

MEDIA CULTURE AND TELEVISION NEWS: A REVIEW OF FIVE RECENT BOOKS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this essay is to explore and examine the usefulness of five fairly recent books in television news production in organizations such as the BBC and CNN, and to show how issues highlighted in the review could inform further research. The review brings to light four key issues. The foremost is that the internal news epistemes of a given media culture heavily influence its news framing. Second, different media organizations proffer and live by different media cultures. Third, the reading reveals that normative standards and universal definitions of objectivity are problematic. Certainly, they are overtly Anglo-American, and reinforce Western hegemonies. Further, such criteria hardly account for cultural dependent factors that shape and constrain the production of news in cultures outside of the West. Finally, the literature shows that research in newsroom is usually ethnographic in nature, drawing on coterminous instruments such as interviews, participant observations and recording. Interestingly, however, the influence of the culture of television stations on news framing has been under-studied, especially in the African context. Prior research, nonetheless, stresses too much content such that empirical knowledge of how variation in news cultures emerges through framing is blurred.

KEYWORDS: Media, Culture, Television, News, Framing, Hegemony

INTRODUCTION

At least since the dawn of White's (1949) "Mr. Gates" newsroom study, several equally useful researches have been conducted in the dynamics of news construction, selection, and production (e.g. Breed, 1955; Gieber, 1964; Tuchman, 1972; Schudson, 1987). Irrespective of the framework—political economy, social organization or culturology— from which they were conducted, much research on the phenomenon has increasingly shown that news is *made*; this is to say that it is socially constructed against the normative view held by many practicing journalists that newswork is practically objective and definable. And yet when scholars such as Gieber (1964) argue that news is what newspapermen make it, they aim at evoking the undeniably everydayness of human workings in the production of news. In their estimation, news is neither objective nor value free, but is rather a social construction of reality. Schudson (1987) has intimated that that news is socially constructed does not mean that news is faked, or is *made up*; instead, it is *made*. He holds that to say that news is made means that news is organized according to specific bureaucratic conventions and expectations, or what Tuchman (1972) calls *strategic ritual*.

The goal of this essay is to offer a review of five fairly recent works in television newswork published between 2000 and 2012, and to explore their implications for future research. The first two books, Allan's (2010) *News Culture* and Bednarek and Caple's (2012) *News Discourse* are more conceptual in scope and provide, in my view opinion, alternative and interesting ways of studying news away from the dominant journalistic paradigm. Proceeding from these works, I will then turn to ethnographic studies conducted by three authors: Jackie Harrison, Lucy Küng-Shankleman, and Emma Hemmingway. The motivation underlying the selection of the works of these researchers is that their works were situated in the BBC and CNN, two media organizations that arguably have a long research tradition, world impact and dominance,

resonance, and unique cultures. Besides, a focus on their works represents a certain Anglo-American hegemony which, in the latter part of the essay, I seek to problematize and the implications such a position shows for embarking on similar studies outside the Western world have.

STUART ALLAN AND *NEWS CULTURE*

In this work, Allan (2010) posits that much as society is ‘news-saturated’, there is the need to move beyond the study of news from the perspective of the media-society dichotomy. Core issues discussed in this book include newsworthiness and news values, the theory of framing, and the cultural politics of news. According to Allan, the news ought to be studied from its ‘news culture’ so that its institutions, forms, practices and audiences in journalism can be captured. Allan holds that news culture is concerned with characteristic ‘modes of address’ and customary ways of speaking to audiences. In his view, the media-society dichotomy “treats respective sides of this relationship as being relatively exclusive” and that research tends to “focus on either the media themselves, so as to ask questions about how they affect society or they center on larger society in order to explore how it affects the media (‘the public gets the media it deserves’). In both instances, the relationship implied by the media-society dichotomy is often simply reaffirmed as one consistent with the role ‘everyone knows’ the news media play in a democratic society (Allan, 2010: 3).

Such problematization leads him to posit that there are three, albeit insufficient, positions on the study of news: (a) news as an object of policy formation, (b) news as an object of commodification, and (c) news as an object of public opinion. For him, each is “also necessarily partial and selective in what it identifies as being relevant to its concerns” (p. 5). Chapter one is grounded in Habermas’s notion public sphere, and Herman and Chomsky’s concept (1988) propaganda model and five filters.

