

Social Construction of International News in India: Politics of International News Agencies

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Abstract

This study outlines the prominence of international news reportage by the international news agencies in India. It also looks into the politics of international news in the selection process of an Indian newspaper. The most widely used sources within the mainstream media are the international news agencies due to their credibility and wealth of information drawn from a network of locations around the world. Traditionally, the news agencies are seen as the primary source for the majority of news-related information. The newspaper organization's implicit trust on these news agencies as the single source forms a large part of the news agenda. If the volume of international news is considered, one invariably finds the balance being tilted sharply in favor of certain 'advanced' countries compared to the 'developing' countries. This article explores the role of three dominant news agencies that are sources of international news in India, such as Associated Press (AP), Agence France Presse (AFP), and Reuters in the 'Times of India' newspaper published from Hyderabad, India, and how they play an important role in construction of international news. The article identifies the patterns and commonalities in the news coverage with the help of statistical data gathered from the monitored newspapers. The data are collected and classified with regard to the geographical area, the type of news and the agencies that report them. Indian newspapers argue that advanced planning is an important indicator of this construction, and the information passed along by news agencies tends to drive some aspects of news coverage. If one assesses the cyclic nature of the news coverage, the newspaper organization's own coverage is influenced by these dominant news agencies. Structures of journalism practices in the country are routinized around the production of these news agencies and the elements of news flow remains critical to the news production process

Keywords: International, news agencies, news coverage, agenda setting, social, and construction

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Introduction

The most widely used sources within the mainstream media are the international news agencies due to their credibility and wealth of information drawn from a network of locations around the world. The news agencies feed the newsrooms electronically, which has resulted in collective monitoring and the diffusion of power. Traditionally, the news agencies have been seen as the primary source for the majority of news-related information. The international news agencies—the Associated Press (AP) and United Press International (UPI), based in the United States, Reuters, based in the United Kingdom, Agence France Presse (AFP), based in France, and Tass, based in the Russian Federation, largely dominate the international news industry. The developing countries do not have anything comparable with any of the dominant news agencies in terms of size of personnel, scope of coverage, funds and technology. As a result, the rest of the world, and the countries of the third world in particular, have no choice but to depend on these five agencies for their supply of international news.

In this article I explore the role of three dominant news agencies that are sources of international news in India, such as Associated Press (AP), Agence France-Press (AFP), and Reuters and how they play an important role in construction of international news. Structures of journalism practices in the country are routinized around the production of these news agencies and the elements of news flow have remained critical to the news production process. Indian newspapers argue that advanced planning is an important indicator of this construction, and the information passed along by News Agencies tends to drive some aspects of news coverage. The newspaper organization's own coverage is influenced by these dominant news agencies if one assesses the cyclic nature of the news coverage. The dominance of news agencies in the production process is largely a result of the close fit between their production and distribution practices and the production practices of news organizations (i.e., the bureaucratically organized fit). Yet it also has roots in the perceived fit in values, and hence credibility. News agencies dominate both the supply of information into newsrooms and the items that end up in the final product. This is a logical consequence of the news agencies' "primary *raison d'être* [which] is, after all, to spread costs in the collection and distribution of foreign news" (Golding and Elliott 1979, 99), since the cost of sending foreign correspondents easily surpassed the cost of agency subscriptions. The dependence on news agencies remains very strong till date. This dominance

and dependence culminated in an agenda-setting function, with news agencies highlighting important themes and stories that merit automatic coverage. Both story selection and treatment were “influenced by the sheer authority of the agencies” (Harris 1976, cited in Golding and Elliott 1979, 105).

The information-producing strata, particularly the dominant wire agencies, were perceived to act in conjunction with the economic logic of news production to further restrict what was captured by journalists’ mythical mirror. One of the reasons for this could be the readymade news stories which were supplied from the dominant sources served the stereotypical news values of news organizations.

