - b. Southern Africa
    - c. North Africa
    - d. Central Africa
    - e. East Africa
  6. Story Type 6
    - a. Spot Stories
    - b. Feature
    - c. Others
  7. Story Location 7
    - a. Urban
    - b. Rural
    - c. Both
- MAIN STORY TOPIC
8. POLITICS 8
    - i. Elections & Campaigns
    - ii. Legislative news
  9. DIPLOMACY 9
    - i. Peace Moves
    - ii. Multinational Politics

10	AID	10
i	Aid between Africa countries	
ii	Aid from Western/UN Sources	
iii	Aid from Socialist bloc	
iv	Aid from 'Other' countries	
11	ECONOMIC	11
	Domestic Economic	
i	Industrial Projects	
ii	Industrial/Labour relations	
iii	Trade/Stock Exchange/Investment	
iv	Monetary Matters	
	Multinational Economic	
v	Industrial Projects	
vi	Industrial/labour relation	
vii	Trade/Stock Exchange/Investment	
viii	Monetary Matters	
12	Sports	12
i	Domestic Sports	
ii	Multinational Sports	
13	Crime/Legal/Judicial	13
14	Culture Religion	14
15	Environment	15
i	Wildlife resources	
ii	Climatic changes/Pollution	
16	Science/Technology/Medical	16
17	Education	17
18	Social Issues	18
i	Literacy	
ii	Social Problems, eg Housing	
19	Negative News	19
i	Earthquakes	
ii	Accidents	
iii	Horror Stories, wars	
20	Development News	20
i	Educational Projects (schools)	
ii	Health Projects (hospitals)	
iii	Public Amenities (transport, library, etc)	

21	Main Story Actors	21
a	Prime Minister/President	
b	Minister/Top official	
c	Political Party Members	
d	Ambassador/Diplomats	
e	International Diplomats	
f	Military/Police/Security chiefs	
g	Industry/Allied Executives	
h	Traditional/Religious Leaders	
i	Opposition Leaders	
j	Legislators	
k	Judicial/Legal Personnel	
l	Musicians/Performers	
m	National states	
n	Non-human (organizational actors)	
o	Women/Children	
p	Students	
q	Ordinary Citizens	
r	Academics/Professionals	
s	Persons on trial/Prisoners	
t	Sportsmen/Women	
u	Labour Officials	
v	Other (Refugees, etc)	

22	Sex of Stories Actor	22
a	Male	
c	Female	
c	Both	
d	Non-Human (assc; state, etc)	
e	Unclear	

23	Story Direction/Orientation	23
i	Critical	
ii	Non-Critical	
iii	Others	

24	Page in Which Story was Published	
i	Front Page	
ii	Back page	
iii	Inside page(s)	

# Appendix 8

## Content Analysis Coding Definition Sheet

The content analysis topic categories Employed in this study were defined as follows:

Politics: News about internal domestic politics comprising elections, campaigns, legislative proceedings, political parties, candidates, political opposition, etc

Diplomatic: News of peaceful relations between countries, diplomatic relation between nations including the UN or its agencies, ambassadors, visits between heads of state, senior public officials, etc.

Aid: News involving military, educational economic or other form of countries, between African countries and other countries including the United Nations and its agencies.

Economic: News of industrial projects, trade, stock exchange, monetary matters, prices and industrial labour relations within and between countries.

Sports: News about anything relating to sports including competitions, results and focus on sports figures, nationally and internationally.

Crime/Legal/Judicial: News about crime acts, criminals, legal trials and judicial proceedings and activity.

Culture/ Religion: News of traditional events, performances, religious groups, campaign, religious services, etc.

Environment: News about weather, climate changes, pollution, wildlife and forest resources, etc

Sci/Technology/Medical: News of all report reports relating to scientific inventions and advances in technological and medical sciences.

Human Rights: Stories dealing with the civil rights of citizens, freedom of speech, movement, etc.

Social Issues: News about illiteracy, housing problems, refugees, etc.

Negative News: News about accidents, earthquakes, famine, hunger, fire, floods written from the perspective of direct narration of the events.

Development News: News reports on government funded projects such as schools; hospitals; libraries; agriculture; aimed at 'developing' people. It also includes news on self help projects paid for by community associations.

Education: News about schools, colleges, universities, adult literacy, training, etc

Others: Any news which does not neatly fall into any of the categories elucidated.