Reechoing Lippmann, Allan notes that “the function of news is to signalize an event, the function of truth is to bring to light the hidden facts, to set them into relation with each other, and make a picture of reality on which men can act” (Lippmann, 1922: 226). According to him, news values of objectivity such as impartiality, non-bias and neutrality, balance and fairness, are but values cherished in America, and that in Europe, and especially France, these values are being questioned as being ideological and devoid of philosophical speculation.

By focusing on news values, Allan indicates that newswork studies have endeavored to “document the fluidly contingent means by which the ideological character of news is encoded through the professionalized norms and values of reporting” (p. 71). These include conflict, relevance, timeliness and simplification.

With respect to the relevance of cultural politics in news discourse, Allan first traces the phenomenon by drawing on Gramsci’s concept of hegemony in which the latter defines it as ‘spontaneous consent’ rather than coercion to established norms. Allan summarizes Gramsci’s theses as (a) hegemony is a lived process, (b) hegemony is a matter of ‘common sense’ and that (c) it is always contested. This rereading of Gramsci leads Allan to identify the important elements of newspaper stories (hard news) as comprising the headline, news lead, narrative order and sequence. The rest are vocabulary, forms of address, transitivity and modality, relations of time and relations of space, implied reader, and closure.

Allan equally sees a shared relationship between the characteristics of the language of radio news and televisual news—evanescence, direct connection with listeners, sense of proximity to the ‘world out there’, choice of descriptive words and the use of actuality sounds. But in his thinking, televisual news strives for impersonality, distance, non-bias and objectivity, through the personality of its news anchors. For example, he argues that there is an imposition of orderliness in televisual news in which audio-visual signs are organized into discourse. This may lead to a politics of signification.

BEDNAREK AND CAPLE'S *NEWS DISCOURSE*

News Discourse offers a comprehensive linguistic and semiotic framework for analyzing news discourse. The co-authors define news discourse as a multimodal or multisemiotic discourse that incorporates the semiotic system of images, and is put to use in order to contribute to the construction of news (p. 2). From this discursive perspective, Bednarek and Caple (2012) support the claim that culture also influences the construction of news in a significant way, and that the news “has great potential to exert considerable influence over us” (p. 6). They cite such linguistic approaches as sociolinguistics, systemic functional linguistics and pragmatics, and corpus linguistics as important to news research.

On the question of normative values, Bednarek and Caple (2012) simply define news values as values by which one fact is judged more newsworthy than another. They consider them as criteria or rules, the imagined preferences of the unexpected audience about what is newsworthy and the qualities or elements that are necessary to make a story. They classify news values as (a) values in the news text, (b) values in the news process, and (c) values in news actors and events. Like Allan, Bednarek and Caple single out negativity, timeliness, proximity, and prominence as basic news values, and also argue that news headlines often fulfill informative, interpersonal, news value, and framing functions.

HARRISON'S *TERRESTRIAL TV NEWS IN BRITAIN*

This work argues that despite the shared cultures prevalent in all news organizations, media cultures do nonetheless exhibit different characteristics. As she says, “Even when a story is recognized by all the news programmes as being newsworthy, such as a major air crash, or the death of a senior politician, or even the death and funeral of a princess, news programs may adopt different ways of telling the story, with different interpretations of the same event.” (Harrison, 2000: 11). The point is that televised national events, such as the death of Ghana's ex-president Professor John Evans Atta Mills, can forge a sense of solidarity and connectedness between citizens and can help them to understand other cultures (Harrison, 2000; Coker & Jantuah, 2013). Using content analysis, newsroom observations, interviews with journalists and consistently watching a variety of British television news programs from 1992 to 1997, Harrison sought to compare the journalistic cultures (i.e. the cultural and professional production) of BBC and ITV and how their internal news epistemes influenced their editorial contents and styles of reportage. She cautions that one problem associated with the analysis of television news is the definition of the news story. This has to do with the rigid format and content categories associated with the definition of the news (See Tuchman, 1978; Schudson, 1987; Berkowitz, 1997). Her coding scheme and interview guide are useful for adaptation.