Since, only a handful of news agencies provided the foundation of news coverage, the homogeneity of news coverage between news organizations became inevitable. “The tyranny of supply is nowhere clearer than in this dependence” (Golding and Elliott 1979: 105). Boyd-Barrett, Oliver and Thussu (1992: 1) examined the system of international news flow from the inception of news agencies, concluding that there were still only a few powerful agencies supplying news, “sitting at the top of or in the centre of a complex nexus of exchange plus cash arrangements.” News organizations were even reliant upon news agencies for “news of their own geopolitical regions” (Boyd-Barrett, Oliver and Thussu 1992: 1). The situation was more serious for the developing nations who attempted to project their image abroad in the midst of this highly structured and organized “system of international news-gathering and supply”. This brings us to the formulation of research questions in my study.

Research Questions

1. Do the news agencies play an important role in social construction of International News in India?
2. Do news agencies in India set an agenda in their news construction?

There are so many issues of selection of a particular news story. Why particular news items are passed on for inclusion in news output while others were ignored? Some of the identified issues are the size of the news story: “The bigger the story the greater the likelihood of its inclusion, and the greater the prominence with which it will be presented” (Golding and Elliott 1979: 119). This value was also linked to proximity: “Either, the further away an event the

bigger it has to be, or, nearby events take precedence over similar events at a distance” (Golding and Elliott 1979: 119). Schlesinger (1987: 118) also found proximity to be a news value. This issue becomes more complex when race is considered.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study how international news are disseminated in the Indian newspapers as catered by the international news agencies.
2. To analyze the politics behind the news coverage of the International news agencies, why a particular news agency is given more priority in India and why certain countries are given more prominence in the newspaper.

Discursive and Symbolic Role of the Media

The theoretical framework of my research is based on Teun A. Van Dijk’s discourse analysis and the ‘Discursive’ and ‘Symbolic’ Role of the media. In his article, he primarily studies the Critical discourse analysis and the ways in which social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. The dissident research carried by the critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. We have seen that among many other resources that define the power base of a group or institution, access to or control over public discourse and communication is an important "symbolic" resource, as is the case for knowledge and information (Van Dijk, 1997).

The power of dominant groups may be integrated in laws, rules, norms, habits, and even a quite general consensus, and thus take the form of what Gramsci called "hegemony" (Gramsci, 1971). Class domination, sexism, and racism are the characteristic examples of such hegemony. Talking about the media discourse, Van Dijk mentions that the undeniable power of the media has inspired many critical studies in many disciplines: linguistics, semiotics, pragmatics, and discourse studies. The traditional content analytical approaches in critical media studies have revealed biased, stereotypical, sexist or racist images in texts, illustrations, and photos. If one studies the early media language, it would show similar observable surface structures, such as the

biased or partisan use of words in the description of us and them (and our/their actions and characteristics), especially along socio-political lines in the representation of communists.

There is no need to argue the overall power of the media in modern information societies. Together with other powerful elite groups and institutions, such as politicians, corporate managers, professionals and professors; they have sometimes an indirect influence on the lives of most people in society. The power of the media is primarily 'discursive' and 'symbolic' (Van Dijk, 1997). Media discourse has become the main source of people's knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, both of elites and of ordinary citizens. It is so believed that the media do this in joint production with the other elites, primarily politicians, professionals and academics. Yet, given the freedom of the press, the media elites are ultimately responsible for the prevailing discourses of the media they control (Van Dijk, 1997). Van Dijk explains that the role of the press in the system is not limited to news reports or editorials, but already begins with the daily routines of news making (Tuchman, 1978; Van Dijk, 1988). Minorities have less access to the media also because they do not control the many source discourses on which daily news making is based: press conferences, press releases, briefings, information brochures, documentation, interviews, and so on. Van Dijk further says that their opinions are less asked or found less credible or newsworthy because he feels that most journalists (and virtually all editors) are white.

