

Major news agencies in the production and flow of international news essay sample...

[Sociology](#), [Communication](#)



As the news media has rapidly developed into a modern, high-tech mass communication industry, it is playing an increasingly important role in different aspects: political, economy, social life, the development and peace between nations. Culture and beliefs flow across territorial boundaries, people in different countries can share ideas and information in ways both formal and informal (such as 'blogs' and the immediate use of mobile phone footage in disasters like the tsunami of 2004 or the London bombs of 2005).

The growth of a globe-girdling, time-space conquering galaxy of communication is arguably of epochal importance. (Hugill, 1999) The mass media plays an important role in the process of globalisation since they are among the agents that embody the transcendence of the limitations of space that is a characteristic feature of globalisation. Communications media like the wheel and the press had distance-shrinking effects, but genuinely globalized communication only began with inventions like overland and underwater telegraphy and the early development of Reuters and other international news agencies. (Keane, 2005)

The roles of these news agencies are, the distributors of news to the news companies, the bridge between nation and nation, the window of the world as news agencies set the agenda for what international stories other media choose to carry through the choice of stories they distribute to clients and the amount of visuals provided. The news agencies were among the world's first organizations to operate, not only globally, but to operate globally in the production and distribution of 'consciousness', through the commodification

of news, in ways which had very significant implications for our understanding or appreciation of time and of space.

News agency news is considered 'wholesale' resource material, something that has to be worked upon, smelted, reconfigured, for conversion into a news report that is suitable for consumption by ordinary readers. It has also suited the news agencies to be thus presented: they are needed to seem credible to extensive networks of 'retail' clients of many different political and cultural shades and hues. They have wanted to avoid controversy, to maintain an image of plain, almost dull, but completely dependable professionalism. (Oliver, 1998)

The news agencies have the responsibility to objectively report the truth, and give out good quality news, also, a world-wide coverage, free, well balanced, transparent and equal flow of information. Especially those long standing, large-scale, strong global news agencies in the modern news media:

The four Western news agencies (Associated Press (United States), United Press International (United States), Reuters (United Kingdom), Agence France Presse (French)) which accounted for the dissemination of international news spread around the world 90% of the total. Currently, Xinhua News Agency (China), The Information Telegraph Agency of Russia (Russia), Deutsche Presse-Agentur (Germany), and Agenzia Nazionale Stampa Associata (Italy) are also classified as global news agencies.

As these major news agencies have such huge influence, people would wonder, are they really play the role that everyone expect?

First, the coverage. Undoubtedly, these major news agencies have departments spread through the world, mighty editor teams, high quality equipments, advanced communication tools and powerful economic and technological supports can be made to the newspaper, radio, television and other news media and other social communication, provide the most timely, most extensive and effective news and other information services. For example, according to Reuters's 2010 annual report, there are now total more than 55, 000 employees in more than 100 countries, almost every major news outlet in the world now subscribes to Reuters' services, which operates in over 200 cities in 94 countries in about 20 languages.

(thomsonreuters. com); Agence France Presse covers the world with a combined 5, 000 stories a day in English, French, Spanish, German, Portuguese and Arabic (other languages are offered through partner agencies including Chinese, and Japanese), 20 television news reports, up to 3, 000 photographs, 80 still and interactive graphics per day, reaching North America, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Middle East and Asia-Pacific. (afp. com)

Secondly, the quality. News is delivered by satellite or Internet feed in all major news agencies. Most of the breaking news are complemented by reactions, in-depth analyses, interviews, features, profiles of the people in the news, obituaries, chronologies and fact box. Associated Press has a commercial digital photo archive that is one of the world's largest collections

of historical and contemporary imagery. The AP has received 49 Pulitzer Prizes, more than any other news organization in the categories for which it can compete. It also has 30 photo Pulitzers, the most of any news organization. (ap. org)