According to her, differences in rationale and culture in different television newsrooms and different organizations are strongly illustrative of differing journalistic views about what serves the public interest, what constitutes television newsworthiness, or what depth and quality of information. She cites the death of Stephen Milligan, Member of Parliament of the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom, which occurred on February 7, 1994 due to his sex life as one that offers insight into how the BBC and ITN covered the sad news. The point then is that “although journalism is underpinned by a shared journalistic culture and by a common agreement on the value of objectivity as a principle of television journalism, different terrestrial television news programmes have diversified to produce different types of television news” (Harrison, 2000: 156). Harrison argues that it was more difficult for the BBC to report on the event than for ITN because of how the content and wording of the story was framed. Thus the problem, Harrison tells us, related to issues of taste and decency. This difficulty in news reportage points to differences in television news philosophies. And so for Harrison, the structure of ITN is much more streamlined than the BBC's, and that the whole process of newsgathering and selection at the former is more flexible and pragmatic than at the BBC. She shows us how and why terrestrial

television news has remained a key source of information for understanding the complexity of the modern world, and that news is reported according to specific cultural values. Such values, she says, form the basic structure of the culture of news production, and goes on to explore the values and beliefs of news producers and the culture within which they work.

Harrison focuses on terrestrial television news rather than satellite television news. In this work she attempts to understand the values and beliefs of news producers and the culture within which they work. According to her, terrestrial television fosters social and cultural plurality, and is becoming homogeneous in content and market-driven. But since media houses work within the context of a competitive ethos, it makes sense that terrestrial television news content is being challenged by globalization and commercialization. For Harrison, terrestrial television news provides the majority of citizens with a good deal of information about the world, and that an informed democracy still relies on it to help to create the conditions whereby citizens can become knowledgeable and informed about the society they live. She also holds that terrestrial television should make a contribution to the welfare of a democratic society and that it should be accountable as a source of public information in a sense of being socially responsible. Harrison (2000) strongly holds that terrestrial television newsrooms operate according to similar cultures and values, and that terrestrial television newsroom styles and priorities produce a diverse range of information content (p. 2). Such a vision, she intimates, is important in three main ways. It must meet group dynamics and diversity. Second, diversity of access points to diversity of voices, and then, provides consumers with a variety of different programs to choose from.

Based on the Habermasian notion of public sphere, the work explores the theme of television news as a democratic forum through an analysis of the politics of representation underlying television's role. Harrison defines newsworthiness as "a construct of the journalist's zone and mode of operation, which can be defined in turn as a dynamic relationship between the political, historical, technological, economic macro influences and the organizational, cultural and professional values and practices of the particular television newsroom" (Harrison, 2000: 14). According to her, the journalist's zone of operation is a framework within which, through which and by which the journalist participates in the understanding and participation of an event, in which they ought to be neutral. She draws on the public sphere because the role of the media in the public sphere is in providing the space and creating the opportunities whereby issues of importance to the political community can be discussed. This means that the media must provide information which is vital to a citizen's participation in community life, in order to create a political forum. She further holds that since television contributes to people's knowledge, then, television journalism can force some minimal accountability from powerful public officials.

Her ideal type generic model of the news offers a useful justification for selecting the coverage of the death of ex-President Atta Mills for an empirical study and how it was covered by Ghana Television and TV3. She sees the death of a known principal as constituting 'pure' news. This pure news, according to her, is the core of the model, and contains the events all news programs cover (Harrison, 2000: 35). The model is premised on the assumption that there are three dimensions of news: (a) the news content, (b) the production of news, and (c) the possible effects that television news can have on the audience (p. 40). However, it still has to be said that news is constrained by logistical, legal, organizational, economic, and political factors, a point well advanced in the extant literature.

In examining the nexus between television and the public interest, Harrison holds that equality of access, universal provision, impartiality and objectivity as the keystones of the public broadcasting principle in Britain. According to her, one of the key features of the audience's perception of television news involves the degree of trust which is placed in it. She argues that this trust is not accorded to other media, and that it is based upon the belief that the broadcast news is not partisan in content. She adds that while television news does not create a public sphere within which rational-critical

debate can take place it does, nonetheless, have a significant role to play in providing citizens with political, social, and cultural information. For her, a clear concern for the relationship of television news to democracy process is that, as the producers of raw material for international news and the regional and global television are becoming increasingly concentrated, the content of international television news in particular is becoming ever more similar.