Most studies of the news have a sociological perspective. The first one is the macro-sociological perspective, interested in the institutional, professional and cultural context of news production. The second one is the micro-sociological analysis of journalistic routines, taken for granted practical rules, and news values or ideologies which govern the daily activities of journalists in gathering and writing the news. And when one pays attention to the content, form or style of news items, such an analysis is primarily geared towards the assessment of social or cultural dimensions of mass media and communication, such as the political views, the institutional embedded-ness or the ideological orientation of journalists or newspapers. Some of the specific properties of news are seen as results of these social and cultural constraints. With the detailed characterization of the nature of this product, one could analyze in detail sound psychological, sociological or even economical perspectives of news production and consumption. The production processes and the cognitive understanding and memory of news, depend on the format of this product.

Macro-sociological approaches to the news are basically restricted to the institutional and professional dimensions of news production by journalists working for news agencies or newspapers (Tunstall, 1971; Boyd-Barrett, 1980), or are concerned with the economic and ideological controls of news production and newspapers (e. g. Curran, ed., 1978; Gurevitch, et al., 1982). Although these studies are certainly important in an account of the social and especially the ideological constraints upon journalists during news production, they seldom show how exactly such constraints work in the actual production process and in the final result: the news. Indeed, this is why we may call them macro-studies: they do not pay attention to micro-phenomena (Hall, 1981: 56). The purpose of the discourse analysis to analyze "opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language" (Wodak, 1995: 204). More specifically, the discourse analysis studies real, and often extended, instances of social interaction, which take (partially) linguistic form. The critical approach is distinctive in its view of the relationship between language and society, and the relationship between analysis and the practices analyzed (Wodak, 1997: 173).

To study discourse as a social-practice, it shows the ideological effects and hegemonic processes in which discourse is a feature. Hegemony concerns power that is achieved through constructing alliances and integrating classes and groups through consent, so that "the articulation and re-articulation of orders of discourse is correspondingly one stake in hegemonic struggle" (Fairclough, 1992a: 93). It is from this third dimension that Fairclough constructs his approach to change: Hegemonies change and this can be witnessed in discursive change, when the latter is viewed from the angle of inter-textuality. The way in which discourse is being represented, re-spoken, or re-written sheds light on the emergence of new orders of discourse, struggles over normativity, attempts at control, and resistance against regimes of power.

News agencies

Denis McQuail in his book "Media Performance: Mass Communication and Public Interest (1992)" takes a different approach to 'news' and argues that it is neither objective nor impartial. When events happen they do not come with a guarantee. Of course all events cannot be report because of the sheer number of all of them.

When we are dealing with the news agencies it becomes of utmost importance to establish a relation between the Indian media and its dependency on these organizations. Indian Journalism found its roots during the British era. We can trace back the birth of Journalism as well Vernacular press in the colonial past of the country. Journalism in India not only aimed at the British settlers in the country also targeted the Indian Elite readership. Eminent personalities like Raja Ram Mohun Roy took the initiative of expanding the nationalist culture. As the nationalist movement gained momentum and the press in India received an impetus, and the English papers, barring those that were controlled by the British and hence strongly supported their rule, devoted themselves to galvanizing the Indian masses. But the Newspapers did not restrict themselves even after the India gained Independence in 1947. Karan and Mathur (2003) in their Asian Communication Handbook writes that “The newspapers including the English publications continued to report of the progress made by the country in various fields and criticized those people and policies that were hindering the country’s development.” As the Indian government adopted pro-liberalization, it opened the floodgates of foreign investments and the import of advanced technologies. It paved way for upper crust journalism (Datta, 2005: 48) and, in a way led several newspaper to launch their own websites and online editions.

When we take the three mainstream national dailies into consideration, they tend to depend on the news agencies for news from foreign shores. When one simply looks at the International page of any mainstream newspaper, it becomes evident of their dependency on the news agencies when one analyses the percentage of the news taken. Due to financial constraints it becomes difficult to engage personnel and bring news from every nook and corner of the world. It always becomes a viable option to subscribe from the International news agencies as we discussed earlier in the introduction. Now this leads to a certain degree of strong hold on some of the most powerful media giants in the country for a News Agency.