Thirdly, trustworthiness. Most of the major news agencies news accredited to be reliable, but, there are still, some scandals fluctuated the credibility of these agencies. For example, a case of Reuter, Reuter had its "Trust Principles", one of those principles is "Thomson Reuters shall supply unbiased and reliable news services to newspapers, news agencies, broadcasters and other media subscribers and to businesses governments, institutions, individuals and others with whom Thomson Reuters has or may have contracts." But, on 7th August, 2006, Adnan Hajj, a Lebanese reporter of Reuter, false a news photo of Lebanon War, he photoshopped the smoke on the photo, to make it more black and thick, in order to exaggerate the ruinous. Afterwards, Reuters announced the withdrawal of 920 business news pictures, and ended the termination with the reporter. (bbc. co. uk)

Also, about the contents and the flow of news, there are a lot of questions about the objectivity, inequality and imbalance between western and non western news - most of the major news agencies are western countries, is it westernization or propagating capitalism, rather than the original role - purely distributing news among the world?

Bursting the bounds of time and space, language and custom, media business is instead transformed into complex global commodity chains, or

global flows of information, stuff, money, components and products. Not surprisingly, the journalism associated with the global media conglomerates gives priority to advertising-driver, commercial ventures. (Keane, 2005) As the major news agencies are from western countries, at least the “ Big four” are all western countries, there must be some elements about westerns or capitalism infiltrate in the news. For example the format of news reporting, the use of words, and the most obvious, news agency itself, like Reuter, also a provider of financial market data. Apart from financial data or international news, found in Associated Press’s website: “ The ENPS Tablet Story Viewer (TSV) allows anchors and reporters to read and review stories directly on an Apple iPad or qualified Android tablet. No more printing and distributing paper copies for studio use. Get faster updates to anchors in the studio.”, no doubt, this is promoting Apple and Android devices in another way.

Back to the contents of news agencies news, as the monopolization of western news agencies, “ First world” or western countries stories making up much of the material which these big news agencies sell to “ Third world” or non-western countries broadcasting stations, to the corresponding way in which western audiences are often given, in return, little of “ Third world ” news except through coups, crises and famines, or the same official, usually male, figures getting in and out of cars, addressing news conferences, etc. This shows an unequal of representation and imbalanced news flow between “ First world” /western countries and “ Third world”/non-western countries.

Moreover, to evaluate the role of the major news agencies, we should look at the entire “ flow of international news” includes the “ output” - not only the

news agencies themselves, but also those broadcasting organizations, like BBC, CNN - how they spread and represent the news they received from and based on the news agencies.

Within this process of spreading international news globally, these major news agencies seem to archived successfully, as these broadcasting organizations have successfully ' bite' into various domestic settings. CNN is available in over 800 million households and many thousands of hotels, the BBC World Service has attracts 150 million viewers and listeners each week. But, still, remains the problem of ' one-way promoting' rather than an equal, exchangeable international news.

Some theorists argues that the contemporary global media scene can also no longer be characterized as a one-way flow from the west to the rest casts of mainstream western networks and through the rise of new, non-western, satellite networks such as Al-Arabiya and Al-Jazeera.(Johnston, 1998) In South Asia, Indian media juggernaut had indisputably dominated the news market. The appetite for 24-hour news channels seems to be insatiable in this region. (Page and Crawley, 2001)With several Indian channels broadcasting to the region and beyond, as well as dozens of nationally based channels, there are grounds for arguing that new forms of regional ' little cultural imperialisms' may be taking place.(Sonwalker, 2001)

However, even there's an increasing number of non- western channels are beamed over the air space of western nations, the extent to which they are distributed and available within western households is often fairly limited, as

usually, in western families, these non-western channels are difficult and expensive to access. (Rai, 2007) Therefore, the role of major news agencies in the flow of international news had not been satisfactory as there are still fail to let non-western international news spread globally as expected.

To conclude, the role of major news agencies in the production and flow of international news can improved by the help of government- to reduce the costs of entry into communications markets, to break down barriers to the free and equal flow of information, and to collaborate with the United Nations in promoting the widest dissemination of cross-boarder news and discussion.

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