Hemmingway's research clearly shows that a shared journalistic culture is what journalists draw upon to distinguish themselves from other vocations, and much more importantly to defend their profession against the charge of not being objective in their line of operation. She also notes that the culture of journalism offers them an identifiable set of skills, practices, and expectations within which they work. For Harrison, the similarities pervading television news programs and media organizations include a set of extant formulas, practices, normative values, and journalistic mythology. As she posits, "A journalistic culture ensures that a certain set of shared practices, values and normative assumptions exist alongside a clear and identifiable set of skills and expectations within which journalistic work" (Harrison, 2000: 120). This journalistic culture then should result in the perpetuation of common-sense values, lores and journalistic myths in all newsrooms. She identifies nine elements of journalistic culture, namely, practices and routines (i.e. uniformity in structure and content of reportage, similarity in procedures, routine, pressure and constraint, and similarity of format and structural devices).

Implications for variations in news values across media houses, Harrison argues, heavily weigh on the universal and normative definition of objectivity in newswork. She contends that objectivity in television news reporting is both an ideal and practical matter. According to her, the assumption that objectivity is vital for news coverage is based on regulatory requirements and has implication for news processes, news content and the relationship of television news producers to their audience. She holds that journalists valorize balance, even-handedness, accuracy and realism by separating facts from opinions. She also acknowledges problems associated with the value of objectivity by emphasizing that most sociological research begins from the assumption that the media, that is, news and journalism, are human constructions shaped by the social world from which they emerge (*See* the edited collections by Berkowitz, 1997 and 2011).

The study, in my estimation, does not address three main issues. First, Harrison focuses on content at the expense of style, even though one will argue that the latter is out of her scope. But understandably, it will be difficult to appreciate empirically how two media cultures vary without recourse to issues of style. Second, it is not quite clear how her analysis reinforces stylistic variations of reporting by the BBC and ITV. In other words, it is difficult to relate to how Harrison arrived at the major difference of importance and interest that marks the two journalistic cultures. This means that Harrison comes low in demonstrating the relevance of framing in her brilliant work. Finally, it serves a good purpose to note that her concept of journalistic culture appears rather too normative, a charge the author aimed at avoiding, as it is Euro-centric such that its application in other newsrooms of other cultures may be problematic. And much as she acknowledges the difficulty the concept 'culture' evokes one would have thought that Harrison would have proceeded throughout her study using a key conceptual or theoretical framework. One such is Küng-Shankleman (2000) in which she draws on Schein's concept of organizational culture to undertake an ethnographic study of the BBC and CNN.

KÜNG-SHANKLEMAN'S *INSIDE THE BBC AND CNN*

Inside the BBC and CNN explores the strategic implications of corporate culture, and uncovers the impact of organization culture on strategic developments in the BBC and CNN. Küng-Shankleman (2000) sees the merits in comparing the two organizations on grounds of their dissimilarity because "they offer the maximum possible range of

circumstances to be found among English-speaking broadcasting organizations” (p. 3). She examines these two dissimilar organizations because they exhibit strong differences in terms of fundamental mission, national context, product range and financial basis. The work aims to expose the wide range of value orientations possible within the same industry, and the way in which different organizational value orientations create different strategic responses to fundamentally similar environmental contexts: different organizations, different business models, same business, same dilemmas.

Aware that culture is “a frustratingly elusive organizational element” (p. 3), the author draws on Schein’s (1992) concept of ‘culture’ in order to look into the values, norms, and behaviors of the BBC and CNN. She asserts that Schein’s model of culture is important for its relevance and theoretical robustness for empirical purposes, in that “Schein offers a definition that is both comprehensive and precise, and should therefore suitable as a basis for empirical research” (Küng-Shankleman, 2000: 8). Applying the model, she sees culture as a symbolic frame which she identifies as the patterns of beliefs, values, practices, and artifacts that define for its members who they are and how they do things” (ibid). In Küng-Shankleman’s thought, empirical studies of organizational management of media institutions ought to move the rhetoric beyond superficial aspects of the organization—its rituals, dress style, logo or the design of its corporate communications. Rather it must study in-depth the basic assumptions, which she defines as the third and deepest level of a culture and also its essence (p. 10). This point is that assumptions, the author insists, perform manifold functions such as creating a sense of group identity and group stability by reducing complexity, confusion, uncertainty and anxiety, and by increasing predictability, even functioning as a cognitive mechanism.