Let’s look at the background of our three mainstream newspapers.

Founded in 1838, The Times of India is owned and managed by Bennett, Coleman and Co. Ltd, India’s largest media company. Its website states that it is the largest selling English language newspaper in the world. The daily is the market leader in Mumbai: the financial hub of the country (Indian Readership Survey, 2011).

The Hindustan Times owes its provenance to the Indian independence movement. It is a publication of the HT Media Ltd. and is owned by a business giant, the Birla family. It has consistently maintained its position as the largest read newspaper in the capital Delhi that is the focal point of political activities in the country (Indian Readership Survey, 2011).

The Hindu is the third newspaper. It was established in 1878 as a weekly, and started publishing daily in 1889. It is a family-owned publication and its parent company is Kasturi and sons. Founded in Chennai, a city in Southern India, the paper maintains a strong reader base in the region. It has a reputation for high quality and serious journalism.

We can trace back the supremacy of Western news agencies over the supply of global news. It all started in the 19th century when a cartel existed comprising of Reuters (United Kingdom), Wolff (Germany) and Havas (France). “Set up by imperial powers, or closely aligned with them, these transnational media organizations were the first of their kind” as discussed by Herman and McChesny (Herman and McChesney, 1997; Thompson, 1995). Described by Boyd-Barrett (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen 1998: 26) as “an oligopolistic and hierarchical structure of the global news market” these three agencies had apportioned territories amongst themselves through agreements. In this way, this triumvirate of agencies monopolized over the circulation of international news over the globe. And this continued till the end of the Second World War. IN the aftermath of what happened in the Second World War, U.S. tended to exert dominance over other countries and its rise as a political and economic superpower and its influence magnified greatly (Hallin and Mancini, 2010: 157). Thussu (2000) writes that “With the end of the cold war and the disintegration of the Soviet Union as well as the sidelining of the global South in the global domain, USA emerged as a key agenda setter in international communication. And with it rose the American news agency Associated Press (AP) as a powerful news-gathering organization (2010: xvi).”

Western European news agencies: Reuters (United Kingdom), AFP (France), and Associated Press and United Press International (United States), were considered to be the ‘Big Four’ Pointing out that AP and UPI were not global in terms of their outlook and priorities Fenby (1986) reveals: “The home market dominates their activities and their essentially American nature has been disguised by their worldwide organization and reach.” These agencies were headquartered in the most advanced nations of the world and gradually expanded their services

to include broadcast media as well. Although once it was in the same league as AP as the leading American news agencies, eventually UPI slipped into the margins. After an assessment of the contemporary information climate and media environment it appears that the competition between the wholesale providers of news has been effectively reduced to two; Reuters and AP.

Founded by the German entrepreneur Paul Julius Reuter in 1851, Reuters is now a leading news gathering organization. Read (1999: 49) describes that “Reuters (from the 1860s - 1914) was an imperial organization, the semi-official institution of the British Empire”. Its association with India goes back to that time, the colonial period. As the heyday of the Empire drew to a close, embracing the breakthroughs in communications technology enthusiastically Reuters reinvented itself from a national to a supranational institution. By the end of the Second World War, Reuters had begun to be regarded as a stalwart coverer of international news for more than a century. From the American Civil War to the assassination of Abraham Lincoln, Reuters was the first to break the news (Tungate, 2005: 223) and thereby it established a reputation of being a credible deliverer of information in real time.

Reuters is listed on both the London and New York stock exchange. It has become a lynchpin for global business and financial flow. It is a major provider of commercial information like foreign exchange rates, stock exchange prices, commodity prices and so on. Its financial news services have catapulted the company’s fortunes. Reuters receives only 10% of its revenues from the media organizations that subscribe to it whereas the 90% of it comes from the clients of its financial services (Tungate, 2005: 227). Headquartered in London, the organization was acquired by the Thomson Corporation in 2008 and is now named Thomson Reuters.

