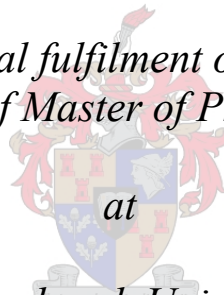


**News agencies as content providers and purveyors of news:
A mediahistoriographical study on the
development and diversity of wire services**

by

Peter Kenny

*Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Philosophy*



Stellenbosch University

Journalism Department

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

Supervisor: Professor Lizette Rabe

Date: March 2009

Declaration

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the owner of the copyright thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

Date: 25 February 2009

ABSTRACT

This study examines the history, development and diversity of news agencies. It studies the major agencies and pinpoints how smaller wire services that sometimes purvey niche news seek to offer a more diverse global news-flow.

The linkage between news agencies and technological developments, and how wire services have helped advance technology, is examined since the first agencies began in the 1800s, up to the current era of the Internet.

The rise of television and the subsequent ascent of the Internet prompted new demands for more diverse news procurement. This accelerated the convergence of different media and has exposed challenges and opportunities to news agencies, large and small.

Alongside the telegraph, news wire services expanded from supplying news and information locally to being global players, helping the world shrink.

The mediahistoriographical approach engages a critical examination of literature sources regarding the development of the major wire services, and some of the smaller players. The literature, along with interviews with news agency experts, provides the material to examine wire services.

The study shows how some original agencies leveraged opportunities offered by their standing in powerful nations to become dominant transnational players. The ascendancy of the mega-agencies compounded limited news-flows from developed to poorer nations, while an expansion of diversified news-flows has not matched technological progression.

This study concludes by recommending greater recognition of the importance of news agencies and more scholarly examination of them, as studies on them appear scarce compared to those on other media branches, such as newspapers, the electronic media and the Internet.

More studies into the development of both mainstream and alternative news agencies would pave the way for a better understanding of how they function and could provide clues as to how they might be able to better sustain themselves as more diverse entities for the benefit of the public discourse.

Through the above, this dissertation seeks to contribute, in a small way, to rectifying a knowledge disparity regarding a key component of the mass media, namely the news agency.

ABSTRAK

Hierdie studie ondersoek die geskiedenis, ontwikkeling en diversiteit van nuusagentskappe. Dit neem veral die groter agentskappe in aanmerking, hoewel dit ook noukeurig wys hoe die kleiner agentskappe partymaal poog om eiesoortige nuusberigte te lewer om sodoende 'n meer diverse globale vloei van nuus te verseker.

Op die verhouding tussen nuusagentskappe en relevante tegnologiese ontwikkelings word daar ook ingegaan, asook die wyse waarop nuusagentskappe, vanaf die ontstaan van die oorspronklike agentskappe in die negentiende eeu tot en met die huidige Internet era, tot die ontwikkeling van tegnologie bygedra het

Die toenemende invloed van die Internet het in die nasleep van televisie nuwe eise vir 'n meer diverse aard van beriggewing gestel. Dit het die samevloeiing van die verskillende media versnel en het beide klein en groot nuusagentskappe aan nuwe uitdagings en geleenthede blootgestel.

Telegraafdienste en nuusagentskappe wat aanvanklik plaaslike nuus en inligting aangebied het, het later wêreldwye invloed uitgeoefen en sodoende tot die “inkrimping” van die planeet bygedra.

Die mediahistoriografiese benadering verg 'n kritiese beskouing van bronne rakende die ontwikkeling van die hoof-nuusagentskappe, asook van sekere kleiner agentskappe. Hierdie ondersoek na nuusagentskappe is gebaseer op bronne wat met onderhoude met deskundiges op nuusagentskappe aangevul is.

Die studie dui aan hoe sekere van die oorspronklike agentskappe, vanweë hul aansien in invloedryke nasies, voordeel daaruit kon trek en sodoende voorrang gewerf het. Die oorheersende reuse-agentskappe het die vloei van nuus van die ontwikkelde na die onontwikkelde lande beheer, terwyl die uitbreiding van diverse beriggewing nie met die jongste tegnologiese ontwikkelings tred gehou het nie.

Omdat daar in vergelyking met ander media instansies, soos byvoorbeeld koerante, die elektronies media en die Internet, 'n skaarste aan studies blyk te wees, kom hierdie studie tot die gevolgtrekking dat groter erkenning aan nuusagentskappe verleen moet word en dat omvangryke wetenskaplike ondersoek na hul werksaamhede ingestel word.

Verdere studies wat op die ontwikkeling van beide die alledaagse en alternatiewe nuusagentskappe ingaan, sal 'n beter insig in hul werkswyses bied en kan moontlike leidrade betreffende hul instandhouding as diverse entiteite verskaf en sodoende tot voordeel van die openbare diskoers strek.

Op die wyse poog hierdie dissertasie om selfs ook in 'n klein mate die gebrek aan kennis van 'n belangrike deel van die massamedia, naamlik die nuusagentskap, reg te stel.

CONTENTS

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------|----|
| Abstract | iv |
| Abstrak | v |
| Contents | vi |
| Chapter 1: Introduction..... | 1 |
| 1.1 Focus of study..... | 1 |
| 1.2 Rationale for the study..... | 4 |
| 1.2.1 News agencies as ‘global gatekeepers’ | 5 |
| 1.3 Importance of news agencies | 8 |
| 1.4 Why news agencies should be studied | 9 |
| 1.5 Central research questions | 11 |
| 1.6 Exposition of thesis..... | 12 |
| 1.7 Summary | 14 |
| Chapter 2: Context of the study | 15 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 15 |
| 2.2 Key global news agencies | 15 |
| 2.3 Origin of news agencies | 16 |
| 2.3.1 Technology..... | 16 |
| 2.4 Definition of news agencies | 20 |
| 2.4.1 Discussion | 22 |
| 2.4.2 Other definitions | 24 |
| 2.5 Summary | 26 |
| Chapter 3: Theoretical framework | 27 |
| 3.1 Introduction | 27 |

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 3.2 | Theories of the Press | 27 |
| 3.2.1 | Development from the Four Theories | 30 |
| 3.3 | Relevance of the Four Theories | 33 |
| 3.4 | Development approach | 35 |
| 3.5 | Developing societies and critical media | 37 |
| 3.6 | Development and the responsibility theory | 39 |
| 3.7 | Summary | 39 |
| Chapter 4: | Methodology | 40 |
| 4.1 | Introduction | 40 |
| 4.2 | Approach based on journalistic values | 41 |
| 4.3 | Summary of information sources | 45 |
| 4.3 | Summary | 46 |
| Chapter 5: | Literature Review | 47 |
| 5.1 | Introduction | 47 |
| 5.2 | Defining the literature review | 47 |
| 5.3 | Organizing the literature review | 48 |
| 5.4 | International, national and niche news agencies | 49 |
| 5.4.1 | The role of national wire services..... | 50 |
| 5.4.2 | Broadcasting and news agencies | 52 |
| 5.4.3 | News agencies and the telegraph | 53 |
| 5.4.4 | From pigeon to Internet, via NWICO | 55 |
| 5.4.5 | Transnational media | 56 |
| 5.4.6 | ‘Hierarchical’ system..... | 58 |
| 5.5 | New World Information Order and news agencies | 59 |
| 5.5.1 | Alternative news agencies | 62 |

| | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 5.6 | News agency hegemony | 66 |
| 5.7 | Rectifying the imbalance | 69 |
| 5.8 | Further readings | 70 |
| 5.9 | Literature on globalisation | 73 |
| 5.9.1 | Domestic and national agencies often ‘linked’ | 74 |
| 5.10 | Summary..... | 76 |
| Chapter 6: | Historical and technological evolution of news agencies..... | 77 |
| 6.1 | The 21st century | 77 |
| 6.2 | The beginnings | 78 |
| 6.3 | Agency pioneers | 80 |
| 6.4 | Wire agencies and ‘objective’ or ‘neutral’ news | 81 |
| 6.5 | The telegraph era | 84 |
| 6.6 | An institution of ‘empires’ | 87 |
| 6.7 | Control..... | 90 |
| 6.7.1 | The ‘Cartel’ | 92 |
| 6.7.2 | Rival agencies and cooperation | 94 |
| 6.8 | Financial news | 96 |
| 6.9 | Agencies start using blogs | 98 |
| 6.10 | Conclusion | 100 |
| 6.11 | Summary..... | 103 |
| Chapter 7: | Wire services as purveyors of news | 104 |
| 7.1 | Introduction | 104 |
| 7.2 | Big agencies and national news wires..... | 105 |
| 7.3 | National news agencies | 106 |
| 7.3.1 | The free flow of news | 107 |

| | | |
|-------|-----------------------------------------------------|-----|
| 7.3.2 | Global and national agencies interconnect | 108 |
| 7.3.3 | Bi-directional dependence | 109 |
| 7.4 | Importance of national news agencies..... | 110 |
| 7.4.1 | Being national and global | 113 |
| 7.4.2 | Smaller national news agencies..... | 116 |
| 7.5 | New World Information and Communication Order | 118 |
| 7.5.1 | News agencies and non-aligned nations..... | 119 |
| 7.5.2 | The Macbride Commission | 120 |
| 7.5.3 | Criticism against NWICO | 121 |
| 7.5.4 | Lessons for NWICO supporters | 122 |
| 7.6 | News agencies in South Africa | 123 |
| 7.6.1 | Regional context | 124 |
| 7.6.2 | First news agency in Southern Africa | 126 |
| 7.6.3 | 'Imperial' Reuters | 127 |
| 7.6.4 | South African newspapers' news agency | 127 |
| 7.6.5 | South African Press Association established | 128 |
| 7.6.6 | Sapa's last overseas correspondent | 129 |
| 7.6.7 | Sapa in the digital age | 131 |
| 7.6.8 | UNESCO's assessment | 132 |
| 7.6.9 | Alternative news agencies in South Africa | 136 |
| 7.7 | Alternative and niche news agencies | 139 |
| 7.7.1 | Gemini News Service | 140 |
| 7.7.2 | 'Mainstream, not alternative' | 141 |
| 7.7.3 | IPS | 142 |
| 7.7.4 | Globalisation and alternative agencies | 143 |

| | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| 7.7.5 | Development and good governance | 144 |
| 7.7.6 | Covering non-mainstream news | 145 |
| 7.7.7 | IRIN, EurasiaNet and the IWPR | 147 |
| 7.7.8 | SUNS and the Third World Network | 149 |
| 7.7.9 | ENI as a niche news agency | 151 |
| 7.8 | Obstacles | 151 |
| 7.9 | Funding | 153 |
| 7.10 | Conclusion of chapter | 155 |
| 7.11 | Summary | 156 |
| Chapter 8: | Conclusion | 158 |
| 8.1 | Introduction | 158 |
| 8.2 | Summary | 159 |
| 8.2.1 | Recap of central research question | 161 |
| 8.3. | Findings | 161 |
| 8.3.1 | Discussion | 163 |
| 8.4 | Recommendations and conclusion | 168 |
| 8.4.1 | More scholarly attention | 169 |
| 8.4.1. | More resources | 169 |
| List of References | | 172 |
| Appendix A: | Memo on transformation of State newspapers and news agencies | 202 |
| Appendix B: | Ecumenical News International editorial guidelines | 206 |

Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Focus of study

This study focuses on the historiographical development of news agencies, and it examines their diversity in terms of news-flow. News agencies are important, as studies have shown that news wire services dominate different media (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:4; Tunstall, 1999:191-200; Paterson, 2003:1; Fenton, 2005:67; Paterson, 2006:5).

The study aims to show how news agencies have been critically important components of the mass media since the 19th century (Fenby, 1986:23; Read, 1992:9; Boyd-Barrett, 1998; 31; Chapman, 2005:60; Loomis, 2007:n.p.) and that they still are the “town criers of the world” (Fenby, 1986:7). In outlining their progression, this thesis seeks an answer to the question of whether there is a sufficient diversity in the range of news put out by news agencies in an Internet age.

In the progression of wire services, the study seeks to show how and why news agencies have evolved from the era of the industrial revolution in the 19th century to the cyber age of the 21st century. The study will also investigate the role that news wire services, as they are also known, have played in the process of globalisation, as well as the impact of globalisation on the advancement of news agencies. The impact of globalisation and the dominance of big news agencies are examined in relation to news diversity and how that in turn can affect the public discourse.

According to commercial operators (KCOM, 2004:1; Ali, 2005:n.p; Globalstar, 2006:1) and media researchers (Carnegie Reporter, 2005:1; Thussu, 2007:12) phone landline and satellite costs have plummeted in many countries in the 21st century. Big operators are now able to offset the extremely costly investments that helped diminish the status of a big news agency such as United Press International (UPI) in the early 1990s (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:9; Harnett & Ferguson, 2003:304).

Steep landline and satellite costs were factors that undermined the ability of a news agency such as UPI to continue as a major player (Gordon & Cohen, 1990:44, 95).¹

News wire services have the longest history of electronic media, and were from the mid-19th century a factor in processes of globalisation, and still remain so in the present day (Rantanen & Boyd Barrett in Paterson & Sreberny, 2004:43).

“They started to transmit news from every corner of the globe with the speed of the telegraph, and thus they contributed to the compression of time and space that is the hallmark of globalisation. Today, we need to assess how news agencies contribute to and are affected by the current phase of globalisation, one in which the intense commodification of information is an outstanding feature.”

In the ongoing role that news agencies have played in the processes of globalisation, advancements in technology that wire services themselves may have played a part in developing (Boyd-Barrett in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:32), have offered both challenges (UNESCO, 2001:19) and opportunities (Boyd-Barrett in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:33) to wire services from their beginnings in the 19th century to the present.

“With the advent of the Internet, some thought that the news agencies would go out of business – may end up being dinosaurs of journalism. But as agencies were using digital technologies before the birth of Internet, well-run news agencies found in this threat a new opportunity. Some dying agencies found in it a new elixir of life” (Shrivastava, 2007:v).

¹ It was experienced first hand by the author while working as a news manager for that agency in Japan during 1998 when, as Tokyo bureau chief, he had to assist in closing down nearly all of its bureaux in the Asian Pacific region, leaving only three functioning with staff representatives. Senior UPI technical staff told the author the crippling satellite and landline costs that had been used for the wire and radio services were one of the reasons for a dire financial situation facing the agency.

The early rise of Havas (which would later become Agence France-Presse [AFP]), Reuters, and a few years later, The Associated Press (AP), during the mid-19th century is well documented (Fenby, 1986:27, 31, 38; Read, 1992:31, 32, 33; Starr, 2004:174, 175; Chapman, 2005:65-66). The same players were dominating at the end of the 20th century (Boyd-Barrett in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:33, Paterson, 2006:5) and they have continued to do so (Paterson, 2006:21) with the rise of the Internet and online news in the 21st century.

“While some of these Internet news services originate news of their own, often much or all of their international coverage consists of unchanged or barely changed wire service reports” (Paterson, 2003:2).

This has exposed “the news industries’ near total dependence on a few wholesale news providers” (Paterson, 2006:21) and that raises questions about a resulting limitation “on public discourse”.

“The political economy of international news maintains a duopolistic wire service based system of global news gatekeeping [See 2.4.2: Other definitions], resulting in an ever increasing audience being exposed to an ever-decreasing news agenda” (Paterson, 2003:1).

Opportunities are offered by the new technologies and these could be beneficial to all news agencies. Yet there may be other factors persisting to maintain or strengthen the position of the old established wire services that took advantage of the geo-political situation in the 19th century (Chapman, 2005:66). Moreover they still use their resources and position to wield big influence (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:33). The 21st century tendency for a few news agencies to continue to play a dominant role in the rapidly developing Internet is noted by Paterson who refers to the “remarkable phenomenon of a now mature news aggregation industry” which he says includes news Web sites such as Yahoo, Altavista, Google and Excite (2006:4).

“A few original producers of content provide the lion’s share of the international news for those aggregators [See 2.4.2: Other definitions], despite the audacious

pretence of source diversity which each promotes. Most of the online news audience spends most of their time with a small number of Web sites, mostly in the guise of news aggregators, and this study confirms that those sites mostly relay news from the same few sources” (Paterson, 2006:4).

In the quest to understand why a similar group of players that started news agencies continues to dominate the field as regards the 21st century news wire services (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:33), this study follows the pattern of development from the start of agencies to the present day. In order to understand the roots of the enduring dominance of those news agencies it is important to have a critical understanding of the history of the relevant media, that is news agencies, from the beginning of their history to the present, hence the use of a mediahistoriographical approach to this study. Such a study can help elucidate the reasons for the inter-linkage of technological development, influence and market domination that is asserted by both Boyd-Barrett and Paterson.

This research will also study news agencies in a national context and whether they can reconcile being agents of both development and social responsibility. Wire services in one particular country, South Africa, will be studied more closely. This is important because South Africa’s news agencies straddle a local, national, regional and global context and their role is seen in different sectors as serving both a developmental and a social responsibility, or a watchdog, role (Kuper & Kuper, 2001:3). The examination of niche and alternative news agencies will follow that of national news agencies and the discussion on wire services in South Africa due to the fact that many of them have developed after the former.

1.2 Rationale for the study

A perceived shortage of information, research and data on news agencies was one important motivating reason for this study. The author is, of course, not the first person to note this. In, *The American Wire Services*, research originally presented as his doctoral thesis in 1965, Schwarzlose (cited in 1979) writes:

“[I]nvestigators of the media of mass communication have almost completely ignored the American wire services as large scale participants in the ongoing communications’ intercourse of this society” (Schwarzlose, 1979:2-3).

The situation of American wire services being ignored by media scholars that led Schwarzlose to his study would appear to prevail still in current times (Paterson, 2006:6). The Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ), in its annual report on American journalism, *The State of the News Media 2007*, has chapters on digital journalism, newspapers, online media, network television, cable television, local television, magazines and radio (PEJ, 2008). There is, however, no chapter assigned to news agencies in the studies conducted from 2005 to 2008 (PEJ, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008).

Although a detailed literature review will follow in Chapter Five, detailed analyses on wire agencies are scarce in journals such as the *American Journalism Review*, *British Journalism Review*, the *Columbia Journalism Review*, *Culture & Critique*, *Ecquid Novi/African Journalism Studies*, *International Media Studies*, *Global Media Journal - African Edition*, the *Journal of Communication*, the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *Journalism*, *Journalism Practice*, *Journalism Studies*, *Media, War & Conflict* and the *Project for Excellence in Journalism*. Scholarly material on news agencies is also hard to find in the general media and journalism text books cited in the list of references for this study, except for those containing studies by scholars such as Boyd-Barrett, Fenby, Paterson, Rantanen, Read and Shrivastava.

1.2.1 News agencies as ‘global gatekeepers’

Paterson has a hypothesis (2003:1) that the emergence of 21st century cyberspace news keeps a system in place whereby the mega global news agencies become gatekeepers for a tighter news agenda. This comes from the advantage they reaped during the geo-political circumstances of Western global dominance during the 19th century, and the big agencies continue to define what is news for many media (Boyd-Barrett in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:33; Herbert, 2001:41), rather than being facilitators of a more diverse window on the world (Rantanen & Boyd-Barrett in De Beer & Merrill, 2004:47).

“As is evident at the time of this writing, thousands of media outlets from around the world turn out to do original reporting on occasional massive stories -- like war -- but international coverage at most other times is left almost exclusively to news agencies. This is true across media, including television, radio, print, and the Internet”
(Paterson, 2003:1).

News agencies such as AFP, Reuters and AP have from the start of their existence been at the forefront in their field and they still are (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:4; Paterson, 2003:1; Paterson, 2006:5). If there is to be greater diversity, it is important to understand how these agencies have been able to sustain their rankings. Studying their history can unlock clues as to why they were able to maintain their positions over more than 150 years.

The distribution of agency news from such a limited number of sources is described by Tunstall (1999:191-200; Paterson, 2003; Paterson, 2006:13) as a “world news duopoly” dominated by Britain and the United States. A pattern shown on the main news pages of the world’s biggest Internet search engines, such as Yahoo and Google, as well as that for the “biggest broadcasting news-gatherer in the world” (BBC, 2007:n.p), in addition to television networks (Fenton, 2005:67; Sherry, 2007:32), also prompts questions about diversity, when there is a dependency on such a few news sources.

The dependence, noted by scholars such as Paterson, Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, on a limited number of news agencies as sources for stories might be construed as good for their fortunes and indeed the futures of the major wire agencies. Yet, one could pose the question: is it good for the quality and diversity of news presented, and does it keep the world’s citizens well informed?

A pattern of using wire agency news for Web sites (Paterson, 2006:4) is repeated for network television news in North America according to a study by a former CBS News European correspondent (Fenton, 2005:67). Using interviews with other former television network correspondents such as former United Press journalist and CBS anchor Walter Cronkite and former ABC news presenter Peter Jennings, the author of the study says US

news stations create an “illusion of global coverage” (Fenton, 2005:67) merely because anchors can interview foreign heads of state thousands of miles away. At the same time, the fuel for their endeavours comes from the major news wire services.

“Instead of an experienced correspondent who knows the local culture and news sources, networks now rely mostly on news agencies, primarily the Associated Press and Reuters, to provide video and news. It’s a lot cheaper” (Fenton, 2005:67).

The “illusion of global coverage” that Fenton refers to provides support for the arguments of those who advocate greater news agency diversity, which is with Internet coverage in the early 21st century “an audacious pretence” (Paterson, 2006:4).

“The political economy of online news is not one of diversity but one of concentration, and the democratic potential of the medium remains mostly that -- potential” (Paterson, 2006:20).

In his study Paterson notes that there is infrequent scrutiny of news agencies and that the production of wire services is “poorly understood” (2006:5).

The role of news agencies has also been examined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the international agency that deals with communication and information, among its responsibilities. The UNESCO report, *News Agencies in the Era of the Internet* (2001:19) said that technology has not only paved the way for the development of global news agencies, but more recently it has indeed also provided challenges, especially to the less financially powerful ones.

Development opportunities stemming from new technology, in particular the Internet, provided fresh opportunities for news agencies such as Reuters, its CEO said in 2006 (Glocer, 2006:n.p.). The position of Reuters, AP and AFP, also known as the “Big Three” (Rantanen & Boyd-Barrett in De Beer & Merrill, 2004:43) in the 21st century suggests, however, that the hierarchy of news power has changed little since the 19th century. This also supports the

position of Boyd-Barrett that historical and political exigencies have left the big global news agencies largely in the hands of those in developed countries (in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:33).

Paterson's research has found there is very little information diversity in online news, a situation that does not tally with "a decade and a half of fervour for the democratising potential of new media" (Paterson, 2006:2) which depend heavily on news supplied by the big news agencies (Paterson, 2006:7).

News wire agency diversity falls within the remit of UNESCO. The UN agency states that its goal of promoting "media pluralism" is a concept that not only includes "all varieties of nations and groups of human beings, but also women and men". The UNESCO goal stems from its New Communication Strategy that was agreed to in 1989. During this study the linkage of that strategy to the international discourse on news agencies will be highlighted. The discourse aims to (UNESCO, 2005a):

- (a) promote at both international and national levels, the free flow of information;
- (b) encourage a wider and better flow of information that enables a balance unencumbered by obstacles to the freedom of expression;
- (c) bolster, in developing countries, communication capacities in order to strengthen their contribution to communication.

The points brought up in the 2001 UNESCO report pinpoint issues that will be raised in this thesis when the central research question is outlined in section 1.5 of this chapter.

1.3 Importance of news agencies

The importance of news agencies for freedom and democracy has been highlighted by the director general of UNESCO, Koïchiro Matsuura, who delivered a speech (Matsuura, 2004:01) in front of the then Russian president Vladimir Putin at the World Congress of News Agencies in Moscow on 22 September 2004. In it Matsuura gave a strong affirmation to the role of news agencies. The occasion was marking the 100th anniversary of Russia's ITAR-TASS news agency, and Matsuura said there had never been "an era in which the relation between media freedom and democracy" had been closer (Matsuura, 2004:1).

“Editorial independence, unfettered access to information and rigorous professional standards are especially important for news agencies since they provide the news material and footage for so many other media outlets, particularly those lacking the resources to be present in the world’s hot-spots, to perform investigative reporting or to cover issues that require large staff deployments or special knowledge. If news agencies did not exist, we would have to invent them” (Matsuura, 2004:1).

Paterson notes (in Skinner, Compton & Gasher, 2005:152) that wire services “manufacture an ideologically distinctive and homogenous view of the world”. He asserts (2005:152) that regional and global wire services are also “crucial due to their agenda-setting role” (see 2.4.2 Other definitions) in other media.

In another study, Paterson (2006:20) has found a linkage, mentioned in the previous section of this chapter, between 21st century online news usage and wire service dominance and the fact that the Internet’s democratising potential that had been much heralded (Pavlik, 2000:229; Gilmor, 2004:44-88; Singer, 2004:3) remains unrealised. This is because of the “concentration” of news sources and its resulting lack of news diversity (Paterson, 2006:20). This, he says, is a blow to the potential of news agencies in the political economy. In his earlier study, Paterson (in Skinner et al, 2005:155) observes that there has been “relatively little scrutiny” of wire service content.

Yet, if news agencies have been ignored (Schwarzlose, 1979:2-3; Paterson, 2006:5) in media studies compared to media components such as newspapers, radio, television and the Internet, the question could be asked, is there any point in studying them?

1.4 Why news agencies should be studied

Paterson (2006:6) postulates that the “agenda-setting influence” has made global and regional news agencies even more crucial than they were in the past, due to their ability now to “increasingly bypass intermediary processors of news in cyberspace”. This allows wire agencies for the first time to reach a large portion of the consumers of mass news directly

(2006:6). Paterson's argument on the expanding access that wire agencies are getting has also been put forward by Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (in Briggs & Cobley, 2002:57). In later work Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (in Paterson & Sreberny, 2004:42) note:

“News agencies deserve scholarly attention not simply because they are agents of construction of what we have come to understand as the domains of the ‘national’ and of the ‘international’ -- now somewhat limited concepts -- but more practically, because there are grounds for considering that what agencies do and how they do it are important for the survival of a ‘public sphere’ of democratic dialogue, and also for global as well as for national and regional security.”

Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen contend (in Paterson & Sreberny, 2004:42) that for the most part this is because news agencies serve numerous subscribers who “differ in philosophy, technology, market ambition, wealth, geographical location”. They observe that in many countries it is only news agencies that have the resources and the motivation to sustain a “nationwide, if not regional or global, structure of news-gathering”, and it is wire agencies alone that can best claim “inclusiveness” in terms of national coverage.

A grouping of wire agencies such as the European Alliance of News Agencies (EANA) sees its existence as an essential component in the distribution of news. The alliance says in its mission statement:

“The news agency business constitutes the very basics of news gathering and distribution” (EANA, 2007:1).

Wire agencies have long provided news to newspapers and broadcasters, and they now have the Internet added as a technical “purveyor” to remain vital suppliers of much basic news. Yet there are unanswered questions relating, for example, to the use of Google News algorithms and the repetitious use of the same news agency stories coming from different news sites to the same Google or Yahoo Web site (Paterson, 2006:7). Paterson asks if there could be “evidence that the human editors at Yahoo and CNN”, for example, are keeping a watch on other popular news services to see how they list stories.

“Or, as this paper posits, could it be that the news agenda of all the popular online news services is substantially determined by the similar choices of two wire services? All are possibilities, but it is beyond the scope of the current study to provide a more definitive answer. There is a need for new research into the online news production process at the international level to answer such questions” (Paterson, 2006:7).

1.5 Central research question

Scenarios of opportunities presented by modern technology (Pavlik, 2000:229; Singer, 2004:3; Volkmer in Alan, 2005:357; Shrivastava, 2007:v) that are countered by the ongoing domination of the established agencies (Paterson, 2003:1, 2) pose problems relating to the diversity of news that is available to the public. A question regarding one of the problem areas for agencies that pertains to all news was raised in an article carried on the Editors’ Weblog by Hopperton (2007:n.p.) entitled: “Will news wire monopoly end impartial news?”

“As more and more journalist[s] jobs are cut ... reliance on ‘wire stories’ is becoming evident. Some consider news wire agencies a potential threat to unique or tailored news and commentary being delivered to the masses” (Hopperton, 2007:n.p.).

Hopperton asks who is responsible for making sure that the public has access to “the varying opinions and commentary on the news” that is required in a situation involving a “changing role of news wire agencies” (2007:n.p.). Her question on the availability of variety and diversity of wire service news leads, along with those raised in the UNESCO report (2001:19), to part of the central research questions of this study. These are:

1. What is the mediahistoriographical development of news agencies as “purveyors of news”?
2. (a) What is the contribution of technological development to wire agency development?
(b) What is the contribution of wire services to the diversity of news-flow?

As this is a mediahistoriographical study it first seeks to examine the history, role and development of the big news agencies. It also elucidates how smaller wire services ranging from national services, or those that are purveyors of niche news, have sought, or are attempting, to gain greater access into the market, in a quest to diversify global news-flow. This is in an age of media convergence (Boczkowski, 2005; Dupagne & Garrisson, 2006:237-255), but also a period of large agency dominance (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:13; Paterson, 2003:1,2; Paterson, 2006:5). The study will seek to show how important wire service news is to traditional media (Paterson, 2003:13) such as newspapers, radio and television and also to new media, like the Internet (Paterson, 2006:1), and how a diversity of news is important (Boyd-Barrett in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:20) for our understanding of the world. If a duopolistic system has arisen (Paterson, 2003:1) in regard to wire services, this study seeks to examine if there is or can be a place for smaller niche news agencies which can contribute to the broadening of the public discourse.

An outline of the manner in which this study is to be carried out, follows.

1.6 Exposition of thesis

This thesis will be executed according to the following structure of chapters and foci of each:

Chapter 1 -- Introduction

This chapter introduces the background and rationale to this study as well as the central research question and why a mediahistoriographical approach is used which entails a critical review of the literature pertaining to the history of news agencies. (A definition of what is “historiographical” is given in Chapter 2.4.2: Other definitions). This chapter presents an outline of the research design. It deals with the introduction to the topic: what are news wire services all about, and what are some of the problems around them that can be investigated?

Chapter 2 -- Context of the study

This chapter provides context to the study. Firstly, it elaborates on explaining the importance of news agencies. Secondly, it gives a historical overview, and thirdly it explains the current

21st century background to news agencies. The chapter also includes definitions including those pertaining to news agencies.

Chapter 3 -- Theoretical framework

This chapter examines the theories or concepts that can be applied to what news agencies should be, and do, as instruments of the media. It in turn raises the question of who should make the decision on what the media theories seek to explain. To engage in such a discourse, the study takes cognisance of the various theories of the press that have been postulated, mainly since the middle of the 20th century, and a theoretical model for this study is found.

Chapter 4 -- Methodology

This chapter elaborates on the methods used to carry out the study, one that involves an extensive literature review of scholarly and mass media information on news agencies as well as interviews with media scholars and news agency professionals.

Chapter 5 -- Literature Review

This chapter is a critical assessment of the main theoretical journalism and media historiographical literature that formed a substantial part of the reading for this study. The readings include research papers in scholarly media journals relating to news-flow, the role of news wire services in globalisation and a discussion on the debate regarding the New World Information Order which was pertinent to the discourse on news agencies during the Cold War era, and that still has a resonance. This chapter also examines analyses of wire agencies by leading practitioners.