Küng-Shankleman applied this model for three reasons. She argues that Schein’s concept of culture is a well-known tool that has been extensively applied in previous researches. Second, she reckons that the model is precise and comprehensive in scope, and therefore provides a more robust methodology for embarking on studies of the sort. Third, the model can be supported by interviews, the participants of which can be selected through purposeful sampling in order to focus in-depth on “a relatively small sample” (p. 225). She argues that purposeful sampling also involves the deliberate selection of a sample which provides information that cannot be accessed so well from other sources, and which is critical for the research question. As she writes, “The logic and power of this method of sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth—that is, cases where a great deal can be learnt about issues of central importance to the research” (p. 255).

Her work shows that the BBC positions itself as having a distinct elitism and that it is pseudo-dictatorial, paternalistic in supplying public taste, anti-commercial, and democratically pluralistic. The author notes that CNN, on the contrary, stresses the breaking of news around the globe (live news), sees itself as reinventing the news, and so for that matter is dynamic, and has strong commercial instincts. For Küng-Shankleman these corporate strategies stem from unconscious cultural assumptions underlying the respective organizational ethos of the BBC and CNN. In view of these claims, she enumerates four assumptions as the cultural paradigm of the BBC. First the BBC is publicly funded. This means that it does not operate on grounds of commercialism, and that it acts for the public good. Second, the BBC assumes that it is the best media organization the world has ever known, in the sense that its journalistic, artistic and technical skills are second to none, so that it produces the best broadcasting in the world. Third, the BBC strongly believes it is part of the British way of life. It serves a unique national role by supplying the citizenry the best programming. In relation to the third assumption, the BBC strives at defending a great heritage. This, it does by constantly making references to the ideals of the past as against the exigencies of the present in anticipation of the future. Two of such philosophies are Reithianism and Birtism. However, Küng-Shankleman does not ignore that such values bring about intriguing paradoxes in that they generate intrinsic motivation and a set of exemplars, attitudes (responsibility, a sense of higher purpose, commitment, a

passion for broadcasting quality). And yet these virtues carry with them a sense of resistance to change, arrogance, disdain for management, insularity and anti-commercialism.

In contradistinction to the BBC, CNN's cultural paradigm, Küng-Shankleman holds, valorizes the urgency of news. She argues that CNN sees the news as a global product for a global world, and so always seeks to be ahead of its competitors by breaking the news. According to her, the organization firmly holds that its production of the commodity must make a difference to the course of world events. Second, she intimates that CNN believes that it understands the realities of life. For that matter, it proffers to be a commercial entity so that it is estranged by the paying of bills by its viewers. This reality-based perspective, she tells us, enables CNN to attract a gamut of advertising agents and companies. A third basic assumption operationalized at CNN is that it is the pioneer, the dissident, and the iconoclast of global broadcasting. She says that since its inception the network has been defiantly weary of industry techne and praxis. For this reason, it has striven to set its own norms and standards. One of such is video journalism (VJ), ironically now in vogue in the industry as competitors have cashed in on that. Surprisingly yet, CNN proudly sees itself as the underdog and outsider of American broadcasting. Such a posture affords them the chance to relentlessly take risks in order to continually remain in tough competition, despite its unorthodox practice, the author concludes.

HEMMINGWAY'S INTO THE NEWSROOM

Another ethnographic report, Hemmingway's work explores how the internal news epistemes valorized at the BBC and the use of digital technologies enable journalists to construct television news. She defines news epistemes as "the internal daily routines, practices, tasks and responsibilities of both humans and technologies that together and in conjunction with one another constitute what we understand as news practice" (Hemmingway, 2008: 220). Drawing on Latour and Woolgar's (1979) concept of Actor Network Theory (ANT), Hemmingway explores the relationship between human and non-human actors in the news making process in two of BBC regional television networks—Nottingham and Birmingham. Her main aim is to challenge orthodox readings of television news production in order to explore fundamental questions concerning the ways in which we understand how journalists and technologies combine with one another in unpredictable ways to create news. The author maintains that it is not enough to attribute the complexities of the newsroom to political economy, capitalism, and global conflict. We will have to study the news from 'the lofty height' she says. She further argues that "to fully understand news processes one must wander through the shadowy basements and explore the darker corners of the newsroom" (Hemmingway, 2008: x), and proposes to use ethnography in order to fully understand its hidden rituals and its unspoken languages so as to discover in it its wider significance.