The Associated Press is a non-profit cooperative. The organization was created by the coalescing of five dailies and is now owned by a network of US newspapers and radio and TV stations. It was established in 1848 in New York. It is sustained by the subscription fees that it charges its media clients spread all over the world. The news agency is governed by a board of directors. It operates 243 bureaus in nearly 100 countries. Most of the top US outlets have subscribed to its news gathering services. Its website mentions that on any given day more than half of the world’s population consumes the news provided by AP (Associated Press, 2011). This is indicative of the status of the organization as a colossus in international news production.

Apart from Reuters and AP, another major news agency is AFP. Headquartered in Paris, it is the oldest news agency in the world and a major wholesale news provider. Other major news agencies include the Russian Itar-Tass (which was referred to as Tass during the Soviet times) and the Xinhua press agency of the People's Republic of China. They are owned by the state and function as a governmental department. Because of this, aspersions are cast on the credibility of the information provided by them, which might be false keeping in view of the associations of these countries' governments with churning out propaganda. Albeit they are used for news about respective countries Russia and China, they are seldom relied on for international news (Clausen, 2004: 18).

Japan's news agencies Kyodo and Jiji are important sources of news within the country; however, their international influence remains slight (Ibid). Although the country rivals the US and Western Europe in economic clout yet, its news agencies have been eclipsed by Reuters and AP because of the language (Ibid). It is an incontrovertible fact that English is the lingua franca of the world; the language of international communications and this has further propelled the AP-Reuters duopoly.

Research Methodology

The methodology used for this study was Content Analysis. The study employed a systematic procedure to examine the content of recorded information. Content Analysis is a systematic procedure to examine the accorded information. According to Kerlinger (1986) it is the method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables. It is a method that is largely used in qualitative analysis but in some cases where it is possible to convert certain qualitative aspects into numbers and statistics, the method may also be used in quantitative analysis as well. The universe in content analysis is the entire population under consideration from which a sample is to be chosen. In the study, the body of work, or universe, considered the news content on the International Page of 'The Times of India', the major English daily published from Hyderabad, from 1 September 2014 to 30 September 2014. The universe was defined for one month during which India was going through a major political and economic change both nationally and regionally.

The study analysed various news reports coming in from various news agencies mainly the Reuters, Associated Press (AP), and Agency De France Press (AFP). The study looked into every day news articles coming from all the news agencies, how the Times of India Paper selected the news reports, the number of news covered by a particular news agency, the images published in the news report and which news agency covered which country.

Data Collection and Interpretation

Europe and Australia

	Number Of News	Places Covered
Total Number of News	56	
<i>Associated Press</i>	13	Romania, Moscow, Estonia, Norway, Bosnia, Belarus, France, Sweden, Warsaw, Poland, Turkey, Cyprus, Denmark and Italy
<i>Agence France Presse</i>	25	Sweden, France, Moscow, Spain, Netherlands, Brussels, Kiev, Athens, Berlin, Vatican City, Rome, Albania, Algeria and Turkey
<i>Reuters</i>	12	Kiev, Moscow, Iceland, Paris, London, Vatican City, Geneva, Berlin, Brussels, Netherlands and Barcelona.

Figure 1: News Flow in Europe and Australia

Issues of News

After articulating all the major news reports the Data Analysis provided a clear picture of how the news agencies performed and the politics behind the reporting. There were only three cases of Ebola reported from Europe and none from Australia. The Ebola case reports were mainly cited by AFP with no pictures. There was no panic in the news stories and no pictures were carried along with the news reports. “The risk of an Ebola outbreak in Sweden is very Low”, was one of the leads carried by AFP. We could see the normalcy in the news with no cited panic.