Chapter 6 -- Historical and technological evolution of big news agencies

This chapter focuses on the rapid development of news agencies in the 19th century, in the early part of the 20th century and how later they transformed to cope with the age of television, and subsequently the arrival of the Internet. The Internet has become a key platform for dissemination of news in the 21st century and the chapter also further examines the role of wire services in globalisation and the impact that process has had on their development. Chapter Six delves into other processes that have had an impact on the

development of agencies such as prevailing social or political factors as well as using advanced technology to move market information.

Chapter 7 -- Wire services as purveyors of news

The chapter begins with an examination of how new technologies have worked to the advantage of some news agencies in becoming global operators and it expands on the theory that news agencies have played a critical role in the process of globalisation as well as being affected by globalisation during the industrial and post-industrial era. The chapter focuses on news agencies as global operators, and on the rise of the national news agencies and their importance as nation-building tools in the 20th century, as well as their prospects in the 21st century following the rise of the Internet. This chapter also discusses South Africa's news agencies, as the country can be seen as a regional news power, and it looks at smaller, niche and alternative news agencies that operate as suppliers of news to the world, separately to the transnational agencies, the big commercial players and the national wire services.

Chapter 8 -- Conclusion

This chapter attempts to draw final conclusions after studying the state of large and small agencies in the 21st century, how they are faring, and seeks to answer the central research questions. It offers some prognostications for the future of wire agencies and suggestions regarding an overhaul in policy thinking in order to sustain a much greater diversity of news agencies. The study concludes with a recommendation that could provide some assistance in making news agencies purveyors of more diverse news.

1.7 Summary

Chapter One has given background and the rationale to this study into the historical development and diversity of news agencies and it has also introduced the central research questions which focus on the historiography of news agencies, what has been the contribution of technology to wire services and what is the contribution of wire services to news-flow and diversity in order to broaden the degree of public debate. The chapter also presents an outline of the research design. It deals with the introduction to the topic: what are news wire services all about, and what are some of the problems around news agencies that can be investigated?

Chapter 2 Context of the study

2.1 Introduction

By examining the past of news agencies and the continued dominance of a few key wire services, media scholars may be better placed to understand the present and find some pointers to how the situation can be improved for the future regarding news agency diversity. The historiography of news agencies can show how and why some news agencies have dominated (Fenby, 1986:23-44; Chapman, 2005:60-68) from the start of the existence of wire services. Delving into the evolution of this and why more or less the same players dominate wire service news distribution could provide some markers to a better comprehension of the role that more choice of news agencies can play in expanding public awareness and discourse. In giving the study's context, this chapter firstly elaborates on explaining the importance of wire services as purveyors of news; secondly, it gives a historical overview, and thirdly, it explains the current 21st century background to news agencies. The chapter also includes definitions pertaining to news agencies and to this study.

2.2 Key global news agencies

News agencies have been “invisible wholesalers” (Shrivastava, 2007:1) of news and information to other media, and the big agencies have in effect been the key players in the global news system (Hachten & Scotton, 2002:32) in the days when newspapers, radio and television were the main channels for dissemination of news. Studies have shown (Paterson in Skinner et al, 2005:145-164; Paterson, 2006:9; PEJ, 2008a) that in the 21st century this continues, and that the biggest and best-known Internet search engines, such as Google, Yahoo! or MSN.com, rely heavily on news on any given day, originating from news agencies, or wire services.

“For much of their breaking news, Yahoo and AOL [American Online] often tap the same source as Drudge [an online columnist] and WashingtonPost.com, The Associated Press, with Reuters, AFP, and a few others also playing a role” (Stephens, 2007a:1).

The PEJ (Project for Excellence in Journalism) report (2007a:n.p.) notes the Web site of CNN news “still relies heavily on wire copy” and that only “a few of the stories” it features “get major treatment” while at the same time it draws 20 million people to its site each month, a pattern that is repeated in its 2008 report (PEJ, 2008a:n.p.)

If recognising the importance of news services in the Internet era through a study of their historiographical development and their impact on the media can help media scholars better understand why and how this component of the media continues to play a key role, it is useful to elaborate on these contexts.

2.3 Origin of news agencies

Perhaps the inter-village drumbeats of ancient times (Stephens, 1989:24) were the precursors of today’s multibillion dollar, multimedia conglomerates that disseminate digitised news each day in billions of bytes via satellite, telephone or by wireless. Stephens, in the first edition of his book on the history of news (1989:4), asserts that in general studies of the media the history of news has been neglected and that could be “because journalists themselves lack a sense of history”. Stephen himself pays scant attention to wire services in his work. Yet wire services have been key suppliers of news, information, pictures and graphics for nearly 175 years since Charles Havas founded the first news agency in Paris in 1835 (AFP, 2006; Fenby, 1986:25; Palmer in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:189). That means news agencies existed about 100 years before television began transmitting on a mass scale and 160 years before the wide-scale use of the Internet to make news available to readers, listeners and viewers.

2.3.1 Technology

Shrivastava (2007:1) has noted that news agencies have constantly used the fastest technology available to compete against one another in communicating news. His study observes that during the 19th century, what became news wire services made use of carrier pigeons “and now they use satellite phones and the Internet”. Herbert (2001:41) says that despite challenges faced from adapting to technological change, the global news agencies have continued to be dominant in the news arena.

Speed is a vital variant of technology that news agencies have always used to get their news to their clients. The front cover of the annual report for Reuters Group PLC (released on 27 March 2007) carries a photograph showing a slightly-blurred group of skaters clad in streamlined suits, racing around an ice track. The one word headline on the cover is: “Faster” (Reuters, 2007:n.p.). Speed has always been important to news agencies and it was the ability to get news quickly from one spot to another that enabled the news agency to develop. “Speed and enterprise were the *raison d’être* of any news agency” (Stephens, 1988:259).

From the times when Julius Reuter, following in the footsteps of his former employer Charles Havas, first used carrier pigeons in the middle of the 19th century to beat the trains running between the Belgian cities of Brussels and Aachen (Read, 1992:11; Loomis, 2007:n.p) speed has been critical to news delivery. New York newspaper owners, who had set up their own agency, raced horses across the east coast states to get news to readers first (Schwarzlose, 1989:22), also relied on fast delivery. The tools to harness that speed and their acquisition have been essential to the rapid delivery of news (Pavlik, 2000:229) and in that process technology has shaped who controls news from its first point to its arrival. The Reuters report for 2006 says:

“Speed is the hallmark of today’s global financial markets. Driven by new trading technologies, new regulations and rapidly shifting market structures, markets are creating and consuming more information at an ever-increasing rate” (Reuters, 2007:16).

Boyd-Barrett (2000:10) observes that international wire services were among the “first multinationals” and that using innovative business techniques and the use of technology, they supported the “process whereby educated people acquired images of other parts of the world” with “new information” while at the same time aiding fast and accurate distribution of financial data.

Paterson (2003:4) elucidates further that digital technologies have brought more efficiency to all facets of wire service production. The convergence that has resulted from this has allowed “easy access into new markets” through specially tailored products for the

news media using the same “words and pictures upon which traditional media have long depended” (2003:4). He postulates that news agencies capitalise on “structural convergence within the information industries” mainly by forming alliances that enhance their ability to gather and send news. Such alliances can, for example, allow a video or picture of a remote disaster to be moved within minutes through the infrastructure of a local, allied news organization with minimal processing to, e.g., London, Johannesburg (or another agency centre) and “onto the Web pages of an allied Internet portal site and into the news junkies’ gaze” (Paterson, 2003:4).

The CNN news Web site “still relies heavily on wire copy” (PEJ, 2007a:n.p) and only “a few of the stories” it features “get major treatment”, while each month it draws 20 million people to its site (PEJ, 2007a; PEJ, 2008a). Looking at another Web portal competing with CNN, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC, 2007) explains its news sources:

“A wide variety of sources is used in the preparation of material -- including BBC News, BBC World Service and a large number of internationally-recognised news agencies. They include the [British] Press Association, Associated Press, Reuters and Agence France-Presse.”

The big news agencies themselves, as well as media scholars (Volkmer in Alan, 2005:357; Shrivastava, 2007:v), have noted that the technological advances that came with the advent of the Internet do offer new opportunities (Pavlik, 2000:229; Glocer, 2006:n.p.; Louette, 2006:n.p.). Many smaller news agencies have seen a potential for cost savings in distribution offered by the Internet that could also offer them opportunities for publishing their news (Gilmor, 2004:44-88; Robinson, 2007:305). There has also been the emergence of news emanating from new formats such as citizen journalism (Pavlik, 2001:1; Gilmor, 2004:136), a new phenomenon that news agencies are contending with (Glocer, 2006a:n.p.), and which Boczkowski (2004:11, 16, 141, 181) sees as incorporated in a “community connection”.

A dependency, noted by scholars such as Paterson, Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen in examples above, on major news agencies as sources for stories, might be construed as good

for their fortunes (Glocer, 2006:n.p.; Louette, 2006:n.p.), and indeed the future of major wire agencies. Yet, one should ask: is it good for the quality and diversity of news presented?

The pattern of using wire agency news for Web sites is repeated for network television news in North America according to a study by a former European correspondent from the US network CBS News (Fenton, 2005). Using interviews with other former television network correspondents such as former United Press journalist and CBS anchor Walter Cronkite and former ABC news presenter Peter Jennings, Fenton (2005:67) asserts that US news stations create an “illusion of global coverage” merely because television anchors can interview foreign heads of state thousands of miles away. At the same time, the fuel for their endeavours comes from the major news wire services (Sherry, 2008:33).

“Instead of an experienced correspondent who knows the local culture and news sources, networks now rely mostly on news agencies, primarily the Associated Press and Reuters, to provide video and news. It’s a lot cheaper” (Fenton, 2005:67).

The distribution of agency news from such a limited number of sources is a “world news duopoly” (Tunstall in Tumber, 1999:191-200) dominated by Britain and the United States. The pattern shown on the main news pages of two of the world’s biggest Internet search engines and that for the “biggest broadcasting news-gatherer in the world” (BBC News Sources, 2007) as well as television networks (Fenton, 2005:67), also prompts the question regarding diversity that is part of the central research questions of this study.

The next chapter will deal with the theories or concepts of what news agencies should be, and do, as instruments of the media. Before proceeding to this discussion, a number of definitions pertaining to this study are necessary.

2.4 Definition of news agencies

To assist this study it is useful to discuss a number of definitions for the term “news agency”.

Firstly, it is imperative to establish a definition for news agencies as they are not always as clearly identified as newspapers, television, radio and the Internet. Boyd-Barrett (1998:19) says:

“The global agencies are organizations whose main *raison d’être* is to gather and to sell news throughout the world for the benefit of ‘retail’ media (newspapers, broadcasters, on-line suppliers) and other outlets (business, finance institutions, governments, private individuals).”

Yet in a more “21st century” description, Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (in Briggs & Cobley, 2002:57) go further when they present a chapter entitled Global and National News Agencies: Opportunities and Threats in the Age of the Internet. In it they ask the question: “What are news agencies and why are they important?” (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2002:57). They answer their question as follows:

“News agencies were classically defined as ‘wholesale’ media, gathering news for the purpose of distributing it to other -- ‘retail’ -- media, mainly newspapers and broadcasters, who packaged news agency news for their own distinctive readers and audiences. Until recently, news agencies did not have a direct access to an audience consisting of individuals; their services were mediated through their subscribers.”

Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen contend that this “classic definition of news agencies” is still generally applicable, but that it currently needs to be added to, and put in a new context. This is because agencies have expanded on their traditional “wholesale” role and have started becoming more important as “retail” sources of information for individual clients as well as for the media.

Increasingly readers will collate a news story from one source, “picked up by a wire service, licensed to a portal such as Yahoo News” (Glaser, 2004:1), then used by a Weblog or personal site, and thereafter it can be emailed and then loses its identity. In the end the reader “isn’t sure who wrote it and where it came from”.

In noting the transformation of news agencies, Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (2002:57) write that the uncertainty of where reports emanate from has been apparent for some time in the context of financial news services for the likes of brokers, financial institutions, foreign and commodity exchanges, etc., but it has been even more noticeable when it comes to disseminating news on the Internet.

“However, even on the Internet, clients typically access news agency news through secondary, or ‘retail’ agents consisting of general interest (e.g. Yahoo!) and corporate Web sites, the Web sites of newspaper and television stations, or through Internet portals such as Netscape. The ‘wholesale’ role of news agencies is therefore still important, but today it is easier for the individual news consumer to access large quantities of news agency news whose text has not been subject to rewriting by a ‘retailer’ who controls the channel through which the news has been disseminated” (Boyd-Barrett, 2002:57).

In the pre-Internet era, wire services had “historically sought to minimise their public exposure” (Paterson in Skinner et al, 2005:153) because their success stemmed from their ability to make their audiences and readers believe that the local media outlet distributing the news was responsible for it. Glaser (2004:1) explains how in 2004, Reuters, however, shifted into the broadband Internet arena to retail its news products. Now, says Paterson (2005:153), news agencies depend on “brand name” appeal from those who use them. The preponderance of stories directly from wire agencies on sites such as Google and Yahoo, cited earlier in this chapter, and MSN.com is evidence of this.

In seeking a more general and traditional description, however, the Encyclopædia Britannica (2006:n.p.) refers to a news agency as a:

“press agency, press association, wire service, or news service organization that gathers, writes, and distributes news from around a nation or the world to newspapers, periodicals, radio and television broadcasters, government agencies, and other users.”

According to Britannica, a wire agency does not generally publish news itself but supplies news to its subscribers, who, by sharing costs, obtain services they could not otherwise afford. It also asserts that all the mass media depend upon the agencies for the bulk of the news, even including those few that have extensive news-gathering resources of their own.

Another definition, compiled by the School of Foreign Studies at China's Nanjing University (2007:n.p.), agrees with the Britannica definition, declaring on its Web site:

“A news agency is an organization that sells its international journalistic reporting to many different individual newspapers and magazines. There are many other names for a news agency, e.g., press agency, press association, wire service, or news service.”

In training notes about types of journalism, Britain's National Union of Journalists (NUJ, 2003:n.p.) says:

“News agencies are to newspapers and other news outlets what wholesalers are to high street shops. They ‘buy in’ the news from source, edit and repackage it and sell it on to their customers. Traditionally, these customers have been newspapers, and the agencies have fallen into two camps -- the international organisations like Reuters or The Associated Press or small specialist or geographically focused organisations covering events in, say, Birmingham and the West Midlands, or sport in Yorkshire [England].”

2.4.1 Discussion

The common thread for all the above definitions is that wire agencies provide news content as wholesalers rather than as primary users and that they sell or distribute that news for others to use. These definitions do not examine the impact of news agencies or their role in the process of globalisation, or how they themselves are affected by that development. Those aspects will be considered in the following chapters.

Moreover, Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen contend there are aspects of news agency operations now that “blur the ‘wholesale’ and ‘retail’ division” in that they buy “into ‘retail’

media” (in Briggs & Cobley, 2002:58). The two scholars cite a 20 percent ownership in 2002 by Reuters in Independent Television News (ITN), Britain’s leading commercial terrestrial channel (See: Other definitions: 2.4.2) television organization (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2002:58).

Another overlap with news agencies has arisen due to the growth of newspapers and media organizations as news “wholesalers” that sell news to other organizations thereby becoming news retailers (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:3). This has for long been the case with syndicated news services such as those of the New York Times News Service, for example, but recent years have seen the emergence of worldwide news organizations such as CNN that have extensive news-gathering facilities of their own, and whose news is often used by other retail news organizations.

In finding a definition that best fits this study, the one given by Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen in Briggs & Cobley (2002:57) is chosen. Here wire agencies are classically defined as wholesale media, collecting news in order to disseminate it to retail media. Their definition also takes into account the new context for news agencies, which have also expanded their traditional “wholesale” role to distribute more news on a retail basis, particularly over the Internet. This is substantiated by Fletcher (2005:182) who says most news agencies see their future as they had seen their role in the past, to engage in the “supply of news to broadcasters, newspapers and net publishers” (2005:182).

For the purposes of this study, therefore, the following definition will be used:

News agencies are normally defined as wholesale media, gathering news for the purpose of distributing it to other -- retail -- media, mainly newspapers and broadcasters, which package news agency news for their own distinctive readers and audiences. News agencies can however sell their news services to individual subscribers via news wires or the Internet.

2.4.2 Other definitions:

Agenda-setting: Agenda-setting describes the manner in which “media set the order of importance of current issues, especially in the reportage of news” (Watson & Hill, 2003:6). Agenda-setting is closely linked with the process of gatekeeping (see below) and it outlines “the context of transmission, establishes the terms of reference and the limits of debate”.

Aggregators: Aggregators allow users to subscribe to feeds from sources as diverse as e.g. the BBC or local newspapers. They work at regular intervals of, e.g., every hour “by checking an Internet address to see if new content has been added” (Singel, 2003:n.p.). The feeds are written according to a “shared specification”. These specifications are referred to collectively as RSS feeds. RSS is, “depending on who you talk to really simple syndication, or rich site summary” (Singel, 2003). RSS feeds facilitate news aggregators to enable Internet users to have access to news links on a designated site, posted soon after they have been sent by a news distributor.

Civil society: “Civil society is an unusual concept in that it always seems to require being defined before it is applied or discussed” according to Civil Society International (2003). It says, “Perhaps the simplest way to see civil society is as a ‘third sector’, distinct from government and business. In this view, civil society refers essentially to the so-called ‘intermediary institutions’ such as professional associations, religious groups, labour unions, citizen advocacy organizations, that give voice to various sectors of society and enrich public participation in democracies.” The London School of Economics’ Centre for Civil Society (2008) notes, “Civil societies are often populated by organisations such as registered charities, development non-governmental organisations, community groups, women’s organisations, faith-based organisations, professional associations, trade unions, self-help groups, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy group[s].”

CNN: CNN was originally called Cable News Network and it operates 24-hour news channels and a news Web portal (CNN.com). CNN.com’s international edition (CNN, 2008:n.p) “is constantly updated to bring the top news stories from around the world”. It has staff in London and Hong Kong, working in cooperation with its world headquarters in

Atlanta, Georgia. It has bureaux worldwide and uses a “global team of almost 4,000 news professionals” (CNN, 2008:n.p).

Gatekeeping: In defining gatekeeping, Watson and Hill (2003:114) use the analogy of the work situation where the “boss’s secretary is the archetypal gatekeeper” who allows callers in or delays them. In the news situation, a “news bulletin is the result of a number of choices by a variety of gatekeepers” that includes editors who decide on daily coverage, copy-tasters, film editors, sub-editors, or duty editors. The selection or rejection of material is made according to criteria determined by factors such as “the gatekeeper's class background, upbringing and education and his/her attitudes to the world”. These include the “values, norms and traditional wisdom of the organization for which the gatekeeper works”.

GII: Global Information Infrastructures “represents an intersect between three major industries, telecommunications, information technology (IT) and entertainment (consumer electronics)” (Rao, Uose & Luetchford, 1996:2).

Historiography: “The writing of history, especially the writing of history based on the critical examination of sources, the selection of particulars from the authentic materials in those sources, and the synthesis of those particulars into a narrative that will stand the test of critical methods. The term historiography also refers to the theory and history of historical writing” (Historiography, 2008).

Media convergence: Different media, such as electronic or print, are used to produce messages for their audience and may be produced using the same production unit (Vilanilam, 2005:209). It is a “coming together of communication devices and processes” that has from the 1990s been a significant feature of the technological development of media (Watson & Hill, 2003:65).

“In *Of Media and People* (US: Sage, 1992), Everette E. Dennis writes of forms converging ‘into a single electronically based, computer-driven mode that has been described as the nearly universal integration of systems that retrieve, process, and store text, data, sound, and image’, in short, multi-media ... Convergence is far more

than ‘the stuff of hardware and software: it is the driving force that has spurred major change in the media industries and almost everywhere else’.”

News-flow: News-flow is what media researchers analyse in seeking “to track the origin, content and destination of news stories in selected media, for the purposes of determining patterns in the circulation of news items and documenting the asymmetries in the ways different countries occupy the international news agenda. News-flow research has been employed since the 1950s to analyse newspapers, wire services, magazines and television newscasts” and on the World Wide Web. (Gasher, 2007:304)

Terrestrial broadcasting: “That which is broadcast from the ground and not via satellite” (Watson & Hill, 2003:294). The term is used in Europe and Australasia, but is not usually used in North America where much of what is called network television is terrestrial TV.

2.3 Summary

This chapter provides a context for this study by explaining the importance of news agencies and giving a historical overview. It also explains the current 21st century background to news agencies. The chapter also discusses definitions, specifically those pertaining to news agencies.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

3.1 Introduction

Chapter Three deals with the theories, or concepts, of what news agencies should be and do, as instruments of the media. Engaging in such a discussion, however, requires cognisance of the various theories of the press that have been postulated, mainly since the middle of the 20th century, and which seek to explain prevailing media structures and the philosophies of certain eras. These perspectives will be examined in this chapter and a theoretical model that can support this study will be selected. This will be done by referring to the Four Theories of the Press and others such as the development theory, to which some nations subscribe, as they see national news agencies as a tool of national development (UNESCO, 2001:4; UNESCO, 2003).

3.2 Theories of the Press

In 1956 Siebert, Peterson and Schramm presented what they argued were four major theories behind the functioning of the world's press system at the time. In their work that consisted of four chapters, they attempted to explain in a theory how the press works, asserting that there had since the beginning of mass communication, in the Renaissance period of history, been only "two or four" press theories, "according to how one counts them" (Siebert, Peterson & Schramm, 1956:2). Before ascertaining theories applicable to the particular phenomenon of news agencies, it is worth examining the context of some of the theories in relation to the mass media as a whole, since this study aims to explain the importance of wire services within the context of mass media.

In the introduction to their work, Siebert et al (1956:1) say that by "press" they mean "all the media of mass communication". They seek to explain why the media is as it is. They contend that in order to see the press system in "full perspective" (Siebert et al, 1956:2) they must look at the social systems in which the media operates. In doing so, they defined the following four systems for the mass media:

- the Authoritarian Theory

- the Libertarian Theory
- the Social Responsibility Theory
- the Soviet Communist Theory.

The oldest of the theories, according to the authors, is the Authoritarian system which came into being in the “authoritarian climate” (Siebert et al, 1956:2) of the Renaissance during the 16th and 17th centuries. According to this theory the national media in a country supports and advances the policies of the government in power under a system of either private or public ownership.

Siebert explains that the authoritarian state system requires direct governmental control of the mass media. He postulates that of the four theories of the press, the authoritarian system has been the “most pervasive both historically and geographically” (Siebert in Siebert et al, 1956:9).

The authoritarian system is also based on the theory that those who have the power determine the truth. Siebert notes that for many modern societies the authoritarian theory of the press provides the basis of the press system, even where it has been discarded, and it has carried on influencing the systems “of a number of governments which theoretically adhere to libertarian principles” (Siebert, 1956:9).

Nerone (1995) edited a collective work (Berry, Braman, Christians, Gulback, Helle, Liebovich, Nerone & Rotzoll, 1995), some years after Siebert et al that is, however, critical of the use of “authoritarianism” as a “vague term” applied to a “broad range of distinguishable press theories”. He debunks the theories, arguing that each of the ideas does not have the “same level of historical concreteness” (Nerone et al, 1995:18).

In expounding their four theory contention, Siebert et al (1956:2) postulated that the Libertarian Theory followed the Authoritarian Theory chronologically. It surfaced after the works of 17th century English thinkers such as John Milton and John Locke, and later that of John Stuart Mill, and also Thomas Jefferson in the United States, were published. The theory

eschews the notion that the search for truth is one of humanity's expected rights. Peterson (in Siebert et al, 1956:73) cites a position given by Williams Peter Hamilton of the *Wall Street Journal* saying a newspaper is "affected with no public interest" as an expression of a valid publisher's position under the libertarian theory.

Schramm's contribution to the Four Theories of the Press came in his chapter on "The Soviet Communist Theory". In this system, mass communications systems are used "instrumentally" by the "State" and the "Party". They are used almost "exclusively ... as instruments of propaganda and agitation" (Schramm in Siebert et al, 1963:121) and they are characterised by "strictly enforced responsibility".

In its Worldwide Press Freedom Index for 2007, the Paris-based advocacy organization, Reporters Without Borders (2008:n.p.), ranks three communist countries and one former Soviet country in its seven lowest ranked countries in terms of press freedom, indicating a strong adherence to either the systems defined in the Authoritarian or the Communist theories. The index ranks China at 163, Burma (Myanmar) at 164, Cuba at 165, Iran at 166, Turkmenistan at 167, North Korea at 168 and Eritrea at 169.

During the 20th century, Peterson (in Siebert et al, 1956:73) says that in the United States there was a "gradual shift from pure libertarianism". In its place began to emerge a "social responsibility theory of the press". In terms of this theory the functions of the press are similar to those under the libertarian theory, but this one comes with the caveat that "freedom carries concomitant obligations" (Peterson, 1956:74). Because it enjoys certain privileges granted by the government, the media is seen as responsible to society to carry out certain mass media functions. An example is, providing access to certain disadvantaged groups, thereby making journalists accountable to both the audience, as well as to the government.

Many Western systems could be seen falling into something similar to this model, and Sparks (in Sparks & Reading, 1998:50) says it was an emerging theory "designed to supplement the libertarian theory dominant in the USA". Most media systems in Western Europe currently probably come close to the social responsibility theory and ownership is

both public and private. De Beer (1998:19) says the social responsibility approach is the system favoured in “Anglo-American countries, and is also propounded by many as the ideal for South Africa”. He notes it includes a “Western societal system” that has a “democratic political dispensation” along with the institution of a free press and with an advanced “economic and technical infrastructure”.

Nerone (1995:27) asserts that the Four Theories are premised on the conclusion that private capital is “benign” and only that form “imposes no restraint”. There is, therefore, an implication that “the infusion of State capital into media must ipso facto impose some restriction”. The Four Theories shun discussion (Nerone et al, 1995:146) about alternatives to capitalist media or on different ways of organizing media in countries using the capitalist model of profit-driven media.

Eribo (2001:189) asserts that the normative theories of the press that were propounded in the 20th century were “largely articulated by American communication scholars” and that they were not fully developed as scientific theories. Nerone (in Nerone et al, 1995:18) goes further: “Four Theories does not offer four theories: it offers one theory with four examples”, and it provides a coherent philosophy of the communications system in society. He says the authors of the theory offer “evidence to support that theory, not to test it”.

3.2.1 Development from the Four Theories

Other press theories note “development” and “democratic” elements and some media scholars have suggested that there should in fact be five or more theories of the press. McQuail (1987:94) criticised the four theories of the press as having a bias because they omitted the mass media of the Third World. He therefore introduced the categories of media as “development agent” and “democratic participant”. In this vein, Eribo (2001:189) develops the application and says that in addition to the “initial four normative theories of the press” three later normative theories of the press -- the developmental theory, the revolutionary theory and the democratic/participant theory -- were developed, “bringing a total of seven normative theories of the press”.

Kuper and Kuper (2001:359) acknowledge that McQuail's supposition triggered a debate that "did much to invigorate the field now known as development journalism". They note that McQuail's fundamental presumption of development journalism is that specific media ought to serve the "public interest" by "design and not simply by chance".

"This is not to say that media must be lackeys of government or social factions or business interests. Rather it is to insist that media necessarily have evaluative orientations that have significant consequences for their social context, and that a conscious approach to the social agenda is morally required and responsible" (Kuper & Kuper, 2001:359).

De Beer (1998:19) explains that the Developmental System is found in what is either known as the Global South, the Third World or developing countries. He says:

"This system does not favour either the extremes of the Marxist-Leninist or the authoritarian system; neither can it afford the 'luxury' of the social responsibility or libertarian systems."

Nerone (in McQuail, 2002:184) describes the social responsibility theory that is alluded to by De Beer above, as a response to "the perceived impasse of classical liberalism in the 20th Century". He (Nerone, 2002:191-192) says the theory "retains a liberal notion of healthy public discourse" and that it ultimately "embraces professional rights for journalists", which might, however, be seen as infringing on the "rights of media proprietors".

Among some of the guidelines of the development system that De Beer (1998:19) notes are:

1. The press should be sensitive to positive developmental tasks in line with nationally established policy, such as nation-building health plans.
2. Freedom of the press should be in line with "cultural, political, social and economic priorities" including the "developmental needs of society".
3. Journalists and press organisations have a responsibility but enjoy individual freedom in their tasks.

4. In the interest of meeting developmental needs, the State has a right to restrict press operations. Censorship, subsidy and direct control can also be justified.

Libertarians might argue that with parameters incorporating censorship, the development theory veers towards the authoritarian. Focusing specifically on South Africa, senior news managers in the private sector might generally favour the social responsibility approach, but there are fears that the government favours a more restrictive development approach or even controlling approach (South Africa: Editors, 2008). South Africa's previous Press Ombudsman, Ed Linington, the former editor of Sapa, said in his final report in September 2007 that freedom of expression was not well understood by many in his country. Linington (2007:n.p) blamed this on the country emerging from a severely restrictive past when he said:

“It has been my experience over 10 years as ombudsman that as a consequence of that restrictive past, freedom of expression is neither well understood nor well received by many South Africans.”

One can argue that Linington's opinion is supported by the South African Government's threat to withdraw advertisements from a newspaper after criticism against Government. The South African National Editors' Forum (Sanef) expressed concern (Sanef condemns, 2007) at the South African Government's suggestions it might withdraw advertising in the *Sunday Times* after the newspaper's use of confidential medical records belonging to the country's Minister of Health. Sanef, on 27 July 2008, at its annual general meeting, restated its firm opposition to any attempt by the Government to control the media, such as the African National Congress' proposed statutory Media Tribunal (Sanef, 2008:1). The deputy president of South Africa's ruling African National Congress (elected in December 2007, and who became the South African president in September 2008), Kgalema Motlanthe, was quoted (ANC has no intention, 2008) in an online report by the national broadcaster, the SABC, as saying that the media was hypersensitive. Motlanthe told a Sanef meeting it was overreacting to a resolution taken by the ANC at its December 2007 national conference in Polokwane to investigate the possibility of instituting the proposed media tribunal (ANC has, 2008). Sanef, however, again reiterated its concern in a statement about the ANC's proposed media tribunal on the eve of 3 May, World Press Freedom Day and it was carried in a Sapa news agency

story which was posted on the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper Web site (Sanef concerned, 2008).

While problems of accepting the development theory have been described above it is worth briefly exploring some of the queries raised about the Four Theories before proceeding.

3.3 Relevance of the Four Theories

The question may have been asked by a number of media thinkers in recent times: Do the four, or five theories, or more theories, apply in the current world media arena? In the case of this study, the question would be: How can they be applied to wire agencies?

McQuail's criticisms of the Four Theories, in which he put forward the development theory, have been debated for some time. More recently, Ostini and Fung (2002:41) noted that work on categorisation of national press systems over the preceding 40 years had been established in many instances in the Four Theories of the Press. They also observed that the Four Theories are still widely taught in introductory journalism courses, although the approach has been criticised by international scholars for its "idealism and its poverty of empiricism" (Ostini & Fung, 2002:41). They postulate that old notions that include the Four Theories "are obsolete and inapplicable for contemporary analysis". Ostini and Fung (2002:42) assert that:

"[A]lthough journalism is contextualised and constrained by press structure and state policies, it is also a relatively autonomous cultural production of journalists negotiating between their professionalism and State control."