Unlike ethnographic newsroom studies that looked into the organizational management practices of media houses (e.g. Harrison, 2000; Küng-Shankleman, 2000), cultural influences in newswork (e.g. Allan, 2010; Berkowitz, 2011) and textual properties of news (Bednarek & Caple, 2012), Hemmingway's work draws on the methodological framework of ANT in an attempt to shed light on the hidden corners of the newsroom. The aim was to reveal the detailed processes of television news production in the digital age. For Hemmingway (2000) ANT is a method that enables researchers to pay particular attention to all of the associations, links and traces they can find between the elements. As she writes, "The purpose of ANT is to examine the detailed construction of news facts *as they happen*" (Hemmingway, 2008: 9, *italics in original*). In fact ANT focuses on the internal news episteme of a particular news organization by revealing internal routines, self-reflexive practices, technological arrangements and the unstable, constantly changing practical constraints that actually govern news production. The point the author is stressing is that the extant literature has laid too much emphasis on the social, political and cultural mores of newswork, and that "most media analyses have focused on either the political economy of media production, the semiotics of media texts or the socio-psychological effects of media

consumption. She argues that empirical studies of media have tended to fix their gaze upon the way in which media industries are managed and operated, or have explored, or paid closer attention to media texts. She intimates that the problem has to do with the fact that far less work has been carried out into what she labels as ‘the actual processes of mediation’.

Using ANT, Hemmingway provides a re-evaluation of the human subject as merely another actor within a network. She problematizes the association between human and non-human actors, questioning the essence of the binary division as it applies to the newsroom, and raises wider issues of epistemology and philosophy. She writes, “Actor Network Theory thus seeks to replace the traditional subject/object distinctions with specifically empirical observation and analysis of both human and non-human actors in a series of fluid and unpredictable relations with one another” (Hemmingway, 2008: 18). As a method, ANT is a means of describing what actors do, and how their actions are inscribed both by themselves, and by other actors so as to create *translations* within the network that continually becomes more or less stable depending on the successful convergence of such translations. It also addresses issues of human strategy, power and intentionality, but insists instead on a total eradication of difference between human and non-human actors, and defines each only by their ability to resist (*resistance*) force whatever event they encounter. The key words are *network* and *dynamism*.

Her work also provides useful cues for embarking on ethnographic research in media organizations. For example, she reminds researchers that “to read media without addressing the specificity of the news environments they observe, (*sic*) is to misread the contingency of news practice” (Hemmingway, 2000: 20). Simply put, she argues that one cannot study the media without recourse to its cultural organization. Another point she makes is that news work is equally a method, however, less fluently articulated by its producers. It has a culture, and can be investigated and understood through self-reflexivity. She is meticulous to acknowledge some weaknesses of ANT. First it is accused of epistemological hegemony. This has to do with hierarchies of size, power and agency.

Despite Hemmingway’s insistence on ANT as the way forward, it does not look like her results will be anyway different as she herself readily admits. The point is that even though she focuses on the mundane and everyday activities of news production, one would have expected to see at least not entirely novel but new compelling ways of doing news work in the literature.

CONCLUSIONS: FOUR HIGHLIGHTS

The review brings to light four key issues. The foremost is that the internal news epistemes practiced in a media culture heavily influence the manner in which it frames and constructs its news (Allan, 2010; Berkowitz, 2011, Bednarek & Caple, 2012). Akin to this is the fact that different media organizations proffer and live by different media cultures, however subliminal this might appear. Third, the synthesis reveals that the normative standards and universal definitions of objectivity are problematic (Harrison, 2000; Küng-Shankleman, 2000, Jirik, 2010). Clearly, they are overtly Anglo-American, and reinforce Western hegemonies. Further, such criteria hardly account for cultural dependent factors that shape and constrain the construction and production of news in cultures outside of the West (Harrison, 2000). Finally, the literature shows that research in newsroom are usually ethnographic in nature, drawing on coterminous instruments such as interviews, participation observations and recording.

Interestingly, however, the influence of the organizational culture of broadcasting houses in general, and television stations, in particular, on news framing has been under-studied. Those that come close (*e.g.* MacGregor, 1997; Harrison, 2000; Hemmingway, 2000; Küng-Shankleman, 2000; Kuhn, 2010; Bednarek & Caple, 2012) take a generalist

sweep at the phenomenon, and in the main focus on content at the expense of examining how variation in news cultures emerge through framing. In view of the call to dewesternize media studies, scholars are hereby presented with fertile grounds for embarking on studies in this area. One promising avenue will be sub-Saharan Africa, in general, and Ghana, in particular following the liberalization of the airwaves at the dawn of the millennium (Coker, 2011).

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