A major chunk of the news coverage was from Moscow and Kiev due to the conflict between the Russia and Ukraine. Putin’s statements were highlighted in the leads. There was also a conflict between the European Union leaders and Russia. The Ukrainian President accused Russia of an open aggression as the Russian separatist force continued to disrupt peace in the region. A lot of political tension and the West accusing Putin for his aggressive measures were highlighted in the news.

News came in from Estonia because US President Barack Obama visited the region in solidarity with NATO- North Atlantic Treaty Organization - allies. There was a lot of fear in the region due to Russian aggression. Fighting in eastern Ukraine killed nearly 2,600 people and forced over 340,000 to flee their homes, according to the UN, quoted in the news. New sanctions were the news highlighted in the coverage, after Western countries imposed limited economic sanctions on Russia.

AFP and AP carried news about the Malaysia Airlines flight MH17 disaster in which nearly 298 people were killed after the plane crashed on Ukrainian soil. Kiev and the Western countries accused pro-separatist forces from Russia for the disaster. Russia denied the report. 193 Dutch citizens were killed in the incident. The tragedy threw the global spotlight back on the bloody uprising in eastern Ukraine. Follow up stories about Ebola Virus were very rare. After France and Netherlands, Denmark joined the US-led coalition in its fight against ISIS. US led the coalition in Syria. Reports were being covered by AP.

News coming in from Australia contained most of the news about the missing Malaysian Airlines flight MH370. Search was still on with no trace till date. News reported from Sydney and Canberra were mostly about a terror plot, as reported from AP and AFP.

Interpretation

1. AFP carried most of the news followed by AP and Reuters.
2. Most of the news content was from Moscow or Kiev.
3. The reports largely dealt with the Russian aggression and the separatist forces in Ukraine.
4. News coming in from other parts of Europe mostly dealt with internal security, accidents or mishaps.
5. All the three major news agencies carried follow up news reports about the Russian aggression and tension in the region.
6. All the news agencies emphasized on the building tension and fear in the region.
7. Most serious news coming from Kiev, Moscow, Belarus and Germany.
8. None of the news reports were taken from any Russian news agency.

The United States of America

	Number Of News	Places Covered
Total Number of News	51	
<i>Associated Press</i>	15	Carolina, New York, Los Angeles, Jamaica, Washington, San Francisco and Boston
<i>Agence France Presse</i>	15	Washington, New York, Los Angeles and San Francisco
<i>Reuters</i>	21	San Francisco, Washington, Pennsylvania, Minneapolis, Boston and New York

Figure 1.2: News Flow in the United States



Issues of News & Interpretation

The reports were mostly filed by agencies such as AFP, Reuters, or AP, agencies located in France, United Kingdom and the United States respectively. The type of coverage received was also significant as most news articles were concerned with international politics and were written with a slant towards the “free market”, “liberal”, “capitalist” sentiment. There were also a large variety of “cultural” pieces or trivia concerning the culture industry. Hollywood, literature, or even human interest stories which were found to be mostly from the United States. This is significant given the fact that the “culture” or “cultural products” from our neighbors from the South Asian bloc were largely ignored or dismissed. It is evident that we would share more of a cultural similarity with Pakistan, Sri Lanka, or Bangladesh, given the shared language and colonial ties. However, the news coverage concerning these countries was dismal. The developing story of the Islamic State (IS) and the manner of its coverage revealed a strategic manner in which news were released to legitimize the actions of the United States and its allies. The official declaration of war by the United States on IS was preceded by news of IS militants targeting an F-15 fighter. Also news regarding John Kerry’s visit to the Middle East received high visibility. The news of ten Middle Eastern countries pledging their support was highlighted. The news of Iran accusing US of invading sovereignty of the countries in the name of fighting IS however received minimal coverage.