New ideas are needed to account for the development of current internationalised and diverse forms of media, postulate Ostini and Fung who suggest using content analysis as a tool:

"Such theoretical models must go beyond the State-policy and normative focus of the Four Theories as a conception of 'what the press should be and do' (Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956). Theoretical models should not be bounded by dominant

ideological perspectives and hinged on certain historical blocs -- namely those of Communism and the Cold War -- and subsequently void with the demise of these concepts.”

What is needed, they (Ostini & Fung, 2002:56) argue, is a model of media systems that can “survive the test of history and empiricism”, and that elucidates the “new order” that Ostini and Fung postulate emerged after the Cold War era ended in the 20th century.

Therefore Ostini and Fung propose a new model that incorporates the feature of “individual journalistic autonomy” as well as “the structures of State policy” that would thereby augment the comprehension of press structures and the societies in which such systems function. This, they (Ostini & Fung, 2002:56) believe, might “more accurately represent press practices in the new international order”. The two media scholars propose that “theories of national press systems have largely remained theories” as “philosophical and normative proscriptions”.

“By the use of content analysis of media coverage of an actual event, this new model has already moved beyond proscription to description and empirical analysis” (Ostini & Fung, 2002:55).

Ostini and Fung’s suggestion of a method for understanding media content, however, lacks a normative stance which could present difficulties when discussing control of media or the lack thereof.

In understanding where and how the control and ownership of media has arisen and to theorise on how it should be made up, an understanding of its historical development is a prerequisite, particularly in relation to news agencies.

For Thussu (2000:53), there is no surprise that the emergence of theories of communication began to emerge “in parallel” with the rapid changes to social and economic life during the Industrial Revolution in Europe. He links the significance of the role of

communications “in the growth of capitalism and empire” and notes that its march forward utilised the advances in science and the understanding of the natural world.

This observation regarding the process of industrialisation and the growth of the British Empire is also noted in regard to wire agency histories by writers such as Read (1992:40) and Chapman (2005:60) whose works are elaborated upon in Chapters 5, the literature review, and in Chapter 6. The notion that theories mirror “the time in which they were developed” is advanced by Thussu (2000:53). This notion also seems to be borne out by Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (in McQuail, 2002:216) in their observation that “early, theorisation of news agencies sees them as powerful, but hidden”. Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (2002: 217) also note the effect of “prevailing discourses about media” on theorisation relating to news agencies.

3.4 Development approach

In selecting a theory that best fits the modern news agency, therefore, the pitfalls of the old theory systems raised by Ostini and Fung remain a useful critique. Yet, the problem with their appraisal is that it tends to suggest a methodology for analysing media rather than an encapsulating theory for its existence and for its *raison d’être*.

In reaching an all-encapsulating theory regarding media it is difficult to avoid a normative approach. Since this study is examining, in part, how a duopolistic system has arisen in regard to wire services, and seeks to examine if there is a place for smaller niche news agencies, it is tempting to tie analysis in the study to the development theory.

News agencies in regions such as Southern Africa have been seen in international forums such as UNESCO as having “an important role to play” in providing the information needed to enable citizens in “making informed choices about their political participation or economic development” (UNESCO, 2001:4, UNESCO, 2003:n.p). This is why discussion on the development theory of the media is relevant to wire services.

The development theory has, however, taken flak from media professionals as being trapped into an expectation of delivering what is known as “sunshine journalism” (Kuper & Kuper, 2001:358) and which is considered akin to “lapdog journalism” (Louw, 2005:64). Kuper and Kuper put forward an approach to media that allows for tackling concerns about an obsequious media and yet one that has a “democratic consolidation” (Kuper & Kuper, 2001:358). In arguing their position, they also note:

“There is strong evidence that, neither ‘sunshine journalism’ nor ‘antagonistic journalism’ is an answer.”

They (Kuper & Kuper, 2001:359) are cognisant of the fact that “the media is not an amorphous whole”, and citing studies by A.C. Nielsen in 1998 and 2000, Kuper and Kuper argue that in the case of South Africa what is termed “doom and gloom” perspectives predominate more and more, which they assert can bring “about a sense of desperation and alienation” among poor people which can be counterproductive to their self perceptions in sustaining development.

“Poorer people tend to explain that they feel inert and helpless, and they feel that they do not have a future; wealthier people tend to articulate a feeling of being divorced from shared social aims” (Kuper & Kuper 2001:368).

In making the case for media approaches that can be seen as an aid to the development of poor people, or those who are not better off than their leaders, so they are not afflicted by “doom and gloom” reporting, it is worth considering the distinction between the “people” and the “government”. It could be asked, does such reporting produce “doom and gloom” for the ordinary citizens of a country, or discomfort for authoritarian rulers. The example that follows is an illustration of where the government may deem its control of a media regulating body is for stated development purposes, but yet appears from the criticism given to it, to be a ploy to keep control of the media.

Namibia’s Minister of Information and Broadcasting, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah, in February 2008 announced her intention of introducing a government media council and said

that the “the media has the power to contribute to our nation building and socio-economic development” (Tyson, 2008:n.p). A lecturer in Media Studies at the University of Namibia, Robin Tyson, commenting in *The Namibian* newspaper on the effort to put in place a media council, noted assertions made by Namibia’s former prime minister, Hage Geingob that the press exists to “report positively on events”. Tyson argues, however, in favour of using media platforms as communication market places, where people can meet, talk and even disagree, and not as “propaganda machines of ‘sunshine journalism’”.

“News stories of underachievement, corruption, nepotism or failure of government policies are not only what the public need, but are vital in pointing out where the nation needs attention -- for directing, assisting efforts towards achievement of national goals” (Tyson, 2008).

Tyson refers to an editorial by the editor of *The Namibian* newspaper, Gwen Lister, on 29 February 2008 in which she responded to Geingob and Nandi-Ndaitwah by noting that although rights and responsibilities are integral to the media, such responsibilities “are towards the people ... and not towards the government of the day” (Tyson, 2008).

3.5 Developing societies and critical media

Civil society organizations (See 2.4.2: Other definitions) such as the German-based international monitoring agency, Transparency International (TI), have documented the crippling effects on development of corruption, which it says a critical press can help check.

“There is a high degree of consensus that corruption is an important development issue and that it cannot be ignored” (Bailey, 2004:3).

Yet it is not always easy for international bodies to build up a consensus on what is needed to fight corruption. At the January 2008 international corruption conference in Bali, countries were unable to reach a consensus on how to assess independently the progress of individual countries in implementing the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). TI (2008) said

that due to disagreement at the conference, concrete steps would only be decided six years after the mechanism was accepted in 2009, at the following Conference on the Convention.

“Civil society groups now fear a failure to build momentum and a downgrading of the Convention on political agendas. They characterised it as a disappointment for the billions of victims of corruption, who are meant to be represented by the national delegations at the UN conference.”

TI (2008) says the UN convention will not be able to operate as a useful weapon to fight against corruption in the world unless it has a vigorous monitoring programme of which investigative journalism is a part. The report says there is a dire need for “action” and due to ongoing “severe consequences for the world’s most vulnerable” it is not feasible for global leaders to maintain “a holding pattern”. The TI statement alludes to the importance of the role of the media in the corruption fight, which it views as a key instrument in development due to its close ties to civil society. The Bali conference noted when they speak out against corruption, “whistle-blowers, activists, trade unionists and investigative journalists” come face to face with extreme difficulties and that “greater protection” is needed for them.

In its 2006 Corruption Perception Index (CPI), TI illustrated a strong link between corruption and poverty, with a “concentration of impoverished states at the bottom of the ranking” or that are the most corrupt (Media Tenor, 2006:102). Media Tenor, a private media evaluation institute, quotes Patrick Smith, the editor of *Africa Confidential*, an in-depth bulletin on African affairs, as warning (2006:102) that people “who are doing badly” and engaging in violence against their own people or plundering national resources “are going to carry on doing [exactly] that”.

One can postulate that this will be the case, particularly as long as media fail to make an issue out of it. It could therefore also be argued that there should be a balance within the framework of the social responsibility theory which incorporates some of the principles of the development theory, and that the latter theory should realise criticism can also be vital to development.

3.6 Development and the responsibility theory

News agencies are seen in the international arena as playing a role in the development process (UNESCO, 2001:4). Given the dominance of a few international news agencies, such as AFP, AP and Reuters that has persisted up till the present, it is worth considering Thussu's earlier-referred-to (2000:53) recognition of theories developing within a historical context. If there is to be news agency diversity, it has to be nurtured and so perhaps it is worth using the more relativist approach suggested by Ostini and Fung. This is one which can utilise a social responsibility theory that incorporates development as part of that social responsibility, and that also excludes unnecessary "doom and gloom" reporting as a principle within such a normative theory.

3.7 Summary

Chapter 3 discusses the theories or concepts of what news should be and links these theories to news agencies as instruments of the media. In doing so, it raises the question of who should make the decision about what the media theories seek to explain. Engaging in such a discourse, however, requires awareness of the various theories of the press that have been put forward, mainly since the middle of the 20th century. Four theories were first named and these seek to explain prevailing media structures and the philosophies of certain eras. Other theories are later added. The viewpoints of these eras and their historical context are therefore noted in this chapter. A theoretical model that encapsulates the theory of social responsibility with elements of the development theory is used for this study as such a combination enables development to be in the theory, but with social responsibility being a safeguard against total control by the State and media owners (Nerone, 2002:192).

Chapter 4, which follows, explores the methodology used to carry out the study.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

Soon after news agencies began in the 19th century they started to make use of the telegraph for the dissemination of information and news, also earning the moniker “news wire services”. As this study involves a mediahistoriographical description of news agencies, it also seeks to show that the earlier major wire services are still dominating the dissemination of news to other news purveyors and they are still using and developing the latest technologies to stay ahead of their game. In the previous chapter various theories of the press that have been put forward since the mid-1950s were examined. They include what has become known as the Four Theories of the Press and other ways of trying to outline what the media should do or be. To opt for only one theory acts as a strait-jacket to analysis. This study therefore applies an approach that uses both the social responsibility and the development theories.

In Chapter 1, questions were raised about the availability of a variety and diversity of wire services including some problems raised in a UNESCO report (2001:19) relating to wire services in developing nations. These are pertinent to the central research questions of this study which examine the mediahistoriographical development of news agencies as “purveyors of news”, the contribution of technological development to wire agency development and what the contribution of wire services is to the diversity of news-flow.

Arising from the new technologies, one needs to ask: does the potential exist for a more inclusive news agency system that allows for more diverse journalism? Or is the hierarchical arrangement that Boyd-Barrett refers to in Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (1998:27), likely to become even more dominant, and is greater diversity in terms of sourcing likely to be stunted in its development? Such questions are beyond the scope of this study, but they warrant scholarly attention if news diversity is a goal for a more democratic society.

This chapter now discusses the method used to gain access to the information to answer those questions.

The history, role and development of the big news agencies is examined and the study also elucidates how smaller wire services, ranging from national services, or those that distribute alternative or niche news, have sought, or are attempting, to gain greater access into the market, in a quest to diversify global news-flow. Before elaborating on the methodology of this study some principles in setting goals for news agencies are briefly discussed.

This study is a qualitative one similar to that used in historical studies which in most cases keep a “detailed record” (Mouton, 2001:107) of data sources, that in this case are the literature pertaining to the studies and a number of interviews by experts on news agencies, or expert wire service professionals.

4.2 Approach based on journalistic values

The principles that guide the manner of evaluating reportage by news agencies are predicated on basic journalistic values expounded by Deuze (2000:39-40) and inspired by thinkers such as Ekstrom (1996:130) and Cottle (2000:24) who sees in journalism something akin to “a shared professional canon”. Basing his tenet on 20th century debates “on professionalism”, Deuze (2000:39, 40) identifies the “so-called ‘true values’ or ideals” as:

- Journalists provide a public service;
- Journalists are neutral, objective, fair and (thus) credible;
- Journalists must enjoy editorial autonomy, freedom and independence;
- Journalists have a sense of immediacy, validity and factuality;
- Journalists have a sense of ethics and legitimacy.

Yet, despite the lofty ideals to which most professional journalists would ascribe, it is Boyd-Barrett’s contention that the world’s news system “is still a hierarchical one in which a small number of global news agencies” (1998:27) purvey news to subscribers all over the world, and that news agencies warrant further study. Boyd-Barrett’s supposition underscores the view that a limited number of global agencies remain the main suppliers of world news to

clients throughout the planet. This study faces the questions as to whether there is any evidence that there is a change in this situation 55 years later.

As a mediahistoriographical description of a journalistic phenomenon that has been fuelling the media since the industrial revolution, this study of news agencies has two main approaches of research -- reading and interviewing -- that was carried out in four segments:

1. Reading of academic and popular literature:

The reading of the available popular media, academic literature and professional journals, which will be referred to in more detail in the forthcoming chapter, provided much of the material for this study. Due to the fact that digital media technology is developing so rapidly, it is necessary to keep up on an almost daily basis with developments. The availability of such technical tools as RSS (really simple syndication feeds) and widgets which facilitate Internet connectivity by using online gadgets make such monitoring an easier task.

Detailed analysis on wire agencies was hard to find through journals such as the *British Journalism Review*, *Communication*, the *Columbia Journalism Review*, *Culture & Critique*, *Ecquid Novi/African Journalism Studies*, *International Media Studies*, *Global Media Journal - African Edition*, the *Journal of Communication*, the *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, *Journalism*, *Journalism Practice*, *Journalism Studies*, *Media, War & Conflict* and the *Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ)*.

The PEJ annually conducts a detailed in-depth survey of North American media and it was noted in Chapter 1, there is no special section assigned to news agencies in the analysis conducted from 2005 to 2008 (PEJ, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008). It was also noted in Chapter 1, that earlier scholarly material on news agencies is also scarce in the general media and journalism text books cited in the list of references for this study, except those containing studies by scholars such as Boyd-Barrett, Fenby, Paterson, Rantanen, Read and Shrivastava.

2. Interviews with managers and practitioners in global and national agencies:

(a) The author was able to interview the Editor of the South African Press Association, Mark van der Velden, in Johannesburg, using email. Sapa's editorial chief was able to give the perspective of a unique African national news agency that is not government-owned, but that is a major purveyor of news to newspapers, broadcasters and the Internet and which is used as a news source by global wire services and that works in cooperation with alternative news agencies such as IPS.

(b) The author also had numerous informal consultations with colleagues working for different transnational news agencies and also interviewed a former Reuters Moscow bureau chief and veteran global correspondent Robert Evans about a special type of inter-news agency cooperation that took place during the Cold War era done in the interests of getting information from a restrictive Soviet Union, rather than for commercial gain.

3. Interviews with academics:

Three academics that could be contacted by the author were asked questions framed according to their relevant experience and expertise as well as their time and availability to answer questions. One of them, Franz Krüger, has both practical experience in starting and sustaining an alternative news agency and journalistic teaching experience. The author was also able to briefly communicate via the Internet with R.T. Stannard, a veteran wire journalist with UPI who has taught journalism in both the United States and at the American University in Cairo to future wire journalists. Professor Anthony Giffard of the University of Washington in Seattle, who spent his formative years and early journalistic and academic teaching career in South Africa, was able to provide valuable insights and pinpoint much research and analysis regarding alternative news agencies, especially IPS, for which he is one of the most frequently quoted sources in academic journals and writing about the alternative wire service. The contacts with Giffard, mainly through email, greatly helped mapping work on IPS.

4. Interviews with managers of niche news agencies:

(a) The author was able to interview Martin Khor, director of the Third World Network, who is also editor of the South North Development Monitor (SUNS), a daily news service run by the network that focuses on international trade and environment news with a focus on the global South that is quite different to the big transnational news agencies. He was also able to provide some insight into the operations of SUNS and the problems it faces.

(b) As regards Ecumenical News International (ENI), another niche news agency mentioned in this study, the author, who works for the agency, was able to have numerous conversations with, and interviewed a founding editor and currently the managing editor of the agency, Stephen Brown. Documents from meetings of ENI's governing bodies were used.

As stated earlier, books on journalism and media historiography seem to have little space devoted to wire agencies and the role they play in the news business, compared to the amount allocated to newspapers, radio, television and the Internet. Still, they can be found.

Stephens' *History of News* (1989) was the first reference book used in this study followed by numerous reference works, many of which are alluded to in the literature review in the following chapter.

This study also entailed rigorous, vigorous and frequent searching and "googling" as well as delving into the findings from various search engines such as Google, Yahoo, MSN.com and LexisNexis to identify references to publications, books and writing about wire agencies. The Internet made a study like this one, done mostly in Geneva, nearly 10,000 kilometres from the supervising professor at Stellenbosch University (SU), more feasible than in the days before the development of cyberspace.

The study involved numerous visits to bricks and mortar as well as online libraries of international organizations such as the United Nations in Geneva, Stellenbosch University and the University of Geneva, in order to read academic books, publications and popular books on news and news agencies, as well as academic papers (hard copies and online).

Many of the books and papers were ordered from cyber retailers such as Amazon.com or papers from online journals.

Regarding the second segment of the study, which involved interviews, Brown, Evans and Giffard were interviewed face to face and via email. Khor was interviewed face to face. The other interviews were carried out via email.

As noted earlier in this chapter, meeting Giffard at an October 2005 conference of Inter Press Service in Florence, Italy was fortuitous. The interviews with Giffard on IPS led to more information on IPS, which has a well-documented history.

Krüger, as a founding group editor of South Africa's East Cape News Agencies, gave background on a network of independent South African news agencies that came into being during the 1980s which were "subjected to considerable repression at the hands of the apartheid government" (IAJ, 2006;n.p.), but which have floundered in the new South Africa.

4.3 Summary of information sources

- Academic and popular books on the history of news agencies
- Libraries of international organizations such as at the UN office in Geneva
- University libraries in South Africa and Switzerland
- Academic papers
- The Internet
- Searching hard copies and online archives of newspapers such as the *Mail & Guardian*, Independent Newspapers, News24, the *Guardian*, *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *The Financial Times*, the *Economist*
- Journalism and media journals such as: *Global Media and Communication*, *Journalism*, *Journal of Communication*, *The Columbia Journalism Review*, *Ecquid Novi/African Journalism Studies* and others mentioned above.
- Online media and journalism journals such as the University of Southern California, USC Annenberg Web site, Poynteronline and others
- Numerous searches in the LexisNexis Stellenbosch University-based data base

- Clippings, newspapers and current affairs magazines
- Formal interviews with journalism professors and lecturers
- Informal interviews with other academics involved in journalism or media studies
- Formal interviews with news professionals who have worked in wire agencies
- Numerous informal conversations with news agency professionals
- Reading of blogs relating to the topic.

4.3 Summary

The methodology of this historiographical qualitative study entails the use of interviews as fieldwork and a literature review of the research data as a research design (Mouton, 2002:107). The interviews are used to supplement the review of literature, which consists of both scholarly and mass media material, as the amount of published material on news agencies was found to be considerably less than that on other media components such as newspapers, radio, television and the Internet, which are all users of wire services. The literature on news agencies, which was found to be less extensive than that devoted to other components of the news media, such as newspapers, radio, television and the Internet, reviewed in the following chapter.

Chapter Five: Literature review

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter Four, having established that the methodology of this study entails the use of interviews as fieldwork and a literature review of the research data as a research design, this chapter will proceed with the literature review.

This chapter examines the literature on news agencies, mainstream and alternative, and how the references used in the study have led to this assessment. It looks at the problems the readings have raised for news agencies both big and small, and it also has reference to the debate on the New World Information Order of the 1970s and early 1980s that related to the dominance of the transnational news agencies (Masmoudi, 1979:172) and proposals to counteract them. The study of this discourse was aided by a number of submissions containing different viewpoints that were carried in the *Journal of Communication*, in the 1970s and 1980s.

The chapter also looks at general theoretical books and publications on journalism and media history that made up the reading for this study, including academic papers relating to past and present news-flow and the role of wire agencies in globalisation from their outset in the 19th century. It also examines analyses of wire agencies by leading practitioners at conferences, as well as writing on the World Wide Web. The study also used daily, weekly and other popular and scholarly publications that cover journalism and the media.

5.2 Defining the literature review

Before proceeding with the literature review, it is helpful to be clear about what it is, and what the review entails. Most studies acknowledge that a literature review assesses academic articles, books, dissertations and written materials relating to a research topic. The Writing Support Group at the University of Toronto (Taylor & Proctor, 2007:1) says:

“A literature review is an account of what has been published on a topic by accredited scholars and researchers.”

The writers say a literature review must:

- A. be related directly to the thesis or research question being developed.
- B. synthesise results into a summary of what is and is not known
- C. identify areas of controversy in the literature
- D. formulate questions that need further research (2007:1).

With similar advice, The University of Arizona Library (2006:1) explains that the literature review does not merely list each item and resource relating to a topic. It centres on materials and resources which are “directly relevant” to dealing with the chosen topic, “and as such, is highly selective” with resources having a short “description and a critical evaluation”.

5.3 Organizing the literature review

Mouton (2001:85-95) discusses six possible ways to organize or structure a review of the literature, which are elaborated below:

1. **Chronologically:** by date of study. This is “perhaps the most basic and least structured” way of presenting the results of reading. It can be useful where little is written, such as in the case of exploratory studies and “in empirical studies where little or no theory exists” (2001:92).
2. **By school of thought, theory, definition.** This approach focuses on the theoretical and conceptual. Mouton says this can be applicable in empirical studies where the first step of the research is a “review of the most pertinent theoretical positions or schools”. The order can consist of the oldest, most established or most recent, allowing a chronological element (2001:92).
3. **By theme or construct.** A literature study can be built around a key theme. Mouton notes such studies may not seek to test or review theories, but may

- “find a classification or typology”. In exploratory studies of a quantitative and a qualitative nature, this approach is more prevalent (2001:93).
4. **By hypothesis.** This procedure can be used when debates rage over an established body of empirical studies and the hypotheses are a launch pad around which the literature is organized (2001:93).
 5. **By case study.** In studies where large groups, such as collectives (countries, nations, regions, cities, or say, news agencies) are analysed, reviews of the literature can be organized around instances or cases of such groupings or organizations. This approach is common when the aims of the study are “exploratory and descriptive”, rather than “explanatory or evaluative”. Here, the literature review can seek to give examples of the phenomena which may elucidate a point (2001: 94).
 6. **By method.** Mouton says this approach, which focuses on techniques as the organizing principle, can be used when comparing quantitative research (say surveys) with narrative or case studies (2001:95).

The first two approaches, as well as the fourth and the sixth are, in the view of Mouton, more suited to empirical studies, which this is not, while the third (2001:93) is used in qualitative and quantitative studies, the latter of which this is.

This study involves both a descriptive and evaluative enquiry into a grouping -- news agencies -- a sometimes large and diverse agglomeration. The case study approach (Mouton’s fifth approach) would, therefore, fit well, since it has been noted that detailed research (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:3) has waned since some interest in the decade between the mid-1970s and mid-1980s. English text books on news agencies are not as extensive as those applying to other media.

In this case, the case study would be different books and articles examining news agencies and factors which impact on the context in which they operate, or have done so in the past. Relevant factors are matters such as their historiography and the agenda-setting role they play as gatekeepers, as well as in the process of globalisation. Such an approach allows for a descriptive method that comes from using historiographical literature, enabling a probe

into the discourse on news agencies as agents of globalisation. Analysis of these topics in this manner fits the case study mould. The narrative in the descriptive approach takes on themed lines in dealing with phenomena on the basis of large news agencies, agenda-setting, globalisation, alternative wire services and the other types of wire services.

5.4 International, national and niche news agencies

The seed to this study was sown with a reading of the first edition of Stephens' *A History of News* (1989). The aim was to get a chronological contextualisation of the wire service in the overall history of news. Stephens' work triggered a systematic and serendipitous search for material on news agencies. Stephens (1988:6) asserts that if we do not have a greater understanding of the history of news, it is easy to neglect "the larger contribution that news has made to history".

His news history has been updated and released as new editions over a number of years, so that the edition of Stephens' work that was published in 2007 has markedly different content to the 1989 edition. Yet as noted in Chapter 1, it is, like the first edition, limited in detail about news agencies and has no critique and very little analysis on them. The first edition contains only four fairly brief references to wire services (Stephens, 1988:78, 209, 259, 290). In Stephens' third edition of *A History of News*, in 2006, the references to wire agencies are even briefer (2007:197, 269, 288), although a large chunk of the work relates to broadcasting, which, as is asserted later in this chapter, links news agencies as key suppliers of news to broadcasters (Fenton, 2005:67; BBC, 2007:n.p).

5.4.1. The role of national wire services

In trying to understand the globalisation of news, Rantanen (1998:36) says a complete comprehension cannot be obtained if scholars separate "foreign and domestic markets from each other". In another study, Rantanen (2002:81) postulates that since their early development in the 19th century, news agencies have "combined a dual global and national role". Reuters, "which always operated primarily as a global agency" is an exception.

By looking at news agencies in both a global and national context, particularly in relation to post-communist Russia, Rantanen (2002:65) asserts that wire services were, and still are, in any media system, crucial institutions, “the nerve centre that connects all its parts”, whether they are small or big, capital or provincial, print or electronic. She also notes that wire services “are also in their own class compared to other forms of media and communications”. This, Rantanen contends, is because news agencies are neither communications nor media, although they have shared features such as delivering their “contents en masse”, while not having a particular audience. At the same time news agencies disseminate content to the media that in turn use the same product “to become mass media and reach their audience”.

“A news agency’s ‘audience’ is other media that are actually the agency’s clients and suppliers of news at the same time. Hence, people do not use news agencies socially” (Rantanen, 2002:65).

In the context of this study, national news agencies are examined more fully in Chapter 7, where Shrivastava (2007:1) postulates that wire services “have been indispensable” in enabling outlets “to give wide coverage to their readers”. Chapter 7 also considers a study published by Boyd-Barrett and Thussu (1992) in association with UNESCO, entitled *Contra-flow in global news: International and regional news exchange mechanism*. The authors note (1992:1) that for more than 100 years there have been “concerns about inequity in international news-flow”. Reference in the chapter is also made to Francis Williams (1953:10), a British journalist and broadcaster, who wrote a report published as a book by UNESCO in which he asserted that for people from different nations to better understand one another they would need to know more about each other. Written less than 10 years after the end of the Second World War, Williams (1953:11) wrote that knowledge over frontiers would not “guarantee world peace and international order” but that if such a manner of dissemination did not come about, peace would be made “more difficult in our complicated yet shrinking world”.

Boyd-Barrett prepared UNESCO’s *Final report of the workshop on news agencies in the Internet era* presented in Amman, Jordan (UNESCO, 2001), which extensively covered

national news agencies and which notes an imperilled situation for many national news agencies, which will be discussed further in Chapter 7.

The new communications technologies, such as the Internet, that came to the fore towards the end of the 20th century, have offered some opportunities to all news agencies and enabled them to deliver their content directly to users, but still without reaching mass audiences in the manner of traditional mass media, with people consuming it in the same time and place (Rantanen, 2002:65).

Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, writing in *Journalism* (2000:86-105) on European national news agencies, call for more resolute scholarly attention to the role of national news agencies as they are, even in many parts of Europe, facing grave difficulties in trying to survive. They observe (2000:86) that the burdens for European agencies have similar origins to those which have dogged news agencies since their beginnings and these relate to ownership, relationships to governments, relations with subscribers and attaining economic stability in line with investment in technology, often relevant to distributing news to clients such as broadcasters.

5.4.2 Broadcasting and news agencies

The scholarly work on journalism reviewed for this study does not carry much detailed discussion on the role of wire services in broadcasting. The role of news agencies as one of the key suppliers of news to radio and television has, however, been noted by scholars such as Boyd-Barrett (in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:20), Paterson (in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:79) and Herbert (2001:41), and a similar topic is also part of a study by Fenton (2005:67), as noted in Chapter 1.

Paterson (1998:79, 82) has studied how television news pictures are supplied to global broadcasters by three commercial news agencies and different cooperative news exchange agreements, with the largest of the agreements being run through Geneva-based Eurovision. These agencies are in fact arms of the major news agencies, in particular Reuters, and now APTV (Paterson, 1998:79; Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2002:101).

In elucidating how wire services set the news agenda for television, Paterson (1998:82) notes that the news agencies “make the first decisions on how and if international stories” will be covered. They do this by deciding where they will allocate their resources such as camera crews and reporters. Wire services also select which stories to distribute to subscribers and to what degree images will be provided. They choose the visuals, audio and text that go with the stories. Paterson also notes that broadcasters “write their stories around the video” they are offered, a process that is also explained by Herbert (2001:41).

“Many studies of television newsrooms have reported that the availability of visual images [likely provided by wire services] is an important factor in determining whether a foreign news story is included in a newscast” (Paterson, 1998:82).

Paterson (1998:82) cites Molina’s (1990) observation regarding Mexico’s Televisa company:

“Television stories whose visual element is available through any of the news exchanges stand a better chance of being included in the programme agendas than those where only text is available.”

Paterson (1998:83 citing Cohen, Levy, Gurevitch & Roeh, 1996:82), notes that often a European broadcast service “decides to present a story only because it has footage available”. So the availability of technology to purvey news agencies footage rather than a journalist to send text, illustrates the inter-linkage of news agencies with technology.

5.4.3 News agencies and the telegraph

There is a broad and detailed assessment of how Reuters, AP, Agence France-Presse and UPI covered the news until the latter part of the 1980s in Fenby’s (1986:200) *The International News Services*. It is one of the most comprehensive single works on the development of different major Western news agencies until the mid-1980s, which also contains references to alternative wire services and those serving developing nations.

In carrying out this study, however, it was found the literature pertaining to the history of wire services could be greatly enhanced if there was a new work updating Fenby’s study

with a vibrant critique of the present day media and news agencies. Fenby looks at the opportunities that arose from people and organizations in positions of political and technological dominance in the mid-19th century. These facilitated the establishment of the cartel arrangements which allowed Reuters, AP and AFP especially, to grow (1986:43) at a time of Western expansionism and the growth of colonial interests.

The same point regarding Western expansionist interests is made in *Comparative Media History* (2005) by Chapman, who links the growth of news agencies to the rise of the telegraph and the heyday of the British Empire (2005:67). Read (1992: 40, 70) also raises it in his comprehensive history of Reuters, *The power of news*, in which he reveals numerous insights into the media giant after having been given access to its archives.

Lefebure's *Havas: Les arcanes du pouvoir* (Havas: The intricacies of power, 1992) outlines the relationship between the development of the telegraph and imperialist interests as regards France and Agence Havas (Lefebure, 1992:107), part of which would, after the Second World War, become AFP. Lefebure takes a similar approach to examining Havas as Read's history of Reuters. Lefebure, however, does it more critically, and he elaborates on how Charles Havas, whom he describes as the "founding father of modern communications" (Lefebure, 1992:31) was able to use his government connections and the tentacles of the French colonial system to expand the company named after him into a global player in the French-speaking part of the world (Lefebure, 1992: 95-150).

Lefebure unravels the complex relationship of Havas, the publishing company, with the French government and the corporation and companies it owned, or had owned, such as Compagnie Générale des Eaux (CGE) (Lefebure, 1992:366), a utilities company that was privatised in 1987. Havas (Havas, 2008:n.p) was also the precursor of Havas, a present-day publishing and communications company that is now a wholly owned subsidiary of utilities and telecommunications giant Vivendi SA. Vivendi is the largest publishing firm in France and is also a global media and communications company. Havas (2008) is now separate from AFP, the news agency, and in 2008 it said on its Web site that "Havas is the world's 6th-ranked group in communications' consulting" (Havas, 2008).

Thussu (2000:19) in *International communications: Continuity and change*, develops the theme of news expansion during the colonial era in explaining how undersea cables “were the arteries of an international network of information, of intelligence services and of propaganda”.

Some of those cables ran to the United States, for which Harnett and Ferguson (2003:14), in *Unipress: Covering the 20th Century*, allude to how AP monopolised news sources with its link to Western Union, another global telegraph player that rose during the 19th century in the United States.

The issue of commercialisation of news is raised by Palmer (1998:178) in a chapter in the definitive work *The Globalization of News* (1998), edited by Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen. This is one of the few scholarly works of theorising, analysis and critique of the media with a substantial portion devoted to wire services, and which is frequently referred to in this study. In it, Palmer (1998:178) notes how international wire agencies helped make news a commodity. The making of news as a commodity and the process to establish a news agency cartel is also examined by Bakker (2007:11), and although the cartel was abolished (Rantanen, 1998:35) in 1934, the dominance of the major Western news agencies would be debated again about 40 year later.

5.4.4 From pigeon to Internet, via NWICO

Shrivastava’s *News agencies: From pigeon to Internet* (2007), gives an updated roundup of the development of wire services from the perspective of the Global South, and is a 21st century update to Fenby’s panoramic work. As well as dealing with the genesis of news agencies, as the title suggests, Shrivastava (2007:19) provides brief descriptions of many national news agencies, particularly in developing nations. He explains how the post-World War Two wave of independence in former colonised countries also coincided with the growth of national news agencies in those nations. Shrivastava (2007:22) explains how a Non-Aligned Movement meeting in Algiers, held in 1973 (Samarajiwa, 1984:110) articulated demands for the institution of a New World Information and Communication Order.

Shrivastava (2007:161) describes how “the awareness raised” during the NWICO period in the 1970s and 1980s led to the establishment of many national news agencies where they did not previously exist. Although there is little discussion on NWICO today, many of the issues, particularly the freedom of people to “propagate information in the manner of their choosing” (Shrivastava, 2007:162) are still relevant. Shrivastava’s work provides a valuable input to the literature about the development of news agencies, particularly in Asian countries. It describes how well-run big agencies, in particular, have turned the challenge of extinction proffered by the Internet to their advantage (2007:v). The book is, however, brief in its appraisal of the media order that has arisen post-NWICO, just as Fenby’s is flimsy in its pre-NWICO critique.

A leading proponent in the NWICO debate was Mustapha Masmoudi, who was once Tunisia’s Minister of Information (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992:18) and who was the first president of the Intergovernmental Coordinating Council for Information of the Non-Aligned Countries. As a member of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, established by UNESCO, he delivered a statement to this commission in 1979. In it he (Masmoudi, 1979:172) accused the Western transnational media of establishing a “flagrant imbalance between the North and the South”. This, he said, was manifest in an existing world information imbalance. In his document, which synthesised “all complaints about information issues” (Samarajiwa, 1984:113), Masmoudi (1979:172) took note of how much information and news destined for developing countries originated from “the developed world” as well as “the volume of the flow in the opposite direction”.

5.4.5 Transnational media

Masmoudi’s contention (1979:172) was that almost 80 percent of world news-flow stems from the major, transnational news agencies and that they in turn allocate a mere 20 to 30 percent of coverage to developing nations. Referring to AP, UPI, Reuters, AFP and TASS, Masmoudi (1979:173) postulated that those five transnational news agencies “monopolise between them the essential share of world news”.

Before proceeding with Masmoudi's charges, the question arises: how do the transnational media, in the form of the major wire services, transcend the international media?

Artz (2007:148) says that transnational media is distinct from international and multinational media by "their relations of production", while the national media produced in one nation and disseminated to other countries can be referred to as international media. He cites as an example a company "doing business 'internationally', across national borders", such as the exporting of movies by Warner Bros to Europe.

"Multinational media may be understood as media that are owned by a company based in one nation, produce media product in and for other countries through corporate subsidiaries, but ownership, control, and profits remain with the national parent company (e.g., CNN-Europe). In contrast, transnational media are enterprises that produce within one nation but are jointly owned by multiple corporations from multiple nations" (Artz, 2007:148).

At the same time, Artz (2007:148) explains that acquisitions, media mergers, and foreign-direct investments have obscured the national identity of numerous media operations. He gives the examples of Univision, a US network, owned by the Cisneros media group in Venezuela and by Mexico's Grupo Televisa network; the German network ProSieben, owned by German publisher Axel Springer, and Power Rangers' producer Haim Saban, owned by Kirchmedia. Artz postulates that transnational media bring together the "capitalist classes" from more than one nation, and that they "have no national allegiance". Robinson (as cited in Artz, 2007:148) has developed a critique of capitalism and the media it sustains:

"Transnational media are the new defining face of capitalist media globalisation, illustrating the transnational reorganization of social class formation as capitalism completes its global expansion."

According to Masmoudi (1979:173), there is also inequality in media in distributing radio frequency and television programmes between the North and the South. He says the situation

is accompanied by “the marked indifference of the media in the developed countries” regarding what is important to developing countries in attaining their goals and solving their problems.

“Accordingly the establishment of a new world information order must be considered as the essential corollary of the new international economic order” (Masmoudi, 1979:185).

The NWICO debate raged strongly in the 1970s and 1980s, but did not succeed in dislodging the current news agency hierarchy which is raised later in Chapter 7, which discusses wire services as purveyors of news.

5.4.6 ‘Hierarchical’ system

Boyd-Barrett’s supposition (1998:27) that the world’s news system remains a “hierarchical one” whereby a few global wire services disseminate global news to clients, not only creates a situation of dependency in smaller countries, but it means that the big agencies act as agenda-setters. Masmoudi (1979:172) refers to this when he speaks of “a de facto hegemony and a will to dominate”. This comes in agenda-setting that results in a system of disseminating news by the major agencies after they have “filtered, cut, and distorted” (Masmoudi, 1979:174) it. Thereby, they “impose their own way of seeing the world upon the developing countries”.

Tony Trew, as Deputy Chief Executive Officer of the South African Government’s Communication and Information System, has given an example of the situation seen to be lingering still in the 21st century. He (Trew, 2004:n.p.) told the Agenda-Setting Conference: Mass Media and Public Opinion in Bonn:

“The Washington-based TransAfrica Forum found that 75 of 89 stories on Africa in the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* from the end of March to mid-August 2000 were negative in content, and 63 on conflict.”

Trew (2004) contends that the achievement of equity in global communications is “in the interests of the global media and communications community”. That is because, if the North is given distorted and limited information about other parts of the world “with whose destiny their own is bound”, the public there will not be sufficiently informed.

Yet, despite Trew’s rationale, during the late 1970s and early 1980s, the North-South divide had tended to overlap with the ideological divisions between the Western world and the communist sphere. Perhaps the most “contentious and controversial” aspect (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1984:121) of the New International Information Order debate that arose through UNESCO was “the question of international news” which stemmed from the historical dependency on transnational news agencies.

“Dependency theory” became (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen in McQuail, 2002:219) the dominant perception of nations from the Second and Third Worlds in the NWICO movement as it “spread its influence” through UNESCO and the non-aligned movement during the 1970s. The fallout from the pressure Western nations perceived was being exerted on them for a new information order was the announcement on 28 December 1983 that the United States would withdraw from UNESCO at the end of 1984 (Schultz, 1983:82).

In an allusion to totalitarianism, Hamelink (1984:103) criticised the decision, saying it marked the “apotheosis of the Orwellian year. Big Brother has finally decided to watch from a distance!” Hamelink (1984:104) viewed as the nub, the necessity to tackle “vitaly conflicting interests” in managing global resources. Mattelart (1984:97) said that the US decision would postpone “the necessary critique of how information functions in countries where the Party and the State reign”.

5.5 New World Information Order and news agencies

Fenby (1986:183) makes reference to the criticism that transnational agencies drew, especially in the 1970s and 1980s, from UNESCO. They did this for engaging in what Amadou-Mahtar M’Bow, who headed the UN body, described as behaviour bordering on “cultural aggression”. The emergence of “development news” (Fenby, 1986:185) and a “new

world order” are “philosophically foreign to the major agencies”. The vehemence of the NWICO debate that prevailed during the 1970s and 1980s is documented by Stevenson (1984:134-138) in a *Journal of Communication* article entitled Pseudo Debate. Stevenson (1984:1370) posited that too much of the debate had centred on assertions that were probably never true and are certainly no longer true”.

Stevenson (1984:134) refutes the arguments that the Western news agencies and media “ignore the Third World”. He contends that such news accounts for about one third of foreign news in Northern media systems, and that two thirds of the foreign news in Third World countries originates from other Third World nations. Stevenson (1984:136) also notes that “nearly all Third World national news agencies”, with Latin America being an exception, “operate as monopolies” for incoming news and sometimes for outgoing news. Arguing from the same philosophical standpoint regarding “development news”, Fenby (1986:185) asserts:

“This view of news as a tool is wholly unacceptable to the major news agencies as far as their own reporting and editing are concerned.”

The lack of empirical backing for arguments that news agencies are actually “important contributors to national and economic development” (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen 2002:219) acted to undermine attempts at tangible action within UNESCO and the NWICO debate. Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen assert that the “dynamics of this supposed relationship” that agencies are indeed important contributors to national and economic development “have never been clear”. The NWICO discourse was also fettered (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2002:219-220) by the notion that the correct way to support or set up a news agency was through governmental or intergovernmental action.

Aggarwala (1979:181) argues that it is, however, difficult to find an “all-inclusive” definition of exactly what is development news. But, he notes, “It is not identical with ‘positive’ news.”

“Development journalism is the use of all journalistic skills to report development processes in an interesting fashion. It may require high skills and hard work but the rewards of this kind of journalism can be tremendous. It could almost lead to the humanisation of international news. It could help lower the walls of intense suspicion and distrust that have arisen between Third World political leaders and the media.”

Yet in saying how development journalism can be beneficial, Aggarwala does not spell out the parameters it operates in, giving ammunition to the assertion by Hachten and Scotton (2002:161) that it is “an amorphous and curious mixture of ideas, rhetoric, influences, and grievances”. Hachten and Scotton also note (2002:164), however, that “ideological conflicts between press systems” appeared to have subsided during an ongoing process of the “globalisation of the media”.

Hamelink (1997:116) argues that if constructing the information highway is left to the private sector, it implies that ways to pay for the development of the information infrastructure are foreseen as coming from the market. But this raises another question, one seldom raised, that concerns the quality and type of information the world can expect.

“The money-makers are likely to deploy at a grand scale the so-called ‘killer’ applications: video on demand, home shopping, video games and direct-response advertising. Their Global Information Superhighway may just amount to the global provision of pornography and the interactive shopping in the ‘Mall in your Home!’.” (Hamelink, 1997:117).

Against those who favour market control of the information highway, Hamelink maintains that because this situation turns “common heritage” into a commodity for sale, it cannot provide “equitable access” to the common resources of the world. “The commodification of information and culture creates a price tag for access and use” (Hamelink, 1997:117). In supporting his argument, Hamelink argues data increasingly indicates a growing disparity between the poor and the rich, and between societies concerning access to communication resources and information created by the marketplace. The literature on alternative news

agencies which seek to redress the disparity to which Hamelink refers, and which are also examined in Chapter 7, is reviewed in this chapter.

5.5.1 Alternative news agencies

In looking at alternatives to the major agencies Fenby (1986:200), a onetime editor of the Reuters World Service (Fenby, 1986:x), cites (1986:214) a tool for the style of development reporting in a section of a chapter entitled: “Inter Press Service: A new approach?”.

Fenby (1986:218) alludes to the inability of IPS (Inter Press Service) to develop a full and independent alternative to the then Big Four (Reuters, AP, AFP, UPI), a problem that still appears to be with the alternative agency in the 21st century (Boyd-Barrett, 2003:376; Horvit, 2006:431). Alluding to UNESCO’s International Programme for the Development of Communication, launched in 1981 to boost media development for poorer nations (UNESCO, 1994:1), Fenby (1986:248), notes that even if the “IPDC were miraculously to receive much larger funds”, it would still be afflicted by “an inherent flaw” in that most of the projects put forward for IPDC assistance are State-backed and that the exchange under the Pan African plan was one of the main seekers’ of assistance.

“An international governmental organization like UNESCO is unlikely to see the promotion of private, commercial media as part of its mission, particularly if such newspapers or broadcasting stations might challenge State information monopolies” (Fenby, 1986:248).

The question can be asked: what are alternative media? Couldry and Curran (2003:7) in *Contesting Power: Alternative media in a networked world*, contend that “if media power itself is an increasingly significant theme of social conflict”, then studies on the media should look not only at “mainstream productions” such as television, radio, film and Web portals, but they should also “challenge central concentrations of media resources”:

“What we mean by ‘alternative media’ in this book: media production that challenges, at least implicitly, actual concentrations of media power, whatever form those concentrations may take in different locations.”

Harcup (2003:161, citing Atton, 1999:54 & 71; Atton, 2002:35 & 50) notes there have been some attempts to deride alternative newspapers as “inconsequential failures”, but asserts that “the alternative press is inseparable from an alternative public sphere”.

In the second phase of this study, during the search for information on alternative news agencies, the author met Professor Anthony Giffard of the University of Washington at an October 2005 conference of Inter Press Service held in Florence, Italy. Giffard has carried out a number of studies on and for IPS and written extensively about the news agency, for which he is an adviser. Interviewing him on IPS, and his guidance towards the documentation on the topic of alternative news agencies, in particular IPS enhanced the mapping of available literature. The interview with Giffard also pointed to more literature on IPS.

Fenby (1986:246) says there is a need for a new news agency “free of the financial constraints that tie the Big Four to the industrialised world” and still unfettered by ties to the countries where it “reports and distributes”. Giffard (1984:44) notes, however, that the “emergence of IPS” which started in 1964 (1984:40) as a genuine competitor “met with strong resistance” from some Western media outlets for “conceptual as well as commercial reasons” (Giffard, 1984:44).

“At its most affluent, in 1992, the agency’s annual budget totalled US\$15 million. By 1997, this had shrunk to US\$5.8 million, resulting in severe reductions in expenditure in every region” (1998:198).

Giffard notes that the “financial crisis” could be attributed largely to the culmination of the Cold War causing a sharp decrease in official development assistance (ODA) to developing regions from the big donors. This stemmed from a decline in “East-West rivalry”, as the Third World was no longer perceived to have a strategic importance.

“Most donor countries cut back the percentage of GNP devoted to development aid, which is now at its lowest level in two decades ... For IPS, this meant fewer grants for third world communications projects” (1998: 198).

Almost 10 years later, IPS has diversified ways of funding itself (IPS, 2008). On its Web site the news agency cites three major sources of financing: income from the market, grants from multi-lateral and national development co-operation budgets, and project funding. The IPS Director-General Mario Lubetkin has (2006:n.p.) referred to the importance of governance coverage. He (Lubetkin, 2006) told UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in December 2006, “IPS has been in the forefront of the global governance process”. Lubetkin warned, however, that if there is not alternative independent and professional, in-depth information of world issues, the world’s citizens will not be able to ever “contribute towards the achievements of the new international agenda”.

Other scholars have studied the agency, such as Joye (2006:3), who writes that IPS “critically questions” the establishment while seeking “a sense of commitment”. He says the news agency “represents a useful and necessary supplement to the mainstream news offer” (2006:3). Rauch (2003:88) finds that imbalances in international news coverage spurred the arrival of IPS to provide content from a Southern perspective and have produced a news output that is “more diverse than mainstream agencies”.

Smaller alternative news agencies exist such as SUNS (South-North Development Monitor), backed by the Third World Network, a non-governmental organization that focuses on trade, development and environmental issues (SUNS:2008). One of the co-founders of the TWN, and of SUNS, is its editor, a Malaysian economist Martin Khor. There is not an abundance of literature available on SUNS, but Khor, in an interview with the author, explained:

“We are a specialised news agency that provides information and analyses on international development issues with particular focus on North-South and South-South negotiations. We are a niche agency and of course we have the same financial problems that the smaller agencies have. If we don’t put out our stories from our perspective that are in the interests of countries from the South, big agencies will not do so” (Khor, 2008:n.p.).

Over the years SUNS (2008) has provided rare in-depth coverage of the activities of the non-aligned countries, of the Group of 77 and other regional and inter-regional groups of the South and on non-governmental organizations. Khor (2008) says his agency does not report only one particular view. He notes there is “no monolithic view, even if we talk about the developing countries communities” and that there are many interpretations among them. Khor cites the example of the World Trade Organization (WTO), which SUNS covers.

“Different countries have different views and we are trying to project that this is the view of Brazil, this is the view of Jamaica; this is the view of Africa. We don’t just say this is the view of Brazil and we support it. So in that sense, we see a diversity of views and we cover it, even if a particular journalist does not necessarily believe that, say that Brazil’s view or India’s view is a perfect one, but you still report it because of the importance of diversity.”

Tehrani and Tehrani (in Mohammadi, 1997:164) have argued that the world’s future to a large extent will be contingent “on how modernity can be tamed” so as to sustain an ongoing wealth production that does not have “disastrous” global consequences for society and nature.

“That, in turn, vitally depends on how humanity can balance its competing and complementary interests in the search for more common norms, laws and sanctions” (1997:164).

In their chapter, “Taming modernity: Towards a new paradigm”, in Mohammadi (1997), Tehrani and Tehrani (1997:165) argue that NWICO can be put to best use by “developing communication competence for the voiceless”. They note, however, that diversity in voices, needs “pluralism in structures of media access”:

“No single system of media control (governmental, commercial, public or community) can alone guarantee that plurality of voices Diverse and autonomous centres of media control are a better guarantee of freedom of speech than the pious wishes of legislatures.”

They (Tehrani & Tehrani, 1997:166) postulate that having media ownership dominated by a few global media conglomerates “does not augur well either for free or balanced flow of information” while the New World Order seeks a balanced and a free flow of communication among the whole world (1997:165), of which they are a part. They urge a system that enables “humanity to celebrate democratic discussion and diversity” or “pluralism rather than cognitive tyranny”.

In the next phase of this chapter the focus moves to the literature on issues of hegemony, gatekeeping, agenda-setting and globalisation as they pertain to news agencies, all of which touch on one another in the era referred to by the Tehranians.

5.6 News agency hegemony

As has been noted earlier in this chapter, there was an inability by some Western countries to support the new information order, particularly US opposition to UNESCO’s advocacy of NWICO. This proposed a retooling of the global information order by “international legislation” (Boyd-Barrett in Mohammadi, 1997:25) and to rectify “the dependency structure” (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992:16). This opposition to dependency on Western tailored news features in the arguments put forward by those opposing the media hegemony of the West.

“The global news system has a long-established history that reaches back to the mid-19th century. The system involves a complex pattern of unequal exchange relationships between large transnational agencies and regional and national news agencies dependent on, and integrated with the politics and economics of Western-based transnationals” (Boyd-Barrett and Thussu, 1992:9).

While Fenby’s work (1986:248) seems to defend the interests of the major news agencies, rather than to challenge them, he does carry details of the cartel arrangements that helped Reuters, AP and AFP gain regional footholds. Despite the financial limitations of the IPDC, Fenby views its proposal as positive “if they really increase the flow of information”. Yet he

cautions that due to the “nature” of the initiative “government concerns will remain dominant”.

Fenby (1986:248) asserts that most of the news in the developing world “will continue to flow through officially supervised channels” and will be determined by “the interests of the supplier rather than the recipient”.

“This means that the four major agencies will continue to exercise their de facto monopoly, dominating the reporting and distribution of instant information for the media in both poor and rich nations” (1986:248).

Bereft of feasible alternatives, Fenby, rather than disproving the “de facto hegemony” theory put forward by Masmoudi (1979:173), argues (1986:248) that the big agencies are simply the most feasible way of guaranteeing that “the world receives a reasonable flow of information about itself”.

Such discourse on news agencies brings to mind national or State control of the instruments of media that have long been an anathema to proponents of the Western system of private-ownership and the free flow of information. That position was strengthened after the dependency discourse waned at the end of the Cold War, and it occurred despite the shrinking number of major news agencies purveying general news that there are now in the 21st century (Tunstall, in Tumber, 1999:191).

Regarding government participation, Starr observes, in *The Creation of Media* (2004:178), that the same policies did not flourish everywhere with State control of telegraph, the fulcrum of wire services. In the United States, the telegraph companies stayed in private hands (Starr, 2004:183). Starr (2004:178-179) observes that the 1870 nationalisation of the telegraph in Britain, however, “brought to the telegraph a public service ethos” as opposed to the “original security-minded take-overs in continental Europe”. In the case of Britain, that nationalisation of the telegraph “opened wire services up to competition” rather than “ushering in censorship”. This is a suggestion that State ownership of some media tools can

be helpful, providing the society and its laws allow diverse outlets to prosper, and that they are unfettered by government interference.

Returning to the shrinking number of wire service players, when Fenby's work was published in 1986, it was possible to talk of the Big Four agencies as regards Western wire services. Yet by the late 1990s and in the early part of the 21st century it was down to two or three agencies, with Reuters and AP being the dominant two in a virtual duopoly (Tunstall, 1999:191).

“These two agencies are the leading news suppliers around the world, not only in text (aimed mainly at newspapers), but in still photographs, graphics, foreign video news for TV, and financial news” (1999:191).

Such a situation regarding the media could be described as one of “hegemony”. Eko (in Artz & Kamalipour, 2007:10), a University of Iowa scholar, who has considerable experience working as a journalist in his native Cameroon and in other parts of Africa, notes that:

“Hegemony has been described as a consensual political and cultural relationship between a dominant class or culture and subaltern, or subordinate, cultures or social groups, in which the latter are subject to the initiatives and interests of the former.”

Citing Gramsci (1996:21, 91), Eko (2007:10) explains that a “subordinate class or culture” is consensual in a relationship “for reasons of cultural prestige” and that either party's roles “are not usually viewed as coercive or submissive”.

In this vein Wu (2000:110-130) investigated “the influence of systemic determinants on international news coverage in 38 countries”, later expanded to 44 nations (Wu, in Paterson & Sreberny, 2004:95-110). Those determinants included patterns and extent of “interaction and relatedness between nations, and logistics of news gathering” (Wu, 2004: 110). Findings from the study showed the United States “was the most covered country in the world”. There was some variation, but “trade volume and presence of international news agencies were found to be the two primary predictors” of the amount of coverage. In line

with the author's views regarding wire services, Wu finds (2004:110) that due to changes following the Cold War "the relevant problems need to be revisited". Wu (2000:126) also says the results of the study clearly indicate that international news in virtually every country "centres on the powerful".

5.7 Rectifying the imbalance

From the 1950s, when Williams engaged in his UN-commissioned study *Transmitting World News* (1953), UNESCO has published, a number of studies looking at the role of news agencies and problems they encounter, especially in the lesser developed nations. In one of these, UNESCO (2001:1) raised the questions:

"What were the implications of the Internet for competition, quality and accuracy in the supply of news? Was news just a commodity to be determined by the market place?"

The points raised in the UNESCO report arise in different places during this study and the role of news agencies in purveying news to the Internet, along with the problems that arise in relation to broadcasting, in regard to gatekeeping and agenda-setting by wire services, are noted. Paterson (2006:2) examined the connection between 2001 and 2006 in wire service "political economy and cyberspace information exchange" to see if online news had rectified or "replicated" the imbalance and shortcomings of international journalism that had developed from "traditional media".

While the news industry has presented an "illusion of information diversity and an endless range of perspectives", Paterson's (2006:2) study period has witnessed a news aggregation industry emerge along with a partially "disguised reliance on a surprisingly limited set of news organisations".

At this juncture of the literature review, gatekeeping and the agenda-setting role of news agencies will be examined before looking at the literature on the development of transnational news agencies, national wire services and alternatives that have sprung up.

The big news agency dominance theory propagated by Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen has been postulated in a number of UNESCO studies (1998; 2001). After a workshop on wire services (UNESCO, 2001:3) which Boyd-Barrett prepared, the UN agency published a report arguing that poorly-funded national news agencies face an uphill battle to function effectively. More pertinent to this study, however, it noted there is not only one relevant model, such as that provided by the giant global news agencies, for wire services:

“The basic mission of a news agency, its public service functions, can be achieved in a variety of different ways, using different organizational vehicles and technologies.”

Turning to essential causes of crises facing the non-dominant news agencies, which this study examines, the UNESCO (2001:4) report refers to one of these as: “breaking down of the classic ‘wholesaler’ model of news agency operations” which it ascribes in part to the explosion of Web sites owned by media and others offering “competing sources of news”.

5.8 Further readings

The major agenda-setters are according to Herbert (2001:41) the international news agencies which decide how and in what manner there will be coverage of international stories. Herbert (2001:42) notes that the news agenda in, say, the global South, is often not set in the “domestic news market” but rather “thousands of miles away in London” in the offices of the agencies or their studios that determine television coverage for clients such as the BBC, CNN or the national broadcasting arms in Germany or say Japan, which relay broadcasts on their global services. The theorisation of news agencies early on saw them as “powerful, but hidden” (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2002:216), and due to the fact that such strength was veiled, made them even more powerful than was widely suspected.

A number of scholars (Park, 1998:80; Tehranian & Tehranian, 1997:157; Artz, 2007:142, 149; Eko, 2007:8, 10, 16; Lozano, 2007:99) have made a linkage between Masmoudi’s (1979:173) hegemony and gatekeeping, and the inevitable agenda-setting that accompanies it.

Aiding the understanding of what is meant by gatekeeping, Manning White (as cited in Tumber, 1999:67) provided in 1950 a vivid example in his case study entitled, The 'gate-keeper'. He wrote in reference to the gatekeeper that he typically was a male in his mid-40s with about 25 years working as both a reporter and copy editor who now works as the "wire editor" on a morning newspaper in a town with about 100,000 residents in a mid-West state of the United States that sells about 30,000 copies daily. His task each day is to sift through screeds of news agency stories provided by the likes of AP, UP and International News Service. Part of his work entails editing and writing the story headlines for the newspaper, much like colleagues in hundreds of non-metropolitan US newspapers.

"And in many respects he is the most important 'gatekeeper' of all, for if he rejects a story the work of all those who preceded him in reporting and transmitting the story is negated. It is understood, of course, that the story could have 'ended' (insofar as its subsequent transmission is concerned) at any of the previous 'gates'. But assuming the story has progressed through all the 'gates', it is obvious that this wire editor is faced with an extremely complicated set of decisions to make regarding the limited number of stories he can use" (Manning White in Tumber, 1999:67).

Shoemaker (in Tumber, 1999:73) says that the process of gatekeeping begins with a number of "potential messages travelling through multiple channels" to different sorts of communication groups, "such as a wire service, a public relations agency, a newspaper, or a television network". In its operation, gatekeeping meshes into the process of agenda-setting. The role of news media in both agenda-setting and as gate-keeper, and in particular their presence in the dissemination of wire services' products, has been noted by Herman and Chomsky (in Tumber, 1999:168, citing Paletz & Entman, 1981:99-100) who say there has been a long-standing observation that the media has tiers, and that the highest tier "as measured by prestige, resources and outreach" consists of a range of between about 10 and 24 systems.

“It is this top tier, along with the government and wire services, that defines the news agenda and supplies much of the international news to the lower tiers and thus for the general public” (Chomsky in Tumber, 1999:168).

Paterson (2006:6) postulates that the “agenda-setting influence” has made global and regional news agencies even more crucial than they were in the past, due to their ability now to “increasingly bypass intermediary processors of news in cyberspace”. This allows wire services, for the first time, to reach a large portion of the consumers of mass news directly (Paterson, 2006:4). Paterson’s argument on the expanding access of wire agencies has also been postulated by Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (in Briggs & Cobley, 2002:57).

Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (in De Beer & Merrill, 2004:37) also note in another study that although a “balance of power” was established during the 19th century between global and national agencies, it began to lean more in favour of global agencies. At the end of the 20th century there was doubt about the survival of some national agencies, while others had collapsed (2004:37).

Golding and Elliott (in Tumber, 1999:114) write that many newspapers are almost totally dependent on wire services for foreign news. The news agencies help newspapers round off their information, or serve to tip-off about stories that might need further attention. So, while the first source of material for newspapers usually emanates from stories produced by the publication’s own journalists, the second source for selecting contents comes from the wire services “the international wire agencies, Eurovision, and the news film agencies” (Golding & Elliott, 1999:115). Paterson (2003:11) says that when it comes to supplies of television there has been a duopoly “controlling the international distribution of television news pictures since 1957”. This duopoly is now in the hands of AP and Reuters (Tunstall, 1999:191; Paterson, 2006:5).

5.9 Literature on globalisation

As noted earlier in this chapter, the link between globalisation and news agencies is a constant thread in the writings of scholars who have engaged in media studies and in

particular those writing about news agencies. Rantanen (2005:1), referring to McLuhan's connection of the medium is the message with the "global village" (McLuhan & Fiore, 1967), remarks that the words "media" and "globalisation" seem to be repeated over and over again in communication studies. Boyd-Barrett (1997:14) contends that "interest in the role of media as vehicles of globalisation" emerges from a practice in the study of mass communications research that recognises "that media practice is suffused with the transnational".

Media had been examined as "national or sub-national (local) institutions" (Boyd-Barrett, 1997:14) in early studies and there had been "disproportionate attention" devoted to elite national media functioning "in prestigious realms of activity such as political reporting". Studies of key wire services that obtain and disseminate news internationally for both "retail" media and "corporate non-media" subscribers that include government departments, financial institutions and brokerages, show they were "among the very first modern transnational corporations". They were in the 19th century "sophisticated players" using the telegraph and cables "on a global scale, subverting nation states and national media" to fulfil their own business objectives and to maintain "their own cartel practices".

This theme is explored further in the following chapter on the historical development of news agencies. Boyd-Barrett (1997:13), however, notes that the "globalisation" concept in essence converges "many different disciplines and discourses". Citing Tomlinson (in Mohammadi, 1997:170-191), Boyd-Barrett (1997:13) says they are linked in different ways to theories related to the media in the "information age" concerning such concepts as "Americanisation, Westernisation, capitalism, and post-modernity".

The growing presence of news agencies has played a role in "news globalisation" (Herbert, 2001:42). Herbert notes (2001:42) there has been a "rearrangement of the global news industry" due to the expanding presence of worldwide satellite television whose outlets get many of their pictures and the text that goes with the news from wire services. Like Boyd-Barrett, Tomlinson (in Mohammadi, 1997:171) believes globalisation is a tricky process to understand and he asks if it is something new, or if it is a product of the late 20th century. Rantanen (2002:1) argues, "There is no globalisation without media and communications". She also notes (2002:1) that although reference is often made to "media and communication

in globalisation”, their exact role in the process is seldom spelled out. In other work Rantanen and Boyd-Barrett (in De Beer & Merrill, 2004:36) note:

“News agencies constitute the oldest electronic media, contributing to processes of globalisation from the mid-nineteenth Century.”