Another important instance of strategic news articles was when the US-based National Security Agency (NSA) received a 90-day extension on its collection of metadata and telephonic records, while simultaneously there was an article discrediting Edward Snowden, stating he had never internally brought up the snoop gate issue before whistle blowing.

Latin America

Number of news stories: One.

Places Covered: Venezuela.

Issues of News and Interpretation

The hegemonic or soft power of the West was revealed in the manner in which it controlled the conversation about itself and its allies and seemingly muzzled information about its enemies.

There was an attempt by the west to “familiarize” people with Western culture to create a market for its cultural products. The enemies of the “imperialist west” such as some of the Latin American countries received minimal coverage in mainstream media. The type of coverage was mostly a caricature. In a month, wherein there were significant policies decisions in Venezuela to reduce state violence by Nicolas Maduro, and calls for a meeting of OPEC countries by Venezuela, the only news that was reflected was a humorous piece on women in Venezuela using wrongly sized “breast implants”, a piece by Reuters.

Asia

	Number Of News	Places Covered
Total Number of News	99	
<i>Associated Press</i>	27	Baghdad, Beirut, Islamabad, Syria and Kabul
<i>Agence France Presse</i>	33	Kuala Lumpur, Beirut, Baghdad, Beijing, Colombo, Shanghai, Yemen, Dhaka, Tokyo and Kabul
<i>Reuters</i>	39	Syria, Beirut, Islamabad, Tehran, Kabul, Seoul, Baghdad, Beijing, Jordan and Hong Kong

Figure 1.3: News Flow in Asia

Issues of News and Interpretation

Asia received the most visibility in terms of number of news articles, which were written about, or involving these countries. China got extensive news coverage in comparison to other Asian countries. Almost all the news stories were from Beijing carrying sensational issues, which

depicted the “production of torture tools”, “MH370 gone missing”, and “detention of journalist and PR Executives.” The Chinese cities of Shanghai and Wuhan got reflected for trivial issues in the international page of a national newspaper.

China was followed by Pakistan with stories reflecting on ship hijacking and naval issues. News coming from Karachi and Islamabad mainly focused on crime, sports and naval issues. There were no pictures to address the news stories. The Times of India paper focused Islamabad for eight consecutive days stating issues of heavy rains and flood which had the death toll rising. Other stories reflected on veteran cricketer Imran Khan and on Malala Yousufzai being attacked by unidentified gunmen. Afghanistan was reflected due to the ‘replacement of the President’ and the new order set in Afghanistan. There were other stories with accidents and crime-related issues. Iran and Iraq had only one story each, for the whole month and both got the maximum page coverage with dominant pictures.

Out of all the Middle East countries only ten countries received prominence from the international news agencies, namely, AFP (Agence France Presse), Reuters, AP (Associated Press), PTI (Press Trust of India). It was observed that the number of news coming from the Middle East were of political nature mainly from Afghanistan, followed by the ISIS news that was covered from across the region of Iraq and Syria. The news from this region depicted chaos and failure of the new government and the angst among people for the local and national regimes. The stories depicted chaos in the region as people are fleeing in the wake of advancing ISIS militants. There were no stories to reflect peace and stability in the whole Middle East region. The whole region was strategically portrayed as inefficient and muddled with internal clashes and chaos with failed regimes in need of US intervention. In the whole month there was no negative portrayal of Saudi Arabia in the political or social context. The coverage given to the Saudi Kingdom was pro-US. News that came in from other countries, not part of the Middle East, were largely of a political nature owing to the extensive coverage given to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Tokyo, Japan. China, Hong Kong, the Philippines, South Korea and North Korea were the other regions mostly covered in the news. The category of news was limited to politics, sports and science. News coverage from these regions was dominated by the presence of the PTI, followed by the AFP.