As alluded to earlier in this chapter, what is meant by globalisation can sometimes become blurred in the polemics of those who see it as either a positive or a negative force. Hamelink (2007:vii) says globalisation is “one of the most popular buzzwords of our age” and its very meanings are a “strongly contested concept with different meanings for different authors”. In suggesting that it may usually be used “in the singular”, but “it would be more precise to refer to globalisations”, Hamelink (2007:vii) cites examples such as health risk globalisation through HIV infection, or avian flu, the globalisation that stems from ecological threats, or that of economic interdependence and finance, and so forth.

Rantanen (2002:4) for her part contends that neither the optimists nor the pessimists of globalisation have taken sufficient note of the “role of media and communications in the process of globalisation”. In this process of neglect, she contends that an essential feature of globalisation, “the relationship between the global and the national”, has been missed (Rantanen, 2002:4).

“In the media debate, the question was also posed as an either/or choice, in which ‘foreign’ was equated with cultural imperialism, and thus threatening to local cultures, while ‘domestic’ was something worth protecting.”

She notes that only within “the theoretical work on globalisation” has there been recognition that the progression has been between the global and the national.

5.9.1 Domestic and national agencies often ‘linked’

As far as Rantanen (2002:3) is concerned the foreign and the domestic approaches are “not mutually exclusive”. She explains that media products and “the experience of them are linked, often in highly subtle ways”. National media and communications systems are liaison

agents between experience and production, while they themselves are increasingly being affected by globalisation. This supports her earlier supposition (in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:36) that if foreign and domestic news markets are separated from one another, “we cannot completely understand the globalisation of news”.

Eko (2007:9) asserts that seeing globalisation as nothing but Westernisation or Americanisation is “unrealistic and perhaps simplistic”. Citing Held and McGrew (2002:8) and Foucault (1994:n.p), Eko argues that power, the use of it, how it is exercised, organized and manifested is a key concern of globalisation as power; its instrumentalities and how they are variously organized, manifested, expressed, and exercised. He asserts that globalisation does not centre on the total world domination of one technology or culture over others, even although it tends to show the “geopolitical, geocultural, and international power relations between the United States” and other less powerful nations as a world that is made up of a single superpower interacting with the rest of the world.

Thus, in seeking a common purpose in what the study of globalisation should focus on in studies relating to news agencies, there has been a tendency to say what it should not be, rather than what it is. “Practical difficulties” (Boyd-Barrett, 1997:13) stemming from “differences between specialist areas of academic work” have resulted in current literature being entangled “with the demand for globalisation themes” as well as the extent to which relevant data have been assembled.

Rantanen (2002:3) writes “The role of communication and media in globalisation theories remains vague and unspecified”. She believes that media studies have missed the “big picture” of globalisation and have contributed little to theoretical discussion on it. If, as scholars argue, news agencies have been so central to the process of globalisation, in the view of the author of this study, wire services warrant further study in all avenues to make a meaningful contribution to the media debate.

Rantanen (2007:843) argues that contrary to research conducted earlier, linking “national” and “international” news in globalisation the process should rather be seen as stemming from “cosmopolitan” news in that it was between “cities rather than nation-states”.

She examines the origin and advancement “of news exchange in and between major cities in Europe” noted earlier in this study (Schwarzlose, 1989:22; Read: 1992:11; Loomis, 2007:n.p). Rantanen asserts (2007:843) that the dissemination of “news is connected to territorial transformation, changing these cities into world cities”.

5.10 Summary

Chapter Five began by noting that the scholarly literature pertaining to news agencies is not as profuse as that on other tools of the mass media, such as newspapers, radio, television or the Internet. That does not mean it is totally scarce, but the chapter notes a number of recurring names of those researching news agencies. Early on, the literature review was defined as having to be related directly to the thesis or research question being developed; it should be able to synthesise what is known about the topic; identify areas of controversy in the literature and formulate questions that need further research (Taylor & Proctor, 2007:1). Although the need for all-round qualitative and quantitative research is noted in this study in order to bring the knowledge of news agencies up-to-date with the Internet age, the final recommendations will be reserved for the last chapter of this study, Chapter 8.

The literature on the role of the United Nations in seeking to diversify news-flow and to stem the hegemony of wire services as well writings on the resistance that resulted from attempts to create a New World Information and Communications Orders are elaborated upon. A number of the issues and themes discussed in the literature review crop up again in the following chapter on the historical development of agencies, which looks closely at the origins of news agencies in the 19th century and their galvanisation into early instruments of modern globalisation along with the emergence of a virtual wire service duopoly in the Internet era.

Chapter 6: Historical evolution of news agencies

6.1 The 21st century

The annual report for 2006 of Reuters Group PLC (Reuters:2006), which owned the news agency bearing the company's name, released on 27 March 2007, describes itself to be the “leading provider of content and transaction services”. The report of the then British-based media company was published before 17 April 2008 when the Thomson Corporation and Reuters Group PLC combined to form Thomson Reuters Corporation, and Thomson Reuters PLC, to operate as a unified group (Thomson Reuters, 2008:51). Its rival company, Bloomberg LP, which describes itself as an “information-services, news and media company” (Bloomberg, 2008:1), reported that Thomson Reuters Corp. was formed through the US\$15.9 billion acquisition of Reuters Group PLC by Thomson Corporation (Rabil & Thiel, 2008). The Bloomberg report quoted Tom Glocer, who was chief executive officer of London-based Reuters for seven years, as saying the new company, for which he was to be CEO, would deliver a “flawless integration” (Rabil & Thiel, 2008:n.p.). Thomson Reuters would combine “legal databases, bond-trading networks and news operations” (Rabil & Thiel, 2008) making it a large transnational conglomerate. In its annual report one year earlier, Reuters (2007:6) said:

“Reuters runs the world’s largest multimedia news operation, employing 2,400 journalists who produce 250,000 news stories in 19 languages, 40,000 pictures and over 4,000 video stories each month.”

As noted in Chapter 2, speed (Reuters, 2007:n.p.) has always been important to news agencies and it was the ability to quickly get news quickly from one spot to another that enabled the news agency to develop (Stephens, 1988:259). The importance of contact between cities for wire services was noted in the previous chapter (Rantanen, 2007:843-861). Speed has been critical to news delivery from the times when Havas and Julius Reuter rapidly moved news between the Belgian cities of Brussels and Aachen (Read, 1992:11; Loomis, 2007:n.p), as did New York newspaper owners (Schwarzlose, 1989:22) in disseminating

news in the United States. The harnessing of technological tools has shaped who controls news from when wire services first began.

This chapter will also examine how influence, either political or economic, has historically been a crucial factor in dictating control over news agencies and their products, operating in a system of globalisation with shrinking international borders. It also looks at the historical role of technology in shaping news agencies.

6.2 The beginnings

While Reuters is, in its delivery of news, the biggest of the wire services at the beginning of the 21st century, the media conglomerate, which grew even more in 2008 (Rabil & Thiel, 2008) when it merged with Thomson Corporation, was neither the first wire agency formed (Stephens, 1988:259), nor was it the first international news agency. It was Charles Havas of France who established “the first major private news agency” (Stephens, 1988:259; also noted in Lefebure, 1992:49; Read, 1992:9), known then as Havas.

Shrivastava (2007:2) describes Havas as “the pioneer of this business”, noting it was the Frenchman who used the word “agency” (*agence*) to describe the media component used to transmit it. So, while it may not have been as profitable a media company as Reuters during its history, Agence France-Presse (2006:n.p.) boasts on its Web site:

“AFP is the world’s oldest established news agency, founded in 1835 by Charles-Louis Havas, the father of global journalism.”

Other news agencies had existed before AFP, but they are no longer around in their own right, having been acquired, absorbed or closed down. There was the agency Correspondence Garnier that charged 50 francs a month (Bakker, 2007:6) for a daily news service from Paris. German newspapers were its major customers (Baggerman & Hemels, 1985:15). Much of the news came from translation bureaux that sourced their output from stories that existed in different languages. After founding Bureau Havas in 1832 (Bakker, 2007:7), Havas did what many of the current media moguls have done: he consolidated market share, made

acquisitions and purchased several news agencies that were already operating, including Garnier. He took advantage of the extensive telegraph network after he started the agency using as “a regular pigeon service between Paris, London and Brussels” (Bakker, 2007:7).

Lefebure (1992:107), who made extensive use of the archives of AFP for his research, describes how, as a former supply officer, Havas used his connections to the government of Napoleon III to consolidate market position. He used his contacts, in a manner that would in all probability be strongly challenged these days, in order to become the official government supplier of news and gainer of the revenues from this sector that were to ensure the company’s success for more than 150 years. This was despite accusations that as well as the close ties there was manipulation of news (Lefebure, 1992:101) done for the sake of the French empire. (The role of Reuters in empire-building will be discussed later in this chapter.)

One of the reasons why agency news was becoming popular with newspapers related to the economies of scale (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2006:n.p.) to cover events, now that mass consumption of news was becoming established. Encyclopædia Britannica, in its section on “Foundations of modern journalism” in the DVD Rom version, notes that:

“The expense of employing a large team of reporters, some of whom could be out of the office for months, proved impossible for smaller papers, thus paving the way for the news agency.”

Operating from Paris, Havas was the first to organize news and then sell it on (Encyclopædia Britannica online, 2007:1). Charles Havas had also been a translator (Fenby, 1986:5), and when he bought Garnier Correspondance he turned it into an agency to extract news from the main European papers for the Paris press (Shrivastava, 2007:2).

Although the bureau started in 1832 in the French capital as a bookshop and lithographic news service (Shrivastava, 2007:19), it became known as Agence Havas. In 1835 it began to provide an expanded service to government ministers, other officials, bankers and newspapers (Chapman, 2005:61). Speed was crucial in sustaining operations.

Havas combined the use of mail coaches, couriers and carrier pigeons (Fenby, 1986:28), and with his innovations he was able to supply newspapers so that Parisian readers could get midday news from the Belgian press by 3:00 p.m. (Shrivastava, 2007:2) on the same day it was coming in from British newspapers.

6.3 Agency pioneers

Two employees of Havas in turn started other news agencies that would have a strong impact on the world news stage. One was Paul Julius Reuter (Fenby, 1986:24), a book publisher who in 1848 joined Havas for a brief period (Chapman, 2005:61). Reuter may have been a replacement (Read, 1992:9) at Havas for Bernhard Wolff, a doctor turned entrepreneur (Fenby, 1986:24), who in 1849 would start his “own successful agency” in Berlin..

After Reuter left Havas (Read, 1992:05), he tried to set up his own news agency and after a number of failed attempts, he opened an office in London in 1851. As Havas did, Reuter named his company after his adopted name. The name given to him when he was born in Cassel, in the centre of Germany in 1816, was Israel Beer Josaphat (Read, 1992:6). The company named after him, Reuters, later claimed to be “best known as the world’s largest international multimedia news agency” (Reuters, 2006:1).

Fenby (1986:24) observes that in Europe, the news agency pioneers, Havas, Reuter and Wolff, all came from outside the world of the press, while across the Atlantic Ocean in North America, the founders of wire agencies were New York newspaper bosses who had also started news agencies by 1850 (Schwarzlose, 1989:7, 8, 20). In the United States, news services surfaced on the east coast during the 1830s. Representatives of the services would rush to incoming ships in fast “news boats” (Schwarzlose, 1989:23; Bakker, 2007:8), to get the news from Europe before the ships reached the harbour. The leading newspapers, such as the *New York Herald*, were prepared to pay premium prices for the freshest news which in turn helped to sell their own publications (Bakker, 2007:7).

When regular steam navigation across the Atlantic began in 1838, it was no longer necessary for editors to “station rangy schooners and coastal steamers” (Schwarzlose,

1989:23) to prowl the seas and scout around 100 miles out to sea for “unpredictable sailing vessels” in search of the latest copy for newspapers about to go to the presses. The reliability of the Cross-Atlantic steamers would force news producers to adapt to changes in technology. Dictated by the economics of gathering their basic resources, newspapers began to pool their news assembling into agencies. Technology was, however, not the only means of distributing the news rapidly; the pony express played its part. The New York business newspaper, the *Journal of Commerce* and the *Courier and Enquirer*, each ran a pony express between Washington and New York in order to get the political news, with the journey taking eight to 10 days (Schwarzlose, 1989:22).

The official AP Web site (2006:n.p.) marks 1846 as the year when news agencies began cooperating in what would become AP, but some historians (Bakker, 2007:8) view the merger of two established organizations, Harbour News Association and Telegraphic and General News Association, in 1857, as the founding date of the present Associated Press as a national news agency.

Fenby (1986:23) notes that although “the nature of the major news agencies was fixed at the start of their history” more than 150 years ago, the way they have evolved has changed substantially in their basic form from when they were started “in the era of carrier pigeons and hand-delivered bulletins”.

“An editorial philosophy that professed objectivity and neutrality was a precondition for survival; from the beginning, the agencies had to be one thing to all people, operating within the status quo and avoiding involvement in the events they reported.”

6.4 Wire agencies and ‘objective’ or ‘neutral’ news

For the first known time, news producers were being asked to stand by what was in the public domain from their dispatches (Chapman, 2005:62). Readers did not seem bothered that they would come across the same *Reuter* telegrams in a number of different newspapers, “but they did care about the reliability of what this unknown Mr Reuter was reporting”. Reuter had faced criticism (Chapman, 2005:63) for “errors and falsehood” in the telegrams sold as news,

so he had to work on establishing a reputation for “accuracy, speed and impartial distribution” to all subscribers. These were similar to accusations that his short-lived mentor and now rival, Havas, had faced of news manipulation (Lefebure, 1992:95-102).

The 19th century wire agency adopted a subscription system (Fenby, 1986:25) for selling news. It believed a uniform report could be distributed to many customers who might have widely differing political and editorial values and whose production schedules could be widely divergent.

“It is a belief that remains critical to the agencies today, and it lies at the root of much of the criticism of the major news services in the 1980s. The agencies do not issue one service for conservative newspapers and another for the left. They distribute a single account of each event. This has been a constant of agency operations for 150 years” (Fenby, 1986:25).

Fenby notes that although the founders of the news agencies did not use the word “objectivity”, it is the “philosophical basis for their enterprises -- or, failing that, widely acceptable neutrality”. Because they supplied different customers, wire services became unavoidably “pre-selectors and pre-processors of news” and the “emphasis had to be on hard facts rather than comment” which Chapman (2005:66) argues led to a growing distinction between editorialising and reporting. Due to the costs, reports had to be brief and that meant issues could not always be covered with enough depth for full understanding, with Chapman citing one commentator at the time, saying “we see the world through a glass darkly” (2005:66; in Hardman, 1909:140-1).

“Now the business of news dictated a relentless requirement for newspapers to cover the events of the day, every day -- which created an onus to meet deadlines with accuracy and reliability” (Chapman, 2005:66).

Along with the attributes of speed and accuracy embodied in the perennial wire agency motto “get it out fast, but get it right first”, media scholars have imputed a relationship between changing news-gathering methods triggered by the telegraph and news agencies, and the

trend towards “objectivity exemplified by” uniform use of “the ‘inverted pyramid’ style” (2005:66). Boyd-Barrett (1998:6) refers to it as the “Anglo-Saxon invention of ‘journalism of information’” that uses a system of verification which he says “has enjoyed increasingly worldwide influence over the past century”.

Boyd-Barrett (1998:23) has noted that “autonomy” is generally considered important “for media scholars in assessing the interest, accuracy and credibility of information providers”. He postulates a strongly held assumption exists that financially and politically independent news providers “have a stronger claim to credibility, impartiality and objectivity in their reporting”. In another study, Boyd Barrett and Rantanen (in McQuail, 2004:316) explain that wire agency news is considered “wholesale” material that can be “worked upon, smelted, reconfigured, for conversion” into a report fitting for consumption by ordinary readers. They (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2004:316) argue that wire agencies have sought to be presented as being seen as “credible” to their wide-ranging “retail” clients of varying “political and cultural shades and hues”. The image they have preferred is as professionally dependable, but perhaps muted.

“This image has sat more successfully with major news agencies such as Associated Press or Reuters, than with government-owned or backed national news agencies where association with State-supported propaganda has compounded the sense of dullness, even while reducing perceptions of professionalism and dependability” (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2004:316).

Boyd-Barrett (1998:23) argues, however, that the image of objectivity nurtured by agencies themselves and also sustained by a significant degree of public opinion is open to question. Questions could occur in regard to commercial media “as guarantors of a “public sphere” by those” who assert that media of that sort could have conflicts relating to advertising dependency as well as their requirement to keep their users as large as possible in order to deliver returns to their shareholders, patrons and owners.

“The limits to autonomy, therefore, are generally seen to relate variously to issues of ownership and sources of finance. Professional values are sometimes seen to act as

buffers or mediators between the interests of owners, profit, audiences and the requirements of impartiality and objectivity, although at other times it is considered that professional values entail certain practices or routines which further compromise claims to impartiality” (1998:23).

Patterson (2006:6) suggests that because wire services must satisfy news editors wherever they may be that in order to appear objective and neutral they have to “work harder than their client journalists”.

“In so doing, they manufacture a bland and homogeneous, but still ideologically distinctive, view of the world; stories challenging the ideological positions of the dominant political players on the world scene (in agency eyes, the US and UK) receive little attention.”

In analysing the content of news agencies, Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (in Paterson & Sreberny, 2004:34) note that the issues around them have not merely revolved around volume of use. “More fundamentally they had to do with balance.” That balance has been in relation to countries in different parts of the world, “different sources and different topics”.

“Inevitably Western agency services were found to be very imbalanced; giving content preference to the region to which a given news wire was directed” (2004:34).

6.5 The telegraph era

In the 19th century there was a close relationship between the founding news agencies and their owners with the prevailing technological developments (McNeill, 1999:424), just as in the 21st century the Internet is seen playing a major role in shaping technology and being a vehicle for media distribution. Chapman (2005:60) describes as “ground breaking” the influence of the telegraph on the development of wire agencies, which were founded to disseminate information across national and regional borders. Noting 1837 as the date the electric telegraph came into being, McNeill (1999:424) writes that the erection of telegraph

wires was relatively inexpensive and it did not take long for them to spread to all parts of the Western world.

“Wireless telegraphy by radio also very rapidly achieved practical importance for long-distance communication after its first practical demonstration by Guglielmo Marconi in 1895. Improved communication provided a flow of news that sustained mass circulation newspapers, which came into being during the 1850s. This in turn affected politics and diplomacy, making it necessary or advantageous for statesmen to play upon and respond to public opinion as generated and expressed in the pages of newspapers” (McNeill, 1999:424).

Samuel Morse’s invention of the telegraph (Du Boff, 1984:53; Shrivastava, 2007:2) in the United States enabled speedy transmission of information and it ensured secrecy and code protection. It was snapped up for use by entrepreneurs (Thussu, 2000:14) who viewed the rapidity and dependability of telegraphy as offering opportunities for profit and expansion beyond their borders. “The 19th and 20th centuries have given us global reporting systems” (Stephens, 1988:5).

Reuters began its London business in 1851 (Chapman, 2005:62) by offering market information and general news, in addition to know-how in operating the telegraph network. Bakker (2007:7) observes that “in 1852, Havas started using the electric telegraph”.

Boyd-Barrett (1998:32) concurs with Chapman in noting that the big wire agencies have sometimes been the pioneers of new technological tools for communications. An example of this was in the laying of cable which Reuters and other agencies did themselves in the latter part of the 19th century.

When the radio came (Stephens, 1988:276), the telegraphic cable was displaced by telephonic cable (Stephens, 2007:268) and, later, satellite communicators (Chapman, 2005:242). The computer in turn came in to replace the telex machine and typewriter, although during the life of the computer there has been a lingering need for telephone cable

(Charney, 2005) as a reliable platform for the Internet and to enable powerful wireless connections.

“Photo services developed in the 1920s, and are now common to each of the main agencies; television began in the 1950s. Today the agencies are complex multi-media organizations using principally satellite for delivery of print, audio and television news and online news services” (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:32).

The electronic telegraph enabled organizations such as Reuters and Havas to grow during the 19th century (Bakker, 2007:9). This meant new business models needed to be developed for their activities in order to make news gathering and dissemination profitable.

Fenby (1986:23) argues that in their first decades, the big news agencies struggled to make acceptable profits, even until 1870. He asserts that this situation still affected agencies more than 100 years later. A lagging profits scenario was not the way the “European entrepreneurs and New York newspaper bosses” had intended when they started the first wire services between 1835 and 1850.

“Their aims in establishing the Agence Havas in France, the Associated Press in New York, Wolff’s agency in Berlin, and Reuters in London were clear and businesslike: the Europeans were out to make money, the New Yorkers to cut news-gathering costs. High-minded thoughts of making the world a better-informed place in order to promote international understanding did not enter their calculations” (1986:23).

After gaining momentum in Europe and North America, the gradual entry of news agencies into different parts of the world (Shrivastava, 2007:7) accelerated as newspapers ascertained they enabled an expanded and economical coverage of more news, which they would not be able to afford to cover themselves. They realised agencies offered an option under which the cost of news collection could be shared, or they could pay another enterprise which would sell them such news.

Another option soon emerged, however, when, like businesses, even national governments, realised the importance of news. This was done by using various methods including the ownership and control, granting State facilities for communications “tariff concessions” (Shrivastava, 2007:7), or with “intervention in news content” with an overt or covert subsidy, or direct financing of news agencies". This facet in the development of news agencies will be expanded upon in the Chapter 7 of this study which deals with national news agencies, and where their interrelationship with the global players will also be discussed.

6.6 An institution of empires

Reuters' news agency operated increasingly as an institution of the British Empire (Read, 1992:40) during the last 40 years of the 19th century. “This was a great status for a private company to achieve.” Founder Julius Reuter wanted to make it the premier global news agency (Thussu, 2000:14) and by the time of his retirement in 1878, it was definitely an established institution in the empire of his adopted homeland. Thussu posits that the swift development of the telegraph played a vital role in the unification of the British Empire.

“With the first commercial telegraph link set up in Britain in 1838, by 1851 a public telegraph service, including a telegraphic money order system, had been introduced. By the end of the century, as a result of the cable connections, the telegraph allowed the Colonial Office and the India Office to communicate directly with the Empire within minutes when, previously, it had taken months for post to come via sea.”

Du Boff (1984:53) asserts that new technologies helped the formation of economic entities that could affect industry supply and demand in circumstances that could influence aspects of government policy.

“Virtually all subsequent developments in telecommunications can be seen, in latent form, in the conversion of telegraphic technology into a commodity bought and sold for profit and saved from the ‘wastes of competition’ by collective actions that preserved monopoly prerogatives within the industry and shielded their beneficiaries from public accountability” (Du Boff, 1984:54).

Du Boff notes that the “lightning wires” invented by Samuel Morse were soon seen as a “market control”, for although spanning national boundaries they could easily be started by regional or local enterprises and this resulted in the seeking of a justification of “private monopoly” with public backing “accepted as a matter of routine” .

Britain’s main possessions in Africa and Asia were linked during the 1860s and 1870s by cable (Read, 1992:60). Reuters’ provision of spot prices for commodities such as cotton via the telegraph gave British merchants exporting from Egypt or India to England a competitive edge.

In the United States, AP, which had its beginnings about 13 years after the establishment of Havas, in around 1848 (Fenby, 1986 24), was handling domestic news as well as international, and its business model was different to the European agencies. “It belonged to the newspapers that used its services.” While member papers exchanged news and jointly met the association’s costs; the services were open to non-members.

“Later generations of AP executives would hail this as the purest form of news agency, in which the press served itself cooperatively with no concern other than mutual professionalism. More realistically, the main attraction of cooperation in the association’s early days, was the news monopoly it offered its members” (Fenby, 1986:25).

In their 20th century history of United Press International, former UPI journalists Harnett and Ferguson (2003:13) touch upon the monopolistic aspects of AP. They assert that AP used its position to advantage against the poorer agency that was a rival to it for most of the 20th century. They record (2000:14) that AP not only monopolised news sources, it was a partner in a “common law marriage” with Western Union which had at the turn of the 19th century “sought to dominate telegraph services in the United States”. Du Boff (1984:54) notes that the “modern era in telecommunications” was presaged by a rapid advancement of telegraph industry monopoly “only 20 year after its commercial birth”.

“It was in this industry that private interests first groped their way toward a kind of ‘regulated’ solution without the formal or present-day government regulation that was just beyond the horizon” (Du Boff, 1984:54).

Du Boff (1984:54) explains it did not take long for the services offered by the telegraph to rapidly become vital to the operations of “bankers, brokers, wholesale and retail businesses, and, by the mid-1850s, railroads”.

In Europe, however, the services created by Havas, Wolff and Reuter through their companies remained independent of the press while their stories were sold to newspapers (Fenby, 1986:25). Subscribers had none of the control AP members could use in running their agency. Their operations denied them the cooperative-backed financing enjoyed by AP, so they were constantly looking for venture capital. Havas had “made and lost a fortune as a contractor to Napoleon’s armies” before he founded his news agency. For his part, the successor to Julius Reuter, his son Baron Herbert de Reuter, ran the “world’s biggest news agency” (Fenby, 1986:25) by combining it “with negotiating a concession to exploit Persia’s mineral rights”.

“For such men, establishing a news service, fascinating as it might be, was a way of exercising a talent for business. News was a means, not an end” (Fenby, 1986:25).

The first underwater telegraphic cable linking Britain and France went operational in 1851 (Read, 1992:61); the first cable between Britain and the United States, in 1866. Undersea cables straddled the North Atlantic, the Mediterranean, the Indian Ocean, and the Persian Gulf between 1851 and 1868. London was connected by cable to the key areas of the British Empire during the 1860s and 1870s. The first link between Europe and India via Turkey opened in 1865 (Thussu, 2000:16).

“By the 1870s, telegraph lines were operating within most countries in Asia and an international communication network, dominated by Britain, was beginning to emerge. The expansion of cable was marked by the rivalry between [the] British and

French Empires, which intensified after 1869, with the opening of the Suez Canal” (Thussu, 2000:16).

Mattelart (1994:9) quotes the International Telegraph Union as reporting that the number of global telegraphic transmissions jumped from 29 million in 1868 to 329 million. The metropolitan countries were, for the first time, able to be in almost instant communications with their colonies (Thussu, 2000:17).

“The world was more deeply transformed in the nineteenth century than in any previous millennium, and among the transformations few had results as dazzling as the network of communication and transportation that arose to link Europe with the rest of the world” (Headrick, 1981:129-30).

6.7 Control

The exponential growth in telegraph links did not lead to a corresponding growth and diversity in wire services, which proponents of the social responsibility theory of journalism and other scholars might say should be a priority (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:20; Paterson, 2006:2). Chapman (2005:64) explains that “agencies viewed their business as a form of commodity trading”, linking the power of news to the increasing number of newspapers, a larger general news market and with bigger profits. She notes that, although news formed a “significant part” of Reuters’ interests, most revenue came from the supply of “commercial intelligence and private telegrams”, in much the same situation as exists in the present day (Reuters, 2006, 2007), where its most profitable operations are from specialist terminals and the sale of financial intelligence.

“For 150 years the company has supplied one of the strongest international financial news services. The profits from this could be used to finance new ventures on the journalistic side, which provided the basis of Reuter’s personal prestige and reputation and for which he had the ambitious strategy to make the agency global, although the word used at the time was ‘worldwide’” (Chapman, 2005:64).

Chapman's (2005:65) allusion to the importance of financial news services for wire agencies is supported by Fenby (1986:24), as noted earlier in this chapter, and it is also backed by Palmer, Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (1998:62) as they explain that Reuters and Havas began as business operations. Both agencies started to meet European demand for international "financial intelligence".

They also explain that before Havas started his news agency, he had been involved in contracting and banking. For Havas news agency's first eight years of existence, "business clients" got special attention. The first location for L'Agence Havas (AFP, 2006) was close to the Paris Bourse du Commerce (Stock Exchange); AFP today is located at Place de la Bourse. In similar fashion, Reuter was in banking (Read: 1992) before launching his first commercial news service in Paris. For the first seven years of Reuters' news agency's existence, its key clients were financiers (Palmer et al, 1998:62) and merchants who subscribed to a service that was mainly economic. Germany's Dr. Bernhard Wolff first had a niche market in commercial news to brokers and businessmen (Fenby, 1986:31), later adding general and political news. Furthermore his agency (Continental) had the backing of both the Prussian government (Fenby, 1986:35) and banking houses. The three European wire agencies, all started by men with Jewish backgrounds (Read, 1992:9), marked their first agreement with "an exchange of news of Bourse and trading activities" (Palmer et al, 1998: 63).

Palmer et al (1998:64) note that "among the major news agencies of what had once been a global cartel", it is only Reuters that devoted most of its activity to news on economics and financial news "and data for the business community". The main rivals of Reuters financial news (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:21) in the last decade of the 20th century, such as Knight-Ridder Financial News, which later became Bridge News, (Bridge went bankrupt in 2001 [New York Times, 2001:n.p.]), Dow Jones, Telerate (which was acquired by Bridge Information systems and then sold off during the bankruptcy), and Bloomberg News, were set up mainly to serve financial and business markets. AP and AFP disseminated economic news for news media but also expanded to provide news for non-media clients.

Media clients are made up of newspapers, radio and television broadcasters and on-line service providers (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:30), while corporate clients or financial clients are

separated from them by agencies such as Reuters and Bloomberg as customers for information products delivering price or other data used for market transactions and knowledge. None of Reuters' general news competitors appears to offer the range of Reuters' services (Palmer et al, 1998:64).

“Financial news services are important in several respects. In the first place, this activity accounts for most of what Reuters does, but at the same time it helps to support the general media services of Reuters, now one of only three major global print agencies, and one of only three (now two, 1998) major wholesaler providers of video news for television” (Palmer et al, 1998:64).

6.7.1 The ‘Cartel’

International wire services' operations entailed a significant number of fixed costs, such as news offices, reporters, the lease of telegraph lines and the costs of running the head office (Bakker, 2007:10). In some cases, especially between about 1870 and 1914 when the First World War started, the global news agencies, in order to “limit duplication” (Bakker, 2007:11), negotiated between themselves “agreed territorial monopolies”. The main signatories to these were a cartel consisting of Havas, Reuters, and Germany's Wolff-Continental, along with AP from the United States. “Together they had divided up the world” (2007:11). Havas (Palmer, 2003:481) played a key part in “the ring or cartel of agencies” that had Reuters, AP and Wolff-Continental in it and it had control of dissemination of news to many parts of the world.

The European news agencies had been struggling to pay their way in their first decades (Fenby, 1986:24), which may be one reason that triggered their fashioning of a cartel arrangement (Chapman, 2005:65; Boyd-Barrett, 1998:26, Fenby, 1986:35). International cooperation agreements regarding the cables that fed the news were at the same time applied to global newsgathering (Shrivastava, 2007:13). According to Headrick (1981:163), the cables were “an essential part of the new imperialism”.

Chapman (2005:65) adds to the analysis that there were also political interests that needed to be met during the peak period of European imperialism. She (Chapman, 2005:67) asserts that Reuters, in viewing itself as an “empire company”, used the telegraph as both a platform for the rise of its news agency, but also for a “genuinely new form of imperialism”.

Tied to such global expansionist ideals was a military component that met the aspirations of the European and North American powers (Thussu, 2000:17). Thussu says the first transpacific cable, completed in 1902, as joint property of the governments of Australia, New Zealand, Britain and Canada, not only assisted the assessment of military operations in conflicts such as the 1904-5 Japanese-Russian war, it also enabled rapid news coverage of the war. The route of the cable was from Vancouver to Sydney and Brisbane, looping to Fanning Island, Suva, and Norfolk Island, with a split via Norfolk Island to Auckland.