AFRICA

	Number Of News	Places Covered
Total Number of News	21	Nairobi, Uganda, Libya, Cape Town, Nigeria and Egypt
<i>Associated Press</i>	2	
<i>Agence France Presse</i>	4	
<i>Reuters</i>	8	

Figure1.4: News Flow in Africa

Issues of News and Interpretation

There were four news stories on the Ebola issue coming from Freetown in Sierra Leone. Times of India especially covered the Boko Haram militants and their atrocities. The news stories mainly constituted of abduction, gang rape and the beheading of journalists by Boko Haram militants. The news about Mohammed Morsi, the president of Egypt, being ousted for state secrets leak was three columns in plain double-deck headline that casually touches upon how, now, “*the hopes of democratic change have faded for Egyptians*”. Words like "largest conspiracy," "icy relations" "network of spies" were dominantly stated in the news article.

News reported in Africa was terror-centric. It gives off a vibe that Africa was predominantly a terror-trove. It instilled both a fear and a sense of neglect as if it was all about Islamist/terrorist people.

The manner in which underdeveloped countries were reported reeked with a kind of “normalization” of even the most gruesome events. The manner in which the “Ebola pandemic” was reported in Africa and the U.S., offered an interesting comparison of reportage. 4000 patients in Africa were reported as a matter-of-fact statistics while a single case of Ebola detected in Houston, Texas received multiple follow up stories. The visibility of the African bloc was dismal and disproportionate to its size with few countries such as South Africa and Nigeria

being reported for the Oscar Pistorius trials and the Boko Haram massacres respectively. Even the photographs, which supplemented the news stories, were gloomy and gory. The pictures had aggressive, threatening and terrorizing shots with militants holding men at gunpoint as hostages.

Conclusion

The article offers an insight into the working of newspapers in an international as well as national context. The inferences internationally pertain mostly to the unequal flow of information from the developed countries to the underdeveloped/developing countries and the advantages of the powerful states to control and set the agenda for the rest of the globalized world. The increasing commodification of news implies that the news created by the first world is sold to content starved markets in the developing world increasing their dependency, handicapping their economies, and influencing public opinions.

The inferences in a national context pertain to the ailing institution of journalism, which has been corrupted by an inordinate fixation on profit margins leading to an increasing commodification. The news industry struggles due to trivialization, paid news, sensationalism, lack of accountability and an indiscriminate profit motive. The resolution at least in a national context would be to give teeth to organizations such as the press council to enforce norms and discourage the flouting of its norms.

The study helped understanding the role played by the dominant news agencies in the context of an Indian newspaper. At the end of the analysis of a period of one month, we could conclude stating the role of international news agencies in the social construction of international news in the country. The ‘discursive’ and the ‘symbolic’ representation of certain underdeveloped countries through content analysis revealed biased, stereotypical, sexist or racist images in texts, illustrations, and photos. All the news agencies emphasized on the building tension and fear in the Ukraine-Russian border region. It was evident that we would share more of a cultural similarity with Pakistan, Sri Lanka or Bangladesh given the shared language and colonial ties however the news coverage concerning these countries was dismal. The developing story of the Islamic State and the manner of its coverage revealed a strategic manner in which

news was released to legitimize actions of the United States and its allies. The news from the Middle East region depicted chaos and failure of the new government. The whole region was strategically portrayed as inefficient and muddled with internal clashes and chaos with failed regimes in need of US intervention. News reported in Africa was terror-centric. It gives off a vibe that Africa was predominantly a terror-trove. It instilled both a fear and a sense of neglect as if it was all about Islamist/terrorist people. The manner in which underdeveloped countries were reported reeked with a kind of “normalization” of even the most gruesome events. The manner in which the “Ebola pandemic” was reported in Africa and the U.S., offered an interesting comparison of reportage. The visibility of the African bloc was dismal and disproportionate to its size.

The article helped to understanding the ‘Regime of Truth’ where the stereotypes get reinforced. It offers an insight on how ‘Discourse’ influence social relations and knowledge systems through language. We also need to look how the language is being constructed for news media discourse. A more comprehensive study would reveal better understanding of generation and reproduction of social meanings through news media.

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