“A connection already existed, established in 1873, linking Tokyo and London, with spurs to Shanghai, Hong Kong, Singapore, Colombo, Calcutta, Bombay, and Alexandria, and with cable and telegraphic spurs by way of Singapore and Batavia to Darwin, Sydney and Auckland, where ties were made to the new transpacific cable to Vancouver” (2000:17).

US interests completed a second transpacific cable (Thussu, 2000:17) in 1903 by linking the west coast of North America from San Francisco and Manila, through Honolulu, to Midway Island and Guam, and from there to the Asian mainland and Japan by existing British cables. The United States controlled all the landing points for the cables. Thussu points out that the Hawaiian Islands had been a US territory since 1900, and Midway had been claimed by the United States in 1867, while the 1898 Spanish-American War had meant the US gaining of Guam and the Philippines. The cartel dominated (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:27) the world’s news market in the second half of the 19th century and the first three decades of the 20th.

“This was an oligopolistic and hierarchical structure of the global news market controlled by Reuters, Havas and Wolff at the top tier, in partnership with an ever increasing number of national news agencies. Each member of the triumvirate had the

right to distribute its news service, incorporating news of the cartel, to its ascribed territories: these territories were determined by periodic, formal agreements.”

Except in some special cases (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:27), members of the “triumvirate” of Havas, Reuters and Wolff were prohibited from selling their news to clients in the territory of the others. They were, however allowed to engage in independent gathering of news from the territories of the others if they wished. In principle, the three agencies supplied world news to national news agencies in exchange for national news and a paid subscription by national agencies, although there were differences in many of the rights under agreements.

Looking back, those who lament the continued concentration of media ownership realise there are recurring patterns. The news agencies started by Havas, Reuters and Wolff “divided the world up so that each could have its own colony of knowledge” from as early as 1869 (Fiske, 1993:158). Havas faced criticism for the monopoly of news agency news in France from thinker and writer Honoré de Balzac (Lefebure, 1992:70), who, although he saw some benefits in the wire service, criticised the news agency monopoly as decreasing the sources of information. There was an ongoing debate at the time described as the “Balzac-Havas encounter” (Lefebure, 1992:70). During this spat Balzac accused Havas of becoming in effect the sole newspaper in France.

“The public is able to think if there are many newspapers, but that definitely can’t be achieved if there is only one newspaper.”

6.7.2 Rival agencies and cooperation

Not all the cooperation between news agencies has been profit-motivated or with an eye on imperial gain. In the midst of the Cold War era, some Western journalists covering the Soviet Union constantly faced problems (Evans, 2008:n.p.) and intimidation in getting politically-sensitive stories to the outside world in a society of rigidly controlled media. In addition, virtually any breaking story was considered sensitive in the totalitarian environment of the time. Robert Evans, a wire service veteran, and Russian-speaker, worked for Reuters in European and South American countries, including three stints in Moscow, from 1965 to 1969, 1973 to 1981 and 1986 to 1991 (2008). He said a special system of cooperation

between the Big Four (at that time), AFP, AP, Reuters and UPI, started around 1964, about the time the wires were allowed to file directly from their offices. In a loosening up of control, they no longer had to take their copy to the Central Telegraph office to go through the censors to then be transmitted by Soviet telex operators. There was no name for the cooperation agreement.

“It developed out of an informal agreement earlier in the [Nikita] Khrushchev period [when some restrictions were eased] under which all four agencies shared information they had picked up at national day receptions, of which there was at least one a week, sometimes more. Nikita almost always turned up and had something to say, but not all of us could necessarily hear” (Evans, 2008).

The initial agreement was signed. “I saw a copy once but did not keep one -- no photocopiers in those days” (Evans, 2008). The arrangement provided for Reuters and AP to share information, and for UPI and AFP to do the same. In this manner, a degree of competition was maintained on what stories they were picking up from the Soviet newspapers. The agreement did not include scoops from sources. Evans recounted one example:

“I was at a party when I met a British businessman who had just flown in from Leningrad and witnessed a major crash at the airport there. He had been able to establish where the plane was flying to -- it was an internal flight -- as well as what type of plane it was, which gave us a good idea of how many must have been on board. The Soviets, of course, refused to say anything (but they never reacted to my story, so it must have been on the ball). I told AP, but could not reveal the source, who didn't want to be telephoned. There was a brief report on TASS [the official Soviet news agency] a few days later” (2008).

Evans says it was the same for other scoops.

“I had the death of [the first president of Angola] Agostinho Neto in a Moscow clinic and of the then Soviet defence minister, which I advised AP about. In all three cases, they couldn't match from their own sources” (2008).

Still, it worked the other way round with AP. The Reuters bureau sometimes got calls from its London desk about UPI/AFP stories that it was unable to match.

“The arrangement did cause some problems because the Desk in London did not know about it [the agreement] and could not understand why, if two agencies had a story, we could not get it too. I remember one case where UPI had a scoop because they happened to be in the right place at the right time (about 01:00 in the morning in the ghetto where their offices were) and AFP took it from them” (2008).

In the early 1970s, the arrangement had evolved into a multi-agency swap, bringing in the Big Four and some of the others such as the Spanish news agency EFE and Germany’s dpa on all stories relating to dissidents and statements from dissident groups. Whereas the earlier agreement had been mainly to ensure good coverage from the newspapers, particularly provincial ones, the later version also had a large element of self-protection.

“If we were all running dissident stories, the Soviets could not take it out on one or other of us. They did, of course” (Evans, 2008).

The agreement evolved over time, but it came to an end during the era of Mikhail Gorbachev's leadership of the Soviet Union, from 1985 to 1991 (Miller, 1992), when the Soviets opened up, and Cold War era communism eventually ended.

6.8 Financial news

Financial and economic news has been noted as being important not only to business clients, but it is also needed by media clients, which more than ever devote attention to market activity and to international trade as an overall contribution to the understanding of global affairs (Palmer, Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:62). Palmer et al note that demand for financial news from both media and non-media clients has in all probability been the single most important stimulus to competition in speed of delivery. That attention to the speed of

delivery, and its packaging for clients, was taken up by Michael Bloomberg, a former Salomon Brothers executive in New York (Boyd-Barrett, 1991:21).

In 1981 he (Bloomberg, 2001:56) started as a newcomer to the field of news and information; his agency gained a foothold with enticing financial market data presentation and rapid delivery to business clients. Bloomberg's growth was rapid (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:21), and from 2001 its founder was the Mayor of New York City (NYC, 2007:n.p.). The news service that started only late in the 20th century is widely considered as the main rival (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:21) to Reuters (now Thomson Reuters), as it expands itself into a multi-media news company using its state of the art technology.

“Even in its embryonic state, the Bloomberg system was already a news machine. Although it provided only numbers, graphs and charts, it delivered the most valuable news a money manager could use: prices, relative values and trends. And that news was not coming second-hand from any wire service, newspaper, magazine or electronic broadcast. It was presented as it happened” (Bloomberg, 2001:75).

Bloomberg, in his autobiography, says that from the outset he had decided his creation should be more than a “niche information provider to a group of bond-market junkies” (Bloomberg, 2001:75). On its Web site (Bloomberg, 2007), the company records that its aim from its foundation was to be “an information-services, news and media company” providing professionals in business and finance “with the tools and data they need on a single, all-inclusive platform” (Bloomberg, 2007). The company, based in New York, now states it has more than 9,000 people in its employ located in more than 125 offices throughout the world.

Forbes magazine (2007:n.p) ranks Michael Bloomberg 34th in its list of 400 richest Americans. As New York mayor Bloomberg has often stated that his time is devoted to running the largest city in the United States (Scherer, 2008:n.p.) and not his news agency. His financial information operation has continued to expand in the financial media sectors, into television, and even into general news. Bloomberg is increasing its general news coverage and even began advertising in September 2007 for journalists to cover sport (Bloomberg, 2007). In doing so, it is edging towards a bigger chunk of Reuters' turf (Loomis, 2007:n.p.)

as part of a battle that has been waging between the two agencies for almost 20 years, a conflict that has garnered frequent coverage in the media.

A *Fortune* editor-at-large (Loomis, 2007:n.p.) wrote that after wire agencies came into service, Reuters had struggled to turn a profit over its first 150 years. At the time Michael Bloomberg was launching his company, “Reuters was engaged in a technological metamorphosis of its own”. Citing two Reuters’ journalists, Brian Mooney and Barry Simpson, who in 2003 wrote a book titled *Breaking news: How the wheels came off at Reuters*, Loomis (2007) argues that the management of the established news agency severely underestimated Bloomberg. Reuters “failed first to notice and then to head off the challenge”.

“Mike Bloomberg, the book reports, was widely viewed within Reuters as an arrogant trader, devoid of the ability to build a real company ... Reuters shuddered in embarrassment when the FBI investigated whether it had stolen Bloomberg trade secrets. The case was ultimately dropped. Its biggest effect, the speculation goes, may have been to dim Reuters’ enthusiasm for battling Bloomberg to the wall” (Loomis, 2007).

6.9 Agencies start using blogs

In the latter part of the 1980s, “Reuters was very different from the news agency of earlier times” (Read, 1992:397). Reuters Holdings had registered as a publicly listed company on 11 April 1984 (1992:366), and the capital generated by this enabled the company to update much of its technology to meet the growing needs of a computerising news and information business (Read, 1992:367). A big shift in its image as a relic of the British Empire came in July 2001 when Reuters appointed US lawyer Tom Glocer as its chief executive officer (Reuters, 2007:n.p).

Glocer started his own blog in 2006 (Glocer, 2006a:n.p.), through which he sometimes disseminated his speeches and in which he gave some support to citizen journalism, the opening up of news gathering that has been enabled by the Internet. In his blog of 12 December 2006, Glocer (2006a) presented a speech he had made on citizen

journalism in which he said, “News organizations must realise everyone is both a potential partner and competitor.” He argued that all people, whether they are a teenager “cranking out gossip, a well-established journalist blogging”, or “a respected academic, all have equal right to have a voice”.

“Whether they have an equal voice is another matter. For too long the public has been a face without a voice, a simple and unheard recipient of media reports, television footage and news pictures. The Internet has changed all that, giving access to all.”

Citing an estimate released by the US-based Internet analysis company Techorati that “one blog is created every second” Glocer (2006a) noted that such a volume is of substantial importance.

“All the voices on the Internet are not positive. Everyone from child molesters to terrorists lurk in the dark corners of the Web.”

While acknowledging that in many ways the Internet has “democratised information” , Glocer (2006a) argues that in order not to allow the use of the media for stirring up hatred, or for distortion of truth, there is still a need for it to be managed in its new form as in its old by reliable professionals.

Glocer has used the new technological tools to market his old media company, which now has a blogs section on its news site (Reuters, 2008a). Before his company merged with Thomson, Glocer wrote of company’s penchant for acquiring (2007:n.p.) and absorbing other companies to consolidate market place, one of the old attributes of his forebears who started news agencies back in the 1830s. Glocer wrote in his blog of 16 September 2007:

“Some of you have noticed that I have not posted in a long time. I am not dead, nor is there a conspiracy by the Reuters PR or Legal Departments to silence me. The truth is that I have been very busy working on the Thomson-Reuters acquisition and, when not at work, playing with my kids on the beach” (2007).

The aim of a merger with Thomson Financial, also a global financial information supplier, was seen (Reed, 2007:n.p) as another salvo in the battle to take on Bloomberg in the 21st century, the equivalent of the earlier competition between Havas, Reuter and Wolff. *The Boston Globe* analysed the trend it was setting as follows:

“A Thomson-Reuters combination would continue a trend of traditional media companies and technology firms consolidating and jockeying for position in a shrinking industry. News Corp., which owns the Fox broadcast network and Fox News cable network, is bidding for Dow Jones & Co., which owns The Wall St. Journal [agreed to on 1 August 2007 (Brook, 2007:n.p.)]” (Reed, 2007:n.p).

In looking at trends over 150 years, Boyd-Barrett (1998:25) finds that for the most part “categories of media and financial sources of revenue” for the big global wire services are currently more important “than the political in comparison with either 1900 or 1850”. He attributes this to factors such as:

- acceptance that “political subvention of news agencies” damages their credibility;
- deregulation and privatisation for print and broadcast media that is linked with an “expansion of cable and satellite” which had eaten away at the importance of government-owned broadcast institutions;
- the development of financial news markets has reduced a need to be dependent on the State (“completely, in the case of Reuters, and partially, in the case of AFP”);
- reduction of the tendency for Reuters and AFP to distribute exclusively through national news agencies that are usually State-controlled and more generally, the expansion of new media and new media markets (“including news-photos, radio, terrestrial television, cable, satellite, videotext, teletext and online services”).

6.10 Conclusion

The monopoly or oligopoly of the 19th century may no longer exist in its old form for global wire services when it comes to text and photographs. Yet there are signs in recent times that two or three wire services command a dominant position in the world-wide news agency

system (Paterson, 2006:6). Oligopoly creates a situation (Paterson, in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:89) in which competition is eliminated, and it extends also to news agency footage supplied to television broadcasters. That “has long been the case in the international television news gathering sector”. The only two major players in this market are Reuters Television News and Associated Press Television News whose system is held in place by the “benefits of market advantage” (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:27) rather than due to formal arrangements between the major agencies and the competition with rival agencies remains fierce, as it was in the 19th century “despite the cartel”. A hierarchical system remains “in which a small number of global agencies supply world news” to subscribers everywhere.

Rantanen and Boyd-Barrett (2002:68) question whether international and national agencies are comprehensive enough, in their geographical, ethnic and political diversity of issues, voices and topics. They also wonder whether agencies, particularly national ones, can last economically while staying true to “their core mission as news-gatherers and suppliers”.

Since the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, as well as the end of South Africa’s apartheid era around the same time, Boyd-Barrett (1998:27) notes, that the “situation has also opened up” those markets to competition from global agencies. This will be explored more fully in Chapter 7. There has, notes Boyd-Barrett, also been a loosening of ties “in both directions” due to “versions of news agency” Internet services. The major news agencies have indeed tailored (Paterson, 2006:3) their recent business thinking to the emergence of the new media offered by the Internet through “new models for online news distribution”. These developments have sometimes challenged “and, in some cases, reinforced previously identifiable trends in news-flow” and Paterson cites Google News as “especially significant” in this regard.

On a technical news and blog site, Search Engine Land (Sullivan, 2007:n.p), it was announced on 31 August 2007 that Google would offer articles from a second major wire service, enabling its specially branded news to be posted to the Google site. It was a new deal that would keep users on that site, “rather than sending readers away from Google” and it was a licensing agreement forged over more than one year, involving AP and earlier AFP.

“Google News is also promising better duplicate story detection, so that the original source of a news article should be more likely to get visitors and readers a better experience by not stumbling over the same story hosted by different publications” (Sullivan, 2007).

Google announced (Sullivan, 2007) a content pact with AP after the wire agency had threatened legal action a year earlier due to the indexing system on Google News. The news aggregator had struck a deal with AFP (Cozens, 2005:n.p) earlier in 2007 following a lawsuit by the French-based news agency, following the settling of a suit brought against Google two years earlier. News agencies will probably be looking to leverage more advertising revenue from the news aggregator system, Google. This is said to favour bigger news outlets as they realise what the *New York Times* hoped (Pérez-Peña, 2007:n.p.) it had done when it dropped a major part of its online subscription service:

“What wasn’t anticipated was the explosion in how much of our traffic would be generated by Google, by Yahoo and some others.”

Still, as in all recent Internet commerce history, there may be many twists and turns until an established system of online news presentation and revenue accumulation is fine-tuned. In terms of the responsibility that some theorists ascertain for the media to present a more diversified face to society (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:20; Paterson, 2006:4) there are few signs this is happening with convergence of different media forms through the Internet.

“In the last five years, international news-flow on the Internet has increased in apparent diversity of original reporting but decreased or remained static in actual diversity of original reporting” (Paterson, 2006:4).

There has been scarce analysis of such trends (Paterson, 2006:4-5), although there has been an increase in comment and concern about them among industry commentators.

“In a recent example, Matt Welch of the Online Journalism Review complained, “... as two or three wire services emerge as dominant content providers to news

organizations that don't want to spend money on bureaus and travel, Internet readers are cheated out of different, more lively versions of events" (Welch, 1999:n.p. as quoted by Paterson, 2006:4-5).

6.11 Summary

This chapter has outlined the development of news agencies from their start, with the use of carrier pigeons, to the present days of cyber journalism, and blogging by news agency leaders. It touches on the news aggregation system mentioned in Chapter 1 that relies on news hits at a certain time to determine rankings on a news page and thereby generating advertising revenues. Chapter 6 illustrates how power connections meshed with political convenience from governments engaging in empire building, helped fuel the growth and power of news agencies through cartel arrangements. Just as in the 19th century, entrepreneurs, in the 20th, and now in the 21st century have honed the new technologies to establish news supremacy to gain business supremacy or influence.

Questions remain about how the explosion of access to news through the new technology can make news more representative of society's interests, and indeed if it is doing so. The situation is summarised by Boyd-Barrett (1998:33):

"The new technologies of the emerging 'superhighways', which also constitute part of the globalisation process, may indicate a less certain future, although early evidence does not suggest any immediate threat to the established balance of news power."

A lingering question persists around the effect of the new media hierarchy, and the burgeoning interest in an Internet supplied with news by international conglomerates. It also arises in considering how that impacts national and some niche news agencies that can provide diversity. Yet, can smaller players survive economically in an aggregator-driven news environment? The development of national, niche and alternative news agencies will be enlarged upon in the following chapter of this study, which examines their interrelationship with the global players where it is applicable.

Chapter 7: Wire services as purveyors of news

7.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter dealt with the arrival of the first news agencies during the telegraph era and the emergence of a 19th century wire service cartel that subsequently broke up in the 1930s (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1998:1). This chapter begins by examining the development of national news agencies and their dependence on, or attempts to be independent of, big international players. The chapter also singles out news agencies in South Africa in its context as a regional media power (Teer-Tomaselli, Wasserman & De Beer, in Thussu, 2007:153) and the only African country with a non-State run national news agency. Later there is an examination on the role and development of alternative or niche news agencies that offer a different framing of the world to the dominant global agencies.

The enduring title “wire services” has stuck through the development of news agencies as a means of distributing news, while they have made use of new tools after the telegraph, such as the computer processor (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:32), the satellite (Paterson, in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:87), electronic mail, the computer chip, the Internet and the mobile telephone (Leung & Wei, 2000:308). Such new technology, including the Internet, has provided challenges to established news agencies (Cook, Gomery & Lichty, 1992:145).

This chapter looks at the impact of technological progression on national wire services and also on news agencies which cover news from another side, with different content to the large players. This study supports the supposition that the constant oscillating dynamic of change, crisis, and also opportunity, have been with news agencies of every ilk since they began, and are likely to remain a factor. Executive heads in Reuters and AFP (Glocer, 2006; Louette, 2006) it has been noted have said recent technological advancements offer new opportunities.

Along with the paradox of challenge and opportunity that new technology provides for news agencies, is analysis (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:1-14) of the sustained role that the largest news agencies play in globalisation. That process has presaged a situation of

media dependency for poor nations, labelled sometimes as media imperialism (Boyd-Barrett, 1977:117). In the 21st century, it is not only globalisation that has changed the underpinning of the relationship between governments, news agencies and clients of the media (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen in Briggs & Cobley, 2002:67). Other processes have been: deregulation, privatisation (Forbes, in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:154) and commercialisation. It could be argued these economic actions in themselves are agents of globalisation.

The changing mode in the market has played a part in pushing wire services (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2002:67) into diversifying and serving markets in broadcasting, satellite, cable television and Internet news, as well as print media markets that are more specialised. At the same time there has been “overall more “infotainmentisation” of news”. Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (2002:67) note that arrangements in the broadened operations of news agencies include making use of Internet portals to sell advertisements of various kinds along with consultant and management services such as being carriers for public relations’ wires, and a myriad of other services.

News agencies such as AP, AFP, Reuters, and TASS, (which became Itar-TASS after the break up of the Soviet Union) have played a key role (Hachten & Scotton, 2002:33) and they have been called the “linchpins” and “global workhorses” of international wire services. Yet the lack of a level playing field for all comers, a recurring theme of this study, has been absent from the early days of news agencies (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992:1) and “concerns about inequity in international news-flow” have been around for more than 100 years.

7.2 Big agencies and national wire services

Boyd-Barrett (1998:33), in looking at trends of global news agencies over 150 years, asserts there is continued dominance by North America and Western Europe among wire services. These days the particular influence of Britain and France “is now out of proportion to the economic significance of these powers”.

Citing the IPI (1953), Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (1998:9), affirm that early content analysis showed the “reality of news agency coverage” did little to sustain the “free flow

model". Weaver, Wilhoit, Stevenson and Shaw (1985:81) found in a study of 29 countries conducted for UNESCO, that in the early 1980s about two-thirds of the news in the press of the Third World, and more developed countries" "originates in the major wire services". It was little wonder then that the Big Four wire services, AP, AFP, Reuters and UPI (Weaver et al, 1985: 81) were being singled out for criticism in a debate about global news-flow.

Global news-flow (Herbert, 2001:31) centres on journalists and the ability they have to "find out what is happening in countries that are not their own". That ability to find out about other countries extends from journalists to their readers or users, and the instrument perceived to have delivered that knowledge has been the national news agency (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:9):

"National agencies were generated within a global news system controlled by the 'Big Four' Western agencies (AFP, AP, Reuter and UPI) and by the two leading State agencies of the [then] communist world, TASS (Soviet Union) and Xinhua (China) serving their allies in the Eastern bloc and communist Asia."

Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (1998:9) observe that national news agencies were often "funnels" for the Big Four agencies being able to reach a greater number of outlets.

7.3 National news agencies

Part of this chapter will deal with the development of national wire services and their dependence on, or attempts to be independent of, the key international players. Rantanen's (2007: 843) more recent analysis on the national news agencies is a reminder that "cities rather than nation-states", noted in Chapter Five, can be viewed as starting points for analysis of wire services. An early goal of wire services was to facilitate inter-city communications, but they evolved into instruments in the national and international sphere from that base. A wave of new news agencies, many of them national, came into existence after the Second World War (Shrivastava, 2007:18, Ayish, 1992:487). In the surge of independence that took place in the 1950s and 1960s, developing nations began to campaign against the unidirectional flow of news, raising it in the UN framework (Shrivastava, 2007:21).

7.3.1 The free flow of news

“Third World” nations began to see “Western dominance of the international economic and communications system” (Ayish, 1992:487) as a symptom of slow development and the situation posed a threat to their own cultural independence and political development. Stemming from the free flow of news, Western dominance of it became an important agenda item for UNESCO.

“UNESCO is a specialised agency of the United Nations system that has particular responsibilities regarding mass communication and ‘the free flow of ideas by word and image’. We have done our utmost to defend freedom of expression, media freedom, media pluralism and media development” (Matsuura, 2004:1).

Some of UNESCO’s policies in this regard have sometimes not been popular, especially among Western powers (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992:2) and one of these was NWICO.

Williams’ report for UNESCO (Williams, 1953:11), not long after the end of the Second World War, that was referred to in Chapter 5, focuses on news-flow. In it he explains that in order for different people to better understand one another they would need to know more about each other and “their news of each other must be continuous and consistent”. Williams (1953:12) postulated that the free flow of news is of critical concern to news professionals and also for all people irrespective of their origins.

If his position is supported, it means the free flow of information is not reserved for a specific ideological camp such as liberals or libertarians. In the 21st century few political powers, except for countries that have a pariah status, openly espouse the authoritarian theory of the press, which hinges on centralised control by the party or person in power.

Williams’ (1953:11) reference to news-flow is applicable to all news agencies as the difference between national and international news agencies tend not to hinge on the structural aspects and general operations of wire services, but rather on scale and power. The

dimensions provide the leverage to transform from being a local to a national agency and the weight to move on to becoming a global agency.

7.3.2 Global and national interconnect

In emerging as major players in their innovative form of news gathering, the founding news agencies have acted both as instruments of globalisation (Boyd Barrett & Rantanen, 1989:9) and that process has also impacted on them. Rantanen (2007:846) refers to the importance of cities such as Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Rome, Madrid and London as well as Venice, Antwerp and Amsterdam being linked into the later process of globalisation.

“Rather than the concept of a world-global or informational city, I use that of a cosmopolitan city to pinpoint the role of cities in the early phase of the cosmopolitanisation of the media that took place before the internationalisation and globalisation of the media.”

Rantanen finds that, although the markets of the founding wire services have been seen as national, their original actions were cosmopolitan, and in many instances became nationally oriented, but their effects and indeed aims turned global. In the process the big international players established dominance both globally and nationally. The result is that in some instances, such as in the case of AFP (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:32), it is not only a global player, but is also the national news agency of France. The same goes for AP (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:32), which is in effect, the national news agency in the United States, since the demise of UPI in the 1990s means it no longer has the clout of its heyday when it was, in the words of Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, one of the “Big Four” (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:9).

Regarding national or area contexts, Putnis (2004: 67-88) provided an anecdotal study of Reuters’ attempts to establish its cartel, and opposition to it in Australia during the 1860s, at the time the country was being established as a British colony. The study can lead to “a re-assessment of the place of Reuters’ history” in Australia and also to the overall history of the might of wire services (2004:67). It indicates that sometimes it is not simple to draw up a dependency model that fits all.

7.3.3 Bi-directional dependence

Although the Australian situation had often been regarded as one-sided, with the global giants dominating the local agencies, “bi-directional dependency” involving the “exclusive” use of news in both domestic and international markets is a better overall description, says Rantanen (in Boyd Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:36).

Putnis’ study focused on the supply and exchange of news in Australia between 1859 and 1877 through Reuters. He (Putnis, 2004:67) notes that the wire service secured its news-flow in Australia through a variety of contractual agreements with local press interests, sometimes with individual newspapers or newspaper groups and other “press combines or associations” as well as with Australian-based news agencies. The establishment of such arrangements often entailed “protracted and difficult negotiations”, which Putnis indicates shows “particular accommodations between Reuters, the global (albeit reassuringly imperial) player” as a principal supplier of overseas material to Australia, and an Australian press seeking to keep its independence as well as “commercial and political clout”. While Australia’s press was prepared to make use of Reuters’ news service, it was “usually only on its own terms” (Putnis, 2004:67).

The agreements that Reuters had with Australian press organizations between 1866 and 1877 led to as much dissension as cooperation (Putnis, 2004:85). Because the agreements were with particular sections of the press, they entangled Reuters in local rivalries in a way that damaged its local standing. One wrangle centred on overseas news and there was considerable Australian disquiet over the standardisation of news provided by the wire service. Reuters was providing the same menu of news it sold to the press in India to Australia, while the newspapers wanted news more suited to local tastes. Differences in perceptions of “news value” between Reuters and Australian newspapers exacerbated disagreements as the Australian press resented paying high transmission costs for items it saw as only marginally relevant. There was also some wariness over what was referred to as “Reutterism” (Putnis, 2004:84). For its own “protectionist” interests the Australian press did not like what Reuters was seeking to do and the cooperation agreement ended in 1871 in what might be construed as a rare victory against the mighty global news agency. It was not until

1935 that the national news agency, the Australian Associated Press, was established as a cooperative “for the mutual benefit of its 14 newspaper members” (AAP, 2007).

In the case of South Africa, which was also in the sights of the British Empire, Reuters was initially more successful. During the 19th century parts of South Africa were a British colony. Reuters’ news service from South Africa was established in 1861, mainly to serve Britain’s imperial interests (Forbes, 1998:155; Read, 1992:84) and not long after the discovery of gold. Reuters consolidated a grip on local news supply with Reuters South African Press Agency (60 percent Reuters, 40 percent local) and was in effect South Africa’s national news agency. With this leverage Reuters was able to repulse a bid from inside South Africa (Read, 1992:155). Reuters had too much power to pit against its rivals (Storey, 1951:136-137). It was only in the 20th century, in the 1930s, that Reuters let go of its control of local general news, which paved the way for the setting up of the first indigenous agency when the South African Press Association (Sapa) began in 1938 (Storey, 1951:200; Read, 1992:118; Forbes, 1998:155).

The two examples highlight the reach that Reuters had into news agencies far from the shores of its headquarters in Britain. They also illustrate the tensions that existed in nurturing or founding national news agencies in two areas where Reuters played a powerful role. This is therefore a pertinent juncture to look into why national news agencies are seen as important.

7.4 Importance of national news agencies

Citing Smith (1980) in *The Geopolitics of Information*, Watson and Hill (2003:193) write that apart from the rotary press, the invention of the news agency in the early part of the 1800s was the most important development in the newspaper industry in the early 1800s.

“The early agencies -- Reuters, Havas and Wolff -- carved up the world into spheres of activity in much the same way as imperialist nations parcelled out ‘Third World’ territories between them.”

But since the end of the Second World War (Williams, 1953), and especially since the 1960s, through UNESCO (Shrivastava, 2007:20), the United Nations has backed the extension and development of national news agencies and of news-exchange arrangements between them. UNESCO's attention came in the 1960s during the independence surge for former colonial countries in Africa and Asia. In defining nationhood it became an essential task to start a national news agency.

“Through a national news agency, a State could lay down information links domestically and internationally which would facilitate the generation and exchange of news. National news agencies became the natural local business partners for the Western-based international agencies: they provided a conduit, albeit government-controlled, through which international news could be funnelled to local media, and domestic news released to the wider world” (Boyd-Barrett 1998:8).

The 2001 UNESCO report entitled “News agencies in the era of the Internet” followed a workshop in Amman, Jordan and the UN agency (2001:5) noted many national news agencies had been in crisis. It questioned whether this had any significance for the wider public and the paper outlined “significant functions” of national news agencies. The main ones were:

- They provide affordable services of domestic and international news to national and local media.
- They are important and privileged sources of news for political, economic and financial institutions.
- They serve as a conduit for services of international news agencies to local, domestic media, and also feed back local and national news to the international news agencies and thus can influence the international representation of their nations.
- They are typically more driven by goals of public service than of profit maximisation.
- They are often regarded by governments as tools of national development and as vehicles for positive or balanced images of their countries for international consumption.

- They serve as a partial correction to the more negative news agendas of international news media (predominantly owned by US, British and French media interests).

The report (UNESCO, 2001:5) warned, however, that the disappearance of national news agencies would:

1. probably result in great fragmentation and unreliability of news sources, thereby triggering global security issues; diminish the contribution of the media to the construction of a public sphere;
2. it would reduce the tools at a government's disposal for the development of national development and identity.

Rantanen's assertion (1998:35) that in studying the globalisation of news, the relationship between the global and local should be heeded is as an important factor in describing what is known as "dependency theory". The major global players from their start constrained other agencies from operating on their turf until the breakdown of the cartel in 1934.

In a different study (Rantanen, 2002:2-3) on the global and the national, pertaining to communications in Russia, Rantanen notes the country that preceded the 1913 revolution that led to the formation of Soviet Union, has long been ignored in globalisation studies. She says it is important to understand this during Russia's post-communist period when the country is building new national infrastructures within a larger context of the globalisation of media and communications. The national and the global can not, therefore, be kept apart. "However, the consequences of the globalising processes are not easy to predict" (Rantanen, 2002:19).²

² During a three-week visit to former Soviet Central Asian countries that entailed travelling around large areas of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan by the author in June and July of 2007, it was noted that the Russian-language daily foreign news fares strongly in print. Television media was predominantly from Russia. Although the importance of Russian appears to be waning, especially in Tajikistan, both of these countries are still in the Russian language and eco-political sphere, despite the United States gaining influence in Kyrgyzstan. There appeared to be a significant dependency on Western aid or aid agencies for development projects, which could affect news-flow.

Rantanen observes (2002:5) that the break-up the Soviet Union, which had a closed system, led to the population “shrinking” from 287 million to 147 million under the Russian Federation, but it also triggered the formation of Russian diasporas of 25 to 35 million people. The case of Russia, which had been studied little in Western countries due to the nature of the closed system during the Soviet era, also raises again the interrelationship between the global and the national. Russia's news media and its main national news agency (ITAR-TASS) had been dominant in the former Soviet Union as national media. Later, in the Commonwealth of Independent States, made up of former USSR countries, those media organizations became global or regional players, and in themselves instruments of globalisation (Rantanen, 2002:5). In the relationship between national and global in regard to news agencies it is valuable, therefore, to look at some of the key players.

7.4.1 Being national and global

Although Reuters had been an instrument of the British Empire and was considered very much a British entity until it listed as a public company (Reed, 1992:366) in 1984, it had started off in the mid-19th century as a company geared to selling news to the global market, and to big national newspapers in Britain. From 1866, Reuters news was distributed to the “provincial press” (Reed, 1992:45) through a cooperative, the Press Association (PA), exchanging foreign news for local news and with the PA paying to make up some of the differences. Reuters is not generally considered to be the national news agency of Britain, or indeed any of the countries that make up the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The PA describes itself as “the national news agency of the UK and Ireland” (PA, 2007) and it is considered as Britain’s national wire service. The Scottish Press Association, which describes itself as the “national news agency for Scotland” (Scottish Press Association, 2008) and The Press Association of Ireland are part of the PA Group, which says it is a “global family of information and media services businesses” (PA, 2007:n.p). It is now a company, controlled mainly by the newspapers it serves. Part of the group is CNW, a news and information company in Canada (PA, 2007:n.p). The case of the PA is highlighted here because it is perhaps the epitome of a 21st century relatively well-resourced (on a world scale), globally connected national wire service, that is not a major global player.

While the PA is not generally perceived of as a national news agency with a global footprint, there are national news agencies that do play such a dual role on the world stage. The major ones are:

1. AP (The Associated Press). This is a truly global company being one of the “Big Three”. Having started in the 1860s, it has been around almost since the start of wire agencies. Since the demise of UPI in the 1990s, AP has effectively become the national news agency in the United States operating as a cooperative to distribute news to US newspapers and it is now “almost a monopoly on the US market” (Boyd Barrett & Rantanen, 2004a:15). On its official Web site AP (2007:n.p.) says it is much more:

“The Associated Press is the backbone of the world’s information system serving thousands of daily newspaper, radio, television and online customers with coverage in all media and news in all formats. It is the largest and oldest news organization in the world, serving as a source of news, photos, graphics, audio and video.”

2. AFP (Agence France-Presse) is the national news agency in France as well as being one of the three major global wire services in the early 21st century. It distributes news in French and also in Arabic, English, German, Portuguese and Spanish. On its Web site, AFP stresses its global nature, noting that daily it produces between 400,000 and 600,000 words in text, 2,000 to 3,000 photos and 80 news graphics, as well as 30 video clips. Based in Paris, it has journalists in 165 countries and AFP operates 110 bureaux from five regional centres. Within France, AFP has seven regional bureaux: Bordeaux, Lille, Lyon, Marseille, Rennes, Strasbourg and Toulouse (AFP, 2007).

3. EFE is the national news agency of Spain, and it also is the world’s leading Hispanic wire service, with a strong presence in Latin American countries. EFE describes itself as the fourth largest news agency in the world (Editor & Publisher, 2007a:43). It has additional services in Portuguese and English as well as in Catalan. EFE’s presence in the United States is growing along with a growing Hispanic-speaking population. The News Media Guild, the major collective bargaining organization for US news agencies, says on its Web page it represents

“employees at AP, UPI and EFE” (Media Guild, 2007). EFE became a big name member of the trade union after the signing of an agreement between the guild and EFE News Service in December 2005, the first with the Madrid-based agency (Lexdon, 2005).

4. dpa is the acronym for Deutsche Presse Agentur or the German Press Agency, which is privately-owned and cooperatively structured (Read, 1992:255). It delivers international media services in Arabic, English, German and Spanish (dpa, 2007). Unlike AFP, AP and Reuters, it did not have a historical past as it was only formed in 1950 after the end of the Second World War. The German wire service gets all its revenue from media subscriptions and sales and although it does not rank highly among global news agencies dpa is ranked “as an important news source by many national news agencies” (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:25). Despite its strong position in Germany, it has not become a real monopoly (Wilke, 1998:51).

5. ITAR-TASS. The first official news agency of Russia began as the St Petersburg Telegraphic Agency in 1904 as the predecessor to TASS under the Soviet Union and later ITAR-TASS (Shrivastava, 2007:9). Known as ITAR-TASS since 1992, the wire service now describes itself as “one of the world’s largest international information agencies” (ITAR-TASS, 2007). The agency’s Web site says it has “retained its status of being the state central information agency” but it explains that whereas it had been only available to “a select few”, the agency’s output is “now available to anyone who is interested” (ITAR-TASS, 2007). It says it has more than 130 bureaux and offices in Russia and abroad. In Soviet times, TASS was a propaganda tool. Boyd-Barrett (1998:25) notes it is still a State agency although after the collapse of the Soviet Union some non-State media was allowed in Russia. Western media commentators and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ, 2007), the world’s largest grouping of media workers, cite growing State control of media in Russia (Kramer, 2007). This raises questions whether ITAR-TASS can be a credible news agency in terms of libertarian principles. It does not bode well for ITAR-TASS in the eyes of those who view the media as contributing to the process of transparent governance. The Russian national legislature is considering extending State control to Internet sites (Kramer, 2007).

6. Xinhua. If EFE is indeed the fourth largest news agency in the world after Reuters, AP and AFP, China’s news agency Xinhua -- also a national news agency with a rapidly growing

global presence -- must be close on its heels. Because of its role as the People's Republic of China's official news agency, and being seen as a mouthpiece for the ruling communist party, there are questions about its role as both a wire service and a propaganda agency, as noted in Chapter Two, and alluded to by Boyd-Barrett (1998:20). Xinhua provides news in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Spanish and Russian (Xinhua, 2007) and one of its vehicles for expansion into global markets, is using Google's news aggregation system involving big hits in its Web based service via Xinhuanet.com. It has "netizens" in more than 200 countries and regions, reaping 800 million hits and 80 million page views each day. On its Web site Xinhua writes:

"Xinhuanet is the top news Web site in China, and one of the most influential sites in the world. According to Alexa, a US Web site-ranking service, Xinhuanet at present ranks around 160th on its list of 108 million global Web sites. Its ranking places Xinhuanet third among the world's news Web sites, narrowly trailing BBC and CNN, but far ahead of Reuters, The Associated Press and AFP" (Xinhua, 2007).

Xin (2006:61) notes that due to "its relationship with the Party press organs and metropolitan newspapers", the growth of Xinhua can be seen as not merely accompanying the emergence of the newspaper industry but as "a result of political circumstances".

It is noteworthy that four of the crossover national-international news agencies mentioned above belong to powerful nations that are members of the UN Security Council; the question arises, where do the smaller national news agencies fit in?

7.4.2 Smaller national news agencies

At the end of the 19th century and the start of the 20th century (Rantanen (1998:46) three categories of wire services existed:

1. Global agencies
2. Middle-sized agencies
3. Small national news agencies.

This study has examined so far the establishment of the global agencies and discussed briefly the operations of some of the middle-sized ones. Rantanen (1998:46) explains that the change in the initial process of news agencies in the process of globalisation took place in 1934 when the world-wide news cartel was formally abolished.

Antara, in Indonesia, was one of the first of the smaller national news agencies to be founded, in 1937 (Shrivastava, 2007:19). It served the struggle against the Dutch colonisers of the time, who were ousted by an invading Japan in early 1942. In 1945, national news agencies were founded in Argentina and Vietnam. A takeover of the Associated Press of India from Reuters was considered in 1946, but it was only in 1949 that the Press Trust of India began distributing news in partnership with Reuters, although the arrangement ended in 1953 (Shrivastava, 2007:20).

Launching has always been difficult for the smaller news agencies and this struggle since their inception was singled out in the UNESCO report (2001:4) which elucidated some critical causes of the crisis for wire services:

- (i) Low potential for profit or for income in excess of operating expenses, arising partially because many agencies have been set up that way, or because internal cultures do not encourage entrepreneurship or because of weak domestic market conditions;
- (ii) Trends among traditional media challenge agency activities;
- (iii) These include: newspaper concentrations and the formation of international multi-media enterprises with little commitment to national agencies, and whose “dumbing-down” of content reduces their need for traditional agency services;
- (iv) Breaking down of the classic ‘wholesaler’ model of news agency operations, as the result, in part, of the Internet, and of the proliferation of media-owned and other Web-sites that offer competing sources of news;

- (v) Reduction in State support to agencies that had been dependent on subsidisation.

Boyd-Barrett and Thussu's study *Contra-flow in global news* (1992), published in association with UNESCO, examines international and regional exchange mechanisms. It scrutinises the unease about imbalances in international news dating back more than 100 years. They observe (1992:1) that during the process of decolonisation from European powers that accelerated after the Second World War, there was a growing consciousness about the economic power and influence of the developed nations constraining their "de facto national autonomy". The emerging nations also were becoming aware of the image of themselves they received from abroad (UNESCO, 1994:6) and, in the case of Africa, how foreign news agencies were responsible for providing countries on that continent with news from Africa. Developing countries felt they were having their "own image" projected abroad and then getting information from powerful nations seeking to influence the modus operandi of "the existing system of international news gathering and supply" (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992:1). There was subsequently an attempt by developing countries through UNESCO to set in motion a process aimed at "evolving a continuous process" (UNESCO, 1986:ix) aimed at a New World Information and Communication Order.

7.5 New World Information and Communication Order

Tunisian diplomat Masmoudi was the most influential spokesman for the Third World in the debate about the New World Information Order. His arguments were a synthesis and advancement of criticisms (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992:19) levelled against the news agencies in cartel times. He condemned "the Western transnational media" (1992:19) for a situation of imposed information imbalance which leaves a "quantitative imbalance between North and South". This was due to the amount of news and information coming from news agencies of the developed world and destined for developing countries, with no corresponding flow from the Third World nations.

In this context UNESCO had funded and started Williams' (1953) "influential" (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992:1) study, discussed earlier in this chapter. Boyd-Barrett and Thussu noted that along with the Non-Aligned Movement, which held its first meeting at

Bandung, Indonesia in 1955 (Shrivastava, 2007:20), UNESCO began to play an important role “in elevating issues of international news-flow in international and intergovernmental debate” (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992:1). Significant in this was the launching of UNESCO’s International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, presided over by 1974 Noble Peace Prize Laureate Seán MacBride (Britannica, 2006:DVD). The commission released a report in 1980 titled “Many Voices, One World”. It prompted the launch of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) (Boyd-Barrett, 1992:2; UNESCO, 1994) referred to in Chapter 6 (Fenby, 1986:24).

7.5.1 News agencies and non-aligned nations

In July 1976, the first general meeting of the News Agencies Pool of Non-Aligned Countries was held in New Delhi. The conference noted the serious imbalance in the prevailing world information system, with the means of communicating being in the hands of the few in the developed nations (Shrivastava, 2007:24). The gathering affirmed that the international news media misrepresented the non-aligned nations’ effort to seek justice, peace and a fair economic order. It emphasised that a new information order was as necessary as was a New International Economic Order (Shrivastava, 25). From that grew the concept of NWICO, although “it is easier to describe the contents of NWICO than to pinpoint the birth-date” (Gareau, 2002:127). The common usage of the term NWICO proliferated though the 1970s and 1980s, evoking much debate.

Pero Ivačać, the general director of the Tanjug news agency, in what was then Yugoslavia, summed up the situation advanced by developing countries in a paper (1978:157) entitled, *The flow of news: Tanjug, the pool, and the national agencies:*

“What do we mean when we speak of a new international order of information? And how does the generally recognized asymmetry of the news-flow between the advanced countries and the developing countries fit into this new information order?”

Ivačać (1978:157) stressed it was as critical to have a new international information and mass communications order as it was to have the international economic order renewed. This was due to the non-aligned countries concerns about an immense and growing gap between

themselves and the developed countries, inherited from their past as colonies. He reiterated the “situation of dependence and domination” in which countries had become “passive recipients of biased, inadequate and distorted information”.

“National news services, along with the Non-Aligned Pool, can assist in improving the amount and presentation of news from developing nations in the Western press.”

7.5.2 The MacBride Commission

The MacBride Commission made recommendations perceived to make global media representation more equitable. It frequently alluded to NWICO, which had been approved as a UNESCO resolution in 1980 (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992:17) and section (iii) of it was based on the elimination of the key impediments “to a free flow of wider and better balanced disseminations of information and ideas”.

Still, the MacBride report triggered much criticism within the Western media and by governments such as the United States, led by Ronald Reagan as president, and Britain, with Margaret Thatcher as its prime minister. Western nations and Western news organizations “stoutly fought” (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992:22) attempts to change the old information order. Their main objection was a perceived “Third World design to control the mass media through State regulation”. NWICO was seen to conflict with liberal Western values and the media beliefs they viewed as “free flow of information” (1992:22). Boyd-Barrett and Thussu record that debates had led to divisions within the UN or its agencies, ranging the “proponents of freedom of international broadcasting” against those supporting “the right to jam international broadcasts in the interests of national sovereignty”. Boyd-Barrett and Thussu (1992:22) accuse North American and Western European news organizations of having limited vision in defining issues around NWICO.

“They stressed the dangers to freedom of information and the effect that the new order would have on objectivity of news coverage.”

Boyd-Barrett asserts (1992:22) that the response of media organizations to the debate on NWICO was influenced by the Cold War scenario, which was not to end until the beginning

of the 1990s. That situation encouraged “East-West rivalry”, which did not help resolve the problems of the free flow of news. Western governments tended to view NWICO’s demands as “Soviet-inspired”.

7.5.3 Criticism against NWICO

Boyd-Barrett & Thussu summarise (1992:23) the criticisms about NWICO led by the United States and other Western nations:

- The existing world information order was healthy and needed no change.
- The demand for a NWICO was misplaced, and was a camouflage on the part of Third World leaders to curtail media freedom, to impose censorship and keep away foreign correspondents from having access to information sources (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu cite Rosemary Righter’s 1978 book, *Whose News? Politics, the Press and the Third World*, as a good example of this view).
- Slogans of “cultural self-determination”, “media imperialism” and “national sovereignty over a country’s communications” were disguises for a design by developing countries to control communication. During the Cold War, the Socialist bloc was seen as inspiring the movement for change in the global information system. UNESCO was helping Third World dictators use the information and communications media for propaganda, and was seeking to dominate control over international information and communication.
- The MacBride Commission was in league with the Third World (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu, 1992:23).

The US attack on UNESCO gained support from some other countries and was supported by the “private media industry” (Ó’Siochrú, 2004:6) and journalism advocacy groups such as the World Press Freedom Committee. The timeline on UNESCO’s Web site (2006) records the result of this debate:

“UNESCO 1984: The United States withdraws from the Organization citing disagreement over management and other issues. The United Kingdom and Singapore withdraw in 1985. The Organization’s budget drops considerably.”

Gareau (2002:130) describes what happened as “The defeat of the Third World nations: A low intensity war”.

7.5.4 Lessons for NWICO supporters

There are some lessons for those seeking to rectify the news-flow imbalances mentioned by Ó’Siochrú, the spokesperson for the Communication Rights in the Information Society, a coalition for democratisation of the media that emerged during the World Summit on the Information Society. Ó’Siochrú (2004:6) argues for “the democratisation of media and communication” as opposed to “State or industry led efforts to create new global orders [or systems]”.

Different sides of the NWICO debate argue about the flow of information, but the discord comes in changing the parameters. There are also disagreements about degrees of freedom, which libertarians believe should be unfettered. Those supporting media as a vehicle for development, and those who believe it has responsibilities in the execution of their duties, can argue for constraints. There is also a strong case for supporting national news agencies in the interests of free flow of information and to facilitate freedom of expression. The question of this, though, is how is it to be done? Is it through State intervention? Or is it by bringing the question of news information flow more prominently into the debates in the WTO in overseeing international commerce?

As evidenced by the UNESCO (2001:39) report on news agencies, actions can be taken to help improve the situation for national wire services. Some of these are: improvement of management and business skills; bringing in flexible systems of incentive and reward to help motivate staff; more experimentation in dealings between national news agencies and governments, which provide agencies with greater editorial and commercial autonomy while continuing to serve the public’s best interests -- where local markets are weak and there is an ongoing need for “government assistance”.

“ In this event it is important that government funding should be adequate, to ensure that the basic mission of a national news agency is fulfilled....Inadequate financing

undermines the usefulness of the news product, and undermines the credibility of both the news agency and the government whose responsibility it is, in these circumstances, to support it” (UNESCO, 2002:39).

Constitutional safeguards can be abrogated, even by democratically elected governments, but these are also the responsibility of society as a whole. And while the end of the Cold War did lead to some news markets opening up, this study has observed the argument that the global news system is still “hierarchical” (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:27). Periods of significant political change since the late 1980s allowed “considerable loosening up in news agency markets in many parts of the world” (Forbes in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:154). Sometimes the new developments have undercut the role of “older state-controlled or monopolistic national news agencies” enabling new opportunities for news agencies that can be more questioning, but in some instances they have also provided new chances for the largest international wire services.

Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen argue (2002: 68), however, that some of the biggest questions hinge on whether national news agencies still have a role, and the issue of how that role should best be performed in a global economy. They argue there is a role for national news agencies in developing countries where there is limited media. Yet, national news agencies face capacity restraints, which according to the UNESCO (2001:39) report’s recommendations, need much greater subsidisation, along with an absence of State control.

In looking at some of the impediments and opportunities to national and other news agencies, South Africa, is an example of a country considered to possess the most developed media infrastructure in Africa. At the same time it still faces the problems of a developing nation and that it has also not had a long history of media freedom (Linnington, 2007).

7.6 News agencies in South Africa

This section looks at news agencies in South Africa and, where applicable, how they fit into a continental and regional context. It examines how South Africa’s national news agency has fared since it started and discusses the linkage of the early arrival of news agencies there to

the accelerating process of globalisation spawned by industrialisation in Europe during the 19th century. It also looks at the flickering emergence of alternative news structures in South Africa during the apartheid era and it links that development to the end of the epoch of white minority rule in the country. The end of apartheid also coincided with the demise of alternative news organizations, including wire services that provided a different framing of news that reported a voice sometimes unheard of in the mainstream media outlets.

South Africa's economy is by far the largest in Sub-Saharan Africa, alone making up about 40 percent of total sub-Saharan African gross domestic product (GDP) (World Bank, 2006). In the 12-nation Southern African Development Community, South Africa is the powerhouse, accounting for 70 per cent of the sub-region's GDP (ADB, 2004:i). South Africa also started (Mail & Guardian, 2007) the continent's first online newspaper, the *Mail & Guardian Online*, launched in 1994. By 2006 South Africa had more Internet newspapers (Stanford, 2006) than any other African country. Moreover, unlike in some other African countries, where wire services have shut down or are battling to manage, South Africa's national news agency has managed to survive (Forbes, 2003:2). Its national news agency, Sapa (South African Press Association) is (Forbes, 1998:163; UNESCO, 2001:10) the only independent, non-governmentally-run, national news agency in Africa. The context of news agencies overall in Southern Africa, will be examined before embarking on a more detailed examination of the situation pertaining to South Africa.

7.6.1 Regional context

As the world's second largest continent, but its poorest, the role that globalisation has played in the development, or lack of it, in Africa has been the subject of considerable examination. In this regard one can examine the role that news and one of its lubricants, wire agency copy, plays in such development or relative lack thereof. That is because in another UNESCO report (2003:1), the international agency explained how news agencies are pivotal to "democracy, poverty alleviation and citizens' empowerment". The report was on a workshop hosted by UNESCO that focused on "strategies for the diversification of news agencies in Southern African" held in Lusaka. It noted (UNESCO, 2003:1) that those present stressed "the importance of news agencies". Yet the process of establishing and sustaining news agencies in the region is beset by difficulties in the civic structures of a number of countries,

as the Lusaka meeting and developments that both preceded and superseded the workshop would reveal.

Opening the workshop, Mutale Nalumango, Zambia's Minister of Information and Broadcasting explained the "important role" (UNESCO, 2003:1) that news agencies play in Southern Africa in giving citizens the necessary information so they can make informed choices. Participants agreed (2003:1) to collaborate with their governments "to ensure that ownership of news agencies is shared between the public and private sectors". They also agreed to introduce a managerial culture in wire services agencies that would show comprehension of "better management of public financial resources" and to expand their services regarding spheres such as photos, video news production and radio as well as specialised services to governments and diplomatic missions. Still, the desire for such diversification in the interest of greater openness and transparency from news agencies can also have the counter-effect of placing strains on resources and thereby affect good governance and delivery (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2002:67).

Following the Lusaka workshop, a project of Germany's Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (Foundation), the African Media Barometer (2007), the first comprehensive "description and measurement system for national media" on the continent was launched. The Lusaka conference raised questions about the role of the media and news agencies in fostering good governance. An AFP report on the workshop (Africa: northern, 2005) illustrated how this issue is visible for civil society groups and some African governments. It cited a *Times of Zambia* report that the Windhoek-based Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) had launched a newspaper called the *Advocate*, to promote media reforms, good governance, and human rights in Zambia.

The launch of the *Advocate* had been preceded in February 2005 by several media organisations, among them MISA and the International Press Institute (IPI), expressing their concern over a good governance watchdog set up by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) ongoing African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). In a letter to the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, MISA and the IPI had written (Africa Media

Barometer, 2007) that an African Peer Review Mechanism relating to good governance had been devised underlining that it was designed to promote democracy in Africa.

“Yet, the APRM’s good governance criteria have a serious defect in that they omit a key requirement for good governance: the fostering of free and independent news media” (Africa Media Barometer, 2007).

The Barometer noted that the Review Mechanism which had been carried out and developed by government agencies lacked “sufficient involvement of civil society organizations and those who are affected by government policies”. It said further that the review mechanism “is meant to overcome these defects in regard to the media” and the Barometer carries a “Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa” (Africa Media Barometer, 2007). Before looking to the expansion of wire services in the region, their origins will be examined.

7.6.2 First news agency in southern Africa

Reuters’ first local South African correspondent had begun work in 1859 (Read, 1992:85). From its establishment in South Africa, Reuters initially fulfilled the role of national news agency and subsequently played a hand in the establishment a national wire service in the country (Forbes, 1998:155). Due to the economic and strategic significance of South Africa, it was a pioneer country on the continent for news agencies. By 1861 Reuters was not only publishing news from Australia and New Zealand, but also in South Africa, in the form of telegrams that reached England by Royal Mail steamer (Forbes; 1998:155; Read, 1992:32). Read (1992:33) recounts the details of news that reached Plymouth from Cape Town on 21 September 1861:

“The dispatch included an account of Zulu unrest; news of Dr. Livingstone in the African interior; and a report of an injunction ‘granted Mr Charles Dickens against the *Eastern Province Herald* publishing his *Great Expectations*’.”

At the other end of the continent, in Egypt, which was establishing itself as a “focal point for news, trade and transport” (Read, 1992, 59), Reuters opened an Alexandria office in 1865.

7.6.3 ‘Imperial’ Reuters

In the latter 19th century hey-day of the British Empire, with the laying of cables around the world (Thussu, 2000:19; Chapman, 2005:65) and due to decreasing transmission rates, Reuters’ global coverage expanded out of Europe. News from India initially took “most space in the Reuter imperial file” (Read, 1992:95), but coverage from South Africa “came to surpass it for excitement”, with news of mineral discoveries, a war against the Zulus as well as “two wars against the Boers”. The Anglo-Boer War, known in Britain as the Boer War, and also sometimes called the South African War or the *Tweede Vryheidsoorlog* (Second War of Liberation), between 1899-1902, drew interest in news from South Africa. This was also a time when many readers were demanding market news from the country (Read, 1992:117) that was rapidly developing its economic output through gold and diamond mines (Giliomee, 2003:236; L’Ange, 2005:88; Read, 1992:85). Roderick Jones, who had headed Reuters in South Africa, and later went on to become managing director of Reuters in 1922 (1992:147), would, when visiting each Reuters territory that was under British control, stay at “Government House”, where the representative of the British monarchy resided. “Here was recognition of the important function of Reuters within the British Empire” (Read, 1992:164).

7.6.4 South African newspapers’ news agency

Analogous to the situation in Australia raised by Putnis (2003:67-88) in the preceding chapter, a group of South African newspapers (the *Cape Times*, *Cape Argus* and *Rand Daily Mail*) had launched their own anti-Reuter news agency in 1908. It was called the South African Amalgamated Press Agency (SAAPA), for the dissemination of both local and world news (Read, 1992:188). Noting that profits in South Africa were important to Reuters, Read (1992:118) writes, “Here was a great challenge, which lasted for nearly eighteen months.” Reuters had to get the amalgamated press agency into line or it would have been forced to ditch its business in South Africa, so it sought “to save the faces of the SAAPA newspapermen while ensuring Reuter predominance” (Read, 118). In beating back the South African attempt to drive Reuters from the country (Storey, 1951:136-7) the powerful agency was able to use its global resources to outmuscle the local rival syndicate. Early in 1910, the South African Press Agency was established (Read, 1992:118). Reuters held a seven-twelfths

holding and the three main local newspaper companies had equal ownership in the remainder of the agency.

“The Boer press remained outside the arrangement, but was given equal access to Reuter news” (Read, 1992:118).

7.6.5 South African Press Association established

As the 20th century progressed, pressure began to mount from both the English-speaking and Afrikaans press that the internal news agency should not be controlled by an outside organization (Read, 1992:165). In 1938, Reuters assisted in setting up a co-operative, non-profit-making organization, the South African Press Association (1992:165) to which Reuters ceded the right “for handling of internal general news” while the global player held onto its “exclusive right to supply world news” (Forbes, 1998:155).

The South African Press Association, or Sapa as it is more commonly known, provides newspapers, radio, television and the Internet with “consistent, reliable and credible breaking news and photographs” (Sapa, 2007). It describes itself as “a non-governmental news agency” and was established in 1938. The news agency says it is the “prime supplier of global news to the South African media market”. Sapa has offices in Johannesburg, Cape Town, at the South African Parliament, in Durban and Bloemfontein. Its slogan is “If Sapa knows, South Africa knows”. Although Sapa has managed to survive, unlike some of its other African counterparts, its resources have been shrinking, so it has had to cut back on staff (Van der Velden, 2007a), despite growing demands made on such news agencies with the expansion of multi-media platforms. In an email interview with the author, Sapa Editor Van der Velden said:

“When I took over as editor in 1992, Sapa had a total staff of about 80 (compared to the 125 or so in its 1950s hey-day with dozens of telex operators and runabout messengers) of which about 45 were editorial....We had massive expenditure upheavals in the early 1990s, in the industry generally” (Van der Velden, 2007a).

In mid-2007 Sapa had a total staff of 52 of whom 37 were editorial (Van der Velden, 2007a).

“We’ve taken a battering, numbers-wise, and it certainly impacted on covering international tours, mega-events such as the Olympics, but I’d like to believe that we still put out a product that delivers at least adequate coverage of top national news and does so at a value-for money rate” (Van der Velden, 2007a).

Sapa is an important supplier of news to newspapers and broadcasters in South Africa and it is also a key supplier of news to Web sites. In his interview for this study, Van der Velden (2007a) said the wire service has recorded many instances when the same news from Sapa is used multiple times on different Web sites simultaneously. He cited one instance:

“I was chuckling out loud at seeing a late edition of the [Johannesburg] *Star*, front page lead, incorporating Sapa copy which in turn was based on original input from News24 -- all duly credited. I think that what this says is that an entity like Sapa can lend credibility to lifted content and also provide space for competing platforms wanting to use the content.”

Over recent years Sapa’s news supply base has, however, trimmed to a narrower national base as it has been forced to close down international and even regional bureaux despite its potential to play a stronger role in Southern Africa.

7.6.6 Sapa’s last overseas correspondent

Van der Velden was the last full-time foreign correspondent for Sapa in London, until the end of 1991, when the agency’s board decided it was too expensive to fund the post, aware that the main South African newspaper groups had their own London-based correspondents. By 1996 the last bureau outside the country had been scaled down to a part-time position and eventually closed down altogether. Van der Velden said if new bureaux were to be opened, he would favour opting for Maputo, or Luanda. “Zimbabwe of course.... once we can get back in there” (Van der Velden, 2007a).

It is likely that due to being aided by Reuters in its formation, Sapa kept close links with the international news agency until the 1990s. Reuters was to make another attempt

(Forbes, 2003:2) then to try to control news supply inside South Africa in the mid-1990s. Sapa was facing difficult financial times after South Africa had been opened up to the outside world with the end of apartheid. According to Forbes (2003:2), the problems included the attempt by Reuters to enter the domestic market and expand across Africa; the cancellation of major contracts of the South African Broadcasting Corporation and Reuters, which added to financial strain on Sapa. Citing Sapa (2003) Forbes (2003:2) says the final of these was when:

“Sapa members began to question the need for the national agency, thus threatening its existence. Members had already reduced their traditional flow of pooled routine news into Sapa -- today Sapa’s self-generation of domestic news is around 99 percent.”

In the interview, Van der Velden (2007a) was asked if national news agencies in the mould of the South African agency can operate effectively now they are openly competing with big players like Reuters, AFP, AP, etc. This question arises since such agencies are no longer locked into agreements with national wire services for distribution and the international agencies can sometimes be better resourced to cover events:

“Yes, we do in effect compete directly, in some respects, with the big agencies and when that started about 10-12 years back, it was a little frightening. [This was the case] especially, for example, when Reuters tried to stamp Sapa out in the early-mid 1990s by setting up a bigger, better resourced local agency network to supplement sales drives on their international wire to our own members. It flopped and Reuters now subscribes to the Sapa local wire again as an input to its bigger, international news network role. What the situation now is, I think, is that the big international news agencies have their space and little guys, like Sapa, have theirs. The two can co-exist mostly in harmony. Sapa, as a domestic agency, still fulfils an important service to our local subscribers; across the spectrum of filtering out the bulk of incoming agency copy from AFP, AP etc.”

After the initial threat from Reuters developing its own local service eventually fell away and the domestic service was withdrawn, South Africa's national broadcaster, the SABC, returned in 1995 to buy from Sapa "because it is value for money" (Forbes, 2003:2).

7.6.7 Sapa in the digital age

In an interview conducted for the host Web site during the 2007 World Editors' Forum in Cape Town, Van der Velden (2007:n.p) said there is a widespread perception that printed newspaper people are "scared of digital developments", with some fearing that they will "swamp and even wipe out newspapers". But Van der Velden believes digital platforms can enhance the way newspapers do business.

"The one thing that people tend to overlook is that in digital journalism -- the fundamental craft will remain the same as in the old style newspaper journalism -- gathering of facts, assimilation of them, throwing out the untruths, trying to find the truths analysing them and presenting them to the consumer."

Can, therefore, a national news agency such as Sapa, traditionally text-driven, utilise the potential offered by digital developments? Van der Velden (2007a) believes there are opportunities for the wire service to develop its potential digitally, but they "loop back" to its dependency on the newspapers that control it as a cooperative. "Sapa's owners are still the main newspaper groups" which themselves are engaged in seeking to come forward with "viable business models that embrace new technologies".

"It's inevitable that there would be a collective reluctance to see or allow a Sapa to surge forward on new but unmapped turf that they themselves may want to try farming. It's my personal, inevitably biased, view that news agencies, rather than traditional print-bound newspaper operations, are inherently much better-positioned to take off in the new digital age" (Van der Velden, 2007a).

Van der Velden's comments indicate that engaging in Web development is a conundrum for news agencies that are cooperatives with newspapers as their main shareholders or stakeholders, such as Sapa or AP. This could explain why, on the global level, AP has been

slower to mobilise its resources (Boyd-Barrett, 1998:33) to take on Reuters head to head on using its public Web site as a platform to make available its news in a multi-media format. This is despite the fact that AP has been adapting its editorial products to use on the Internet in various ways (Carroll, 2007:34-35). Sapa's Internet site does not contain interactive content, but as a text and photo agency it has still been able to maintain its independence and also to withstand the introduction of the government's Bua information service (Forbes, 2003:9), which has taken advantage of Sapa as a carrier for its information.

“Whether Sapa will retain its independence is too early to say. Sapa, as it stands at present, is hamstrung -- it is the South African newspapers that will determine future agency policy” (Forbes, 1998:163).

Given the history of wire services, South African media and news agencies in expanding their role into other parts of Africa will have to remain sensitive to the legacy of their past if they are not to be viewed themselves as economic predators (Tleane 2006:14). That perception could arise, and the question is raised by Tleane (2006:14):

“South African companies have successfully exploited the economic advantages that the new South Africa carried over from its apartheid predecessor. The rich section of South Africa has taken advantage of the ravages of neo-colonialism that have left the region lacking in capital to improve communications infrastructure.”

7.6.8 UNESCO's assessment

A news organization such as Sapa, which, despite Tleane's caution, does not appear to have been criticised for being a predator, could still count on the good standing it has built up internationally. UNESCO (2001:10) notes that the competition triggered by Reuters' attempt in the mid-1990s to establish a domestic news service in South Africa has not negatively impacted Sapa.

“More significantly, the agency [Sapa] has survived the transition from apartheid to democracy. During states of emergency imposed under apartheid, authorities required journalists to walk away from scenes of unrest and their reports had to be officially

confirmed. Sapa's policy was to report everything in full, and clients were advised when stories might contravene security regulations. This established a level of credibility that has sustained the agency to the current day" (UNESCO, 2001:10).

Sapa is an "African" agency (Forbes, 1998:163) that has news of interest to its neighbouring states and a market for news from those countries. When South Africa opened up to the rest of the world, with the demise of apartheid, it looked to African countries as within reach, a hope, and a signpost for the continent's future. Sapa has a co-operation agreement with Botswana's agency, BOPA, an exchange agreement with ZIANA (Zimbabwe) and looks to news agencies in its region for closer ties in the future.

Much potential could lie in Sapa embarking on a regional role; but that tack also has uncertainty, says Van der Velden. After seeing off Reuters in the mid-1990s, Sapa seems to have a comfortable relationship with the global players, but in the rapidly changing era of media convergence, nothing remains static for long. Van der Velden (2007a) believes a "a clash could happen" with other agencies such as Reuters, if for example, Sapa expanded with greater resources as an SADC (Southern African Development Community) or pan-African news agency.

In a contribution to a publication entitled "The vital, but unfulfilled, role of news agencies in Africa", marking 50 years of African journalism since Ghana's independence, Van der Velden expanded on this theme.

"It's frightening to realise that, with a few exceptions, no national news agencies churn out that reliable stream of neutral "he-said, she said, this-happened-here", independent-minded news for all to see and work forward with. Of greater concern is that there's no inter-African exchange of such basic news streams from one country, or region, to the next. Indeed, there have been various attempts to create this over the years, from the early days of the Organisation of African Unity and its Pana news service and, since then, some regional efforts" (Van der Velden, 2007b:95).

According to Van der Velden, most of such efforts in the past have “been doomed by ideologues who want the news-flow to right wrongs”. Van der Velden asserts that “a flow of facts” is both in the public interest and good for democracy. An expanded Sapa could increase both South-South communication as well as a greater diversity of news about Africa to the developed world, in the same way that the now defunct Gemini News Service did for the last three decades of the 20th century (Thompson, 2007:442).

“African news media still rely heavily on the much maligned, but well-run Western news agencies, to hear what’s happening -- not only in the country next door but sometimes right at home” (Van der Velden, 2007b:95).

In the case of two countries near to South Africa, Banda (2007:78) argues in a similar vein, writing in the same publication as Van der Velden, that the media in both Malawi and Zambia, as in other African countries, have inherited a colonial legacy and that many colonial laws controlling media were kept in place after independence for use “ironically, by the erstwhile victims” of the same laws “in the interests of the new governments which they constituted”.

If, however, there is to be a new pooling system of regional and continental African news that reduces dependency on the old players, can it work? Forbes asks what the possibilities are of a future “Southern African” news pool system emerging. He says that Sapa believes it would not gain financially -- “that in fact it has more to lose” (Forbes, 1998:163). He (Forbes, 1998:163) quotes the manager of Sapa, Wim van Gils, as saying,

“People think South Africa is the economic powerhouse of the continent, that Sapa is a rich news agency. It is very much the contrary. In fact we are a poor news agency, financially speaking.”

Still, Forbes (2003:15) notes that “in this age of globalisation”, Sapa has a key role to play “in the development of South Africa, and Southern Africa in general” and is primed to contribute to the development of a future Southern African or “African wire network” .

During meetings in Pretoria and Stellenbosch in 2006, Southern Africa news agency managers, veteran news agency professionals and communications experts from such countries as Mozambique, Namibia, and South Africa drew up a memorandum on the transformation of state newspapers and news agencies. They said: “There is now an African consensus that”:

- freedom of expression is a fundamental human right;
- the media promotes the free flow of information, ideas, pluralism of media ownership;
- diversity of content and editorial independence from all undue influences is indispensable in a democratic society.

The participants also recommended that:

“In order to promote the flow of information within the SADC region, bilateral and multilateral pooling and news exchanges by news agencies with each other is encouraged” (See Appendix A).

National news agencies such as Sapa, which has a high standing with UNESCO, can be viewed as a regional development tool if it is the centrepiece of a regional news sharing system. Were Sapa to get official funding in the manner, e.g. that IPS (Inter Press Service) does as a registered international not-for-profit association that has the OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development) status of an ODA (official development assistance) eligible international organization, the South African agency could get access to seeding capital that could help it develop. That could boost Sapa’s aspirations of becoming a stronger regional player supplying African news to Africans and to the rest of the world, acting as a facilitator in reversing the one-way-flow of global news to the continent.

Having referred to IPS, an alternative agency to the big transnationals, it is now appropriate to look at niche and other news agencies in the South African context.

7.6.9 Alternative news agencies in South Africa

During the 1980s, a plethora of newspapers, news agencies and publications sprang up in South Africa (Merrett & Saunders in Switzer & Adhikari, 2000:460). Many of these publications were virulently opposed to the apartheid government of then President P.W. Botha which had begun introducing piecemeal, limited reforms that did not give the black majority any real power (Sparks, 1994:69). Sparks notes that: “Instead of mollifying the black majority, this inflamed them.”

In this push against the refined apartheid system, emerged a “working class”, “progressive” press and an “independent social democratic press” (Louw in Tomaselli & Louw, 1991:7) that cooperated with the former. Louw describes it as a “hybrid”. The labels given to this media included “alternative”, “resistance” or “struggle” press. The publications not only championed the cause of the downtrodden majority of South Africans, they also brought new styles of ownership, presentation, and philosophy. Many of them were, however, short-lived publications and did not survive into the post-apartheid era (Ruether, 2003:76) because they either lacked resources to continue their work, or failed to adapt to the new times and to the changed readers’ tastes.

“The dissident voices are dead. Dozens of newspapers and magazines were vitally important in bringing about change in apartheid South Africa, but hardly any of them have survived into the post-apartheid era” (Ruether, 2003:76).

Following the massive global political change witnessed in the late 1980s and early 1990s that included the fall of the Soviet communist system and the proliferation of capitalist systems, there was an emergence of “more pluralistic regimes in parts of Africa and South America” (Forbes, 1998:157). In addition, South Africa’s transformation “from apartheid to a non-racialist democracy”, may have “opened up new and somewhat different spaces in the organization of global news”. Under this new dispensation some State news agencies disappeared or reorganized and there was the arrival of competition in previously controlled domestic markets.

The alternative press in the reformed South Africa no longer seemed to have a place. South Africa's alternative press or resistance press, as it was also referred to, in a way became a victim of the success of the political goals with which it aligned itself. "Ultimately, it seems that the alternative press was a 1990s phenomenon" (Louw & Tomaselli, 1991:225).

Yet not all the news publications that sprang up during the resistance era to apartheid disappeared. The *Weekly Mail* is now published under the title the *Mail & Guardian*, a newspaper that states on the Web site for its online edition that it was voted one of the world's top 175 Web sites by Forbes.com in 2001 (M&G, 2006:n.p.). The *Mail & Guardian* online is a subscriber and user of Sapa, as well as of other international wire services such as AFP and Reuters.³

Another survivor of the alternative publications that emerged during the height of the struggle against apartheid in the 1980s was the East Cape News Agencies (Ecna) (Forbes, 1998:157), which in 1997 was renamed East Cape News (Krüger, 2007:n.p). Funding, or the lack of it, largely in the form of foreign funding, was at the heart of many woes of the resistance press in the post-apartheid era. Krüger (2000:271) a co-founder of Ecna, postulates:

"In the post-election [1994] period, donor funds began to dry up, leading to the closure of the majority of the independent media."

Although Ecna had ties with Sapa, it seemed to suffer on a regional level having the same problems that national news agencies are afflicted with on a global level, trying to compete with the big players. It can be identified as a news-flow problem, as the rest of South Africa is not taking sufficient news from the Eastern Cape for an agency to survive as a national player (Forbes, 1998:166).

³ All of South Africa's major newspapers that have online editions make extensive use of Sapa copy, according to Van der Velden (2007a). The Sapa news often becomes available before the newspapers' own stories, which can lag in production time.

“ECN is active in very different arenas than we were at Ecna. It has little presence in the national press (except occasionally in the daily *Daily Sun* as far as I can make out), but quite a strong presence in the Eastern Cape press” (Krüger, 2007).

On the international front there is no longer the intense interest there was in South Africa during the 1980s and 1990s (Krüger, 2007). Racial oppression, draconian media restrictions and the transforming into what was viewed as something of a global miracle and a normal society, without a revolution, made South Africa good media material and gave local media outlets some opportunities to make money. That “has of course faded” (Krüger, 2007).

“Even then, the Eastern Cape was quite a backwater, and only occasionally managed to be of interest internationally. That would be even more so today. The national media are cutting costs at every turn. Certainly groups like Independent are being squeezed very hard to keep costs low, and they would not be big clients...and Internet news sites spend almost nothing on original content” (Krüger, 2007).

Evidence that self-funded alternative news agencies can survive is not apparent, said Krüger (2007), and therefore survival for such wire services does not seem likely. With Internet clients apparently unwilling to spend money on alternative sources, the potential resources for news agencies other than the mainstream players looks problematic in many instances, as UNESCO’s (2001:1) report on News Agencies in the Era of the Internet found:

“The Internet poses many technical, design, professional and strategic challenges. However, the relevance of the Internet and appropriate responses to it can be misjudged unless the technology is analysed in relation to the broader context of agency operations.”

Historical evidence in the case of South Africa would seem to point to little growth potential for news agencies to disseminate news that goes outside the realms of Sapa or the government information service, Bua that distributes its releases on a non-news wire through Sapa.

7.7 Alternative and niche news agencies

By understanding the history and working of news agencies this study has sought to examine if there is wire service diversity, or if it can develop. That it is why it is worth studying the history and development of niche news agencies. This can cover areas such as development, gender issues, health, religion, etc. without necessarily being tied inextricably into playing an advocacy role for players involved in the issues, or for the stakeholders backing them. This section of this chapter, in particular, studies those news agencies that are sources of alternative news that more accurately present a greater global diversity.

Sapa is a cooperative owned by various South African newspapers working with mainstream international news groups and other news distributors. Among these, Sapa has a business link with global partners such as IPS, the Rome-based Inter Press Service, which has as part of its motto “another communication is possible” (IPS, 2007c:1). For distribution to mainstream media within South Africa, IPS uses Sapa, which has dedicated satellite links it can utilise (IPS, 2007b:1).

Thussu (2000:252) asserts that there is both a “moral imperative” and a democratic necessity for supporting an alternative to the “corporatised global communication” that dominates news distribution internationally. He asserts that the news agenda has to cover matters that are relevant to the majority of the world’s people. Such an agenda needs to scrutinise the consequence of policies negotiated at a multi-lateral level by international organizations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and World Trade Organization (WTO), and how they impact on the poor.

In clarifying how alternative news agencies differ from the mainstream wire services, therefore, it is useful to look to the development of some of the attempts to set up wire services outside the ambit of the big three (Reuters, AP and AFP) as they are presently structured, or the national news agencies.

The Non-aligned News Agencies Pool, referred to by Shrivastava (2007:24), was an international exchange that sought to boost the dissemination of news among non-aligned countries, and contributed to promoting alternative international communication (Thussu, 2000:251). The drawback for the Non-aligned News Agencies Pool was that it lacked journalistic credibility due to it consisting of government-sponsored wire services (2000::251).

Still, in defining “alternative news”, Couldry and Curran (2003:7) note that by “alternative media” they mean media that is produced to challenge real “concentrations of media power, whatever form those concentrations may take in different locations”.

Thussu (2000:251) mentions other smaller organizations such as the Malaysia-based Third World Network (TWN) features’ service which has been used among Asian newspapers, and which carries substantial coverage on trade issues and the World Trade Organization (TWN, 2007:1). There is also the news agency TWN supports, SUNS, originally named the Special United Nations Service and later renamed South-North Development Monitor (SUNS, 2008a:n.p.). TWN has, however, according to Thussu (2000:251), gained a reputation for “advocacy rather than conventional journalism” and its output is fairly small. It will be discussed more extensively later in this chapter.

7.7.1 Gemini News Service

The non-profit Gemini News Service, established in 1967 (Thussu, 2000:251), at one time ran features for more than 100 subscribers in 80 countries. In examining Gemini and taking the case of Africa, Thompson (2007:442) concurs with Van der Velden’s point (Van der Velden, 2007b:95):

“Africans don’t just need to tell their stories to the outside world. They need to tell them to one another” (Thompson, 2007:442).

Thompson observes how, for decades, Gemini News Service pioneered “South to South communication” and how it provided news to some agencies in the developed world such as to Canada’s Southam News Service, as well as being a pathfinder in recruiting and training

home-grown journalists to report on development matters. This practice of Gemini's enabled it to "reflect local perspectives rather than the outsider's view" (Thussu, 2000:251) presented by "most of the transnational news agencies".

Some of the news agencies presenting alternative news might be viewed as part of what Lopez-Escobar (2004:589) calls "the increasing disaffection towards politics and towards the mainstream media" that became a significant feature at the end of the 20th century "in some of the most traditional democracies". Lopez-Escobar notes that along with this disaffection the "Internet has appeared as a powerful medium", which is used by alternative and mainstream media, with both competing in its use. The Internet, however, offers "new information outlets" as well as advancing political discussions about "the emergence of a new civil society: in this case a global civil society".

This is a reference to organizations such as those that emerged during the time of the World Summit on the Information Society, which met officially for the first time in Geneva in December 2003, and that will be referred to later on in this chapter.

7.7.2 'Mainstream, not alternative'

Thompson observed (2007:442) that in the case of Gemini News, its founder Derek Ingram "objected to the notion that he was running an alternative news agency", as he wanted the wire service to be a source of mainstream news. The end result was, however, that like numerous other such news agencies, Gemini struggled financially, and in 2003 it stopped operating after nearly 30 years in the news business. "Perhaps it is time for an agency like Gemini News Service to be reborn" (Thompson, 2007:442).

Ingram's quest to have the news he was presenting accepted as mainstream news is, in the opinion of the author who runs a niche agency, likely to be the goal of news agencies that are sometimes described as alternative, yet what they are doing, is trying to reshape the mainstream news-flow. Some such wire services state that their goal is to broaden the news-flow with a greater diversity of copy that more truly reflects the world than the skewed images purveyed by the transnational news agencies, which have a Northern bias in their news selection.

Rome-based Inter Press Service, referred to during in the introduction to this chapter, which was set up as a journalists' co-operative in 1964 and better known as IPS, is “another key player in international alternative media” (Thussu, 2000:251). It is a news agency catering for a particularly particular niche or niches, just as e.g. Bloomberg does in its market information news service.

Another niche wire service is Ecumenical News International (ENI), the Geneva-based news agency that covers news about churches and religion, including the global institutions and society within which they work, and for which the author of this study works. It supplies news mainly to mainstream media or specialist religious media and academic institutions. It has a charter that guarantees it freedom of expression and it is independent from its funders under Swiss law (ENI, 2007).

Both IPS and ENI seem to fall into the realm of what Harcup (2003:371) describes as being alternative media. This is because they are able to provide, what he cites Habermas (1992:425-426) describing as “subcultural or class specific public spheres”. These can “compete with the dominant hegemonic public sphere”. Yet like Ingram's Gemini, while they can fall into this category, they act as news sources to the mainstream media as well as to outlets in the global South (IPS, 2007:n.p.; ENI, 2007).

7.7.3 IPS

IPS started in 1964 as a cooperative of international journalists who set up a non-profit agency. It as an information bridge between Europe and Latin America (Giffard, in Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:191) following “the political turbulence following the Cuban revolution of 1959” (IPS, 2007:n.p.p.). After a steady growth, it expanded into Asia and Africa with its aim to “give a voice to the voiceless” while endorsing news of development issues, and seeking to “create a better balance and flow of international news” (IPS, 2007). In order to strengthen its “non-profit identity”, IPS in 1994 altered its legal status and became a “public-benefit organisation for development cooperation” open to journalists and other professional communicators.

IPS, on its main Web site, describes itself as “civil society’s leading news agency” (IPS, 2007) and as a voice from “the South” for development that delves “into globalisation for the stories underneath”. The overall mission of IPS, according to its statutes, is a “former cooperative of journalists” that seeks to be “a public-benefit organization for development cooperation”:

“Its main object shall be to contribute to development by promoting free communication and a professional flow of information to reinforce technical and economic co-operation among developing countries ... its purpose to support the production and dissemination of information on national and international realities with particular regard to the developing countries.”

As with Gemini News, IPS has sought to focus (Thussu, 200:251) on coverage of issues affecting developing countries, and in that process its major presence was established in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in Latin America, where its Spanish language service was well received. Giffard made the presentation on IPS at the workshop that produced the 2001 UNESCO report *News Agencies in the Era of the Internet*. He (Giffard, 1998:191) postulates that globalisation is “no abstract concept” for IPS which he describes as the “world’s largest purveyor of information about the developing nations”.

“Global issues and global interdependence are the core of the agency’s news agenda and have a profound effect in shaping its philosophy, structure and financing.”

7.7.4 Globalisation and alternative agencies

There are those who view globalisation as a positive force for making a more compact world that ensures stability and growth under a system in which politics and national economies become more interdependent. Giffard (1998:192) notes, however, that not all share this view. IPS has carried the views of those who assert globalisation has “so weakened the nation state that it can no longer adequately protect its citizens” (Giffard, 1998:192) and the economic growth it pursues threatens the sustainability of the environment.

“And some say that the kind of cultural, economic, and social dislocation brought on by globalisation reinforces ethnic and religious identities, which further undermine the nation state’s ability to safeguard the rights of its citizens. IPS has tried to keep abreast of these historic shifts.”

Giffard, like Thussu (2000:252) notes that IPS has boosted its coverage of international agencies such as the WTO, the World Bank and the IMF. All three are institutions viewed by many both inside and outside them as a catalyst in the process of the globalisation process.

7.7.5 Development and good governance

There is, however, another aspect to the reporting carried out by news agencies on issues regarding development. It matches this study’s postulation that the most realistic media theory for the purposes of this study is one that combines aspects of the social responsibility theory and a development theory that enables press freedom as a development tool rather than seeing an adherence to it as a means of controlling the media. Such a theoretical standpoint shuns the view of “sunshine journalism” (Kuper & Kuper, 2001:3), which Bonning (in De Burgh, 2005:160) says is a form of journalism that presents governments’ interests as being congruent to public interests. Under the social responsibility theory, news institutions are rather viewed as part of the overall governance process of nations and as instruments of free expression in that process. IPS believes it is involved in that process (Lubetkin, 2006:n.p.). The IPS director-general, Mario Lubetkin (2006), referred to the importance of governance coverage in making a presentation on behalf of the news agency to honour outgoing UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in December 2006:

“IPS has been in the forefront of the global governance process. Without professional, independent and in-depth information of world political and economic issues, the global citizen will never be able to contribute towards the achievements of the new international agenda.”

7.7.6 Covering non-mainstream news

Joye's study (2006:3) based on both a quantitative online survey and a literature review among Flemish news practitioners in Belgium, finds that "IPS still represents a useful and necessary supplement to the mainstream news offer".

Rauch (2003:88) has found that imbalances in international news coverage that pushed on the arrival of IPS to provide content from a Southern perspective have produced research findings that its news output has a greater diversity "than mainstream agencies in terms of number of topics covered, datelines filed, and sources used". Part of that diversity comes in the IPS coverage of issues relating to women, and Geertsema (2005:vi) asserts that IPS provides an example of a news vehicle that is "globalised in the deterritorialisation of its production" through its distribution of content:

"IPS provides a particularly interesting study because of its gender mainstreaming policy, as gender equality is a concept that remains contested in nations across the world."

Geertsema observes (2005:vi) that there was insufficient news coverage devoted to women early on in the news agency, but IPS strived to solve this problem. A gender-mainstreaming project was begun in 1994 "to improve the coverage of gender issues" in the wire service, but which she notes, has only been partially successful. While arguing (Geertsma, 2005:vii) that IPS still has a long way to go in attaining "gender equality in its employment and news content", it provides other news organizations with an example "of how globalised journalism can include more diverse perspectives".

In its shortfall of resources to cover a global canvas, IPS faces limitations to the breadth it can cover. As Harcup (2003:370) notes, numerous "alternative projects" have a short life, an outcome "they share with many commercial media projects, incidentally", that lack sufficient capital.

When it comes to covering expensive actions such as the Iraq war and the war in other nearby areas, IPS has not been able to breach the coverage of the commercial transnationals.

Horvit (2006:429) conducted a study entitled “International news agencies and the war debate of 2003”. Citing Wittebols (1996:n.p.), Horvit (2006:429) observes that some studies show, when it comes to foreign policy in a country, the news coverage has a tendency to favour the government in that nation. She also refers to a cross-cultural study carried out by Alexseev and Bennett (1995:399-400) that found in regard to coverage of national security issues, whether it was Britain, Russia or the United States, “the elite news media” (Horvit, 2006:49) mostly carried “opinions of officials in the administration in power (more than 50 percent)”. Horvit refers to a study by Atwood (1987:n.p.) in which he indicates that foreign correspondents may give preference to sources from their own country, at least on an issue such as trade (Horvit, 2006:429). The aforementioned studies, however, notes Horvit, have explored mainly “either the prestige press or television, and not compared the work of news agencies”.

Horvit (2006:429) highlights some exceptions, such as Giffard (1999) and Rauch (2003), who are both cited in this study. She notes that Giffard, in research about the Beijing Conference on Women in 1995 as it was seen by three international news agencies (Giffard, 1999:327), found that Reuters and AP mentioned US sources most frequently in their coverage of the meeting. At the same time IPS quoted UN sources more than any other type of news agency cited.

“In her case study of a summit involving 100-plus developing countries, Rauch (2003: 97–98) found the AP quoted US official sources nearly as much as sources from the developing nations; IPS was more likely to quote sources from non-governmental organizations than was the AP. Neither the Giffard nor Rauch study focused on a brewing international crisis. Nevertheless, who is gathering the news seems to matter” (Horvit, 2006: 429).

Citing Giffard and Rivenburgh (2000:12), Horvit also notes that IPS is the biggest international wire service specialising in news from the developing world, and that despite its financial limitations (Boyd-Barrett, 2003: 376), IPS has survived because it offers “distinctly different” (Horvit, 2006:431) ways of presenting news to that from the global Western-based wire services.

Rauch (2003:89) for her part asserts that the type of “alternative journalism” that comes from IPS “deserves more scholarly attention” as it offers crucial “mediascapes” that permit its user “to imagine resisting a Northern knowledge monopoly” and construct more democratic news systems”.

In looking at differing “mediascapes”, Horvit (2006:429) notes Cohen’s observation (1963:13) 40 years earlier that different perceptions of the world derive not only from the interests of individuals, but also on how they are presented to them “by writers, editors, and publishers of the papers they read” .

7.7.7 IRIN, EurasiaNet and the IWPR

Another news agency that covers news relating to the developing world is the Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), which like IPS and ENI, uses mainly freelance correspondents. There seems to be little scholarly analysis available on this service as yet, resulting in discussion in this study to be merely descriptive.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA, 2007:1), IRIN was formed as “a multimedia humanitarian news and analysis service”. It covers crises in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and is a key project of the UNOCHA, the UN office that is responsible for international emergency coordination, humanitarian advocacy and policy. IRIN has editorial independence (UNOCHA, 2007:1) from its donors and UNOCHA. Some of its users are mainstream media organizations like the BBC. IRIN’s major donors are (UNOCHA, 2007:1) Australia, Canada, Denmark, the European Commission (ECHO), Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the USA (USAID).

Another news agency that is aimed at increasing the media capacity of developing nations is EurasiaNet (2008:1) which analyses and provides information on economic, environmental, political and social developments in Central Asian nations and those in the Caucasus, as well as in the Middle East, Russia and Southwest Asia. Backed by the Open

Society Institute, EurasiaNet is based in New York, and it “advocates open and informed discussion of issues that concern countries in the region”.

The Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR, 2008:1) for its part says it aims to “build peace and democracy through free and fair media”. IWPR operates as an online news agency and seeks to “develop skills and professionalism” as well as providing reporting that is reliable. It is backed by UNESCO, a number of Western governments and institutes such as the National Endowment for Democracy, the Open Society Institute and the Ploughshares” Foundation. It works in Afghanistan, the Caucasus, Central Asia, The Netherlands, Iran, Iraq, the Philippines, Southeastern Europe, Syria, Uganda and Southern Africa, including Zimbabwe.

7.7.8 SUNS and the Third World Network

On its own Web site, SUNS quotes Jan Pronk (2008:n.p), former Minister for Development Cooperation of The Netherlands, as saying sustaining the news agency is vital to manifest news and opinion relating to policy making regarding international development.

“I have always been very impressed by the quality of the bulletin as a channel for information on international negotiations.” (Pronk, 2008).

Pronk notes that in Geneva itself, at the WTO “one is less aware of the information-gap abroad”. More explicitly, regarding international commerce, McChesney (1997:1) has written that the world is threatened by a “spectre” in which small but immensely powerful, “mostly US-based transnational media corporations” have dominant control of the commercial media system throughout the world. The system functions to promote “commercial values” and the values of international markets as it undermines journalism that does not tie in with “the immediate bottom line” or established corporate interests.

“It is a disaster for anything but the most superficial notion of democracy -- a democracy where, to paraphrase John Jay’s maxim, those who own the world ought to govern it” (McChesney, 1997:1).

In his later work McChesney (2004:106) cites a survey by David Croteau on the Washington press corps which finds they are “to the right of the US population on core economic issues”. McChesney points to the survey as indicative of US media coverage concerning global trade deals that are negotiated at bodies such as the WTO. He asserts (2004:107) that the US media has “distorted the issues” in its coverage, especially in its reference to “free trade”. This is often done by not correctly presenting “complex agreements involving corporate-negotiated protectionism and subsidies”. This, says McChesney, derives from a close connection between media companies, politicians, journalists and business leaders whereby in economic coverage, global trade deals are applauded by sources used for business journalism because they assure more business and greater profit. In addition the owners of the big media organizations are strong backers of world trade agreements (McChesney, 2004: 107) that facilitate conditions for snapping up ownership of media in other countries, making intellectual property laws tighter, aiding access to cheaper labour for markets, opening up new markets, and paving the way to sell their wares in new markets.

“The audience for business news is primarily the upper middle class, who see much to gain from the trade deals and little downside. Journalists fit squarely in this camp: they have little reason to fear they will lose their jobs to cheaper Haitian or Vietnamese labourers. Free trade deals seem A-OK to them, and all the institutional pressures are pushing in one direction. Hence, stories tend to herald ‘free trade’ agreements and ignore the important democratic issues involved” (McChesney, 2004: 107).

Khor (2008) explains that SUNS aims to counter the corporate-led slant that much of the mainstream and transnational media has in its reportage of the WTO that McChesney asserts exists. SUNS seeks to interpret news and it carries a wide range of opinions emanating from perspectives of “local communities, and perspectives of people in developing countries” (Khor, 2008). He acknowledges that all media have a tack or “slant” in carrying news, including the transnationals with their corporate-led direction, which Khor observes, the professionals working for them, would argue is neutral or un-biased.

“Our slant is to try to inject the views and interest of local communities of the developing countries. That is the mandate of our organization. So we try to promote interpretation of news as well as opinions that emerge from the broad platform of the perspective of the local communities, and perspective of the people in the developing countries” (Khor, 2008).

While the Internet has offered SUNS the chance to reach more readers it has also presented its problems such as readers or newspaper organizations often being no longer willing to pay for our its news, or even for analysis as in the past.

“I think this is because they have such a wide variety of news sources that they can get on the Internet for free, which in the past, didn’t exist. So by supplying news alone, it is very difficult for agencies like ours to finance our operations” (Khor, 2008:n.p).

7.7.9 ENI as a niche news agency

As a vastly smaller player than the Big Three, ENI has a small core staff in Geneva and about 50 correspondents, none of whom are staff reporters. The network of stringers for ENI works in Africa, Asia, Australasia, Europe, North and South America.

ENI’s main role is as a wholesale distributor of news about religion and churches (ENI, 2007:n.p.) to secular news organizations, such as the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the BBC, National Public Radio in the United States and the Dutch newspaper *Trouw*, the *Zimbabwean* as well as to specialist religious media and academic institutions. Like IPS, ENI is unable to sustain itself only from its subscriptions. The agency’s non-subscription revenue comes from membership fees of four sponsoring organizations, which are four global and regional church groupings. ENI’s charter spells out a commitment to independent journalism (See Appendix B).

Correspondents send in news about the role of churches and religion in society, whether it is positive or negative (Kenny, 2006:1).

“Our job is to resist the pressure to transmit news about the churches that only makes them feel comfortable” (Kenny, 2004:n.p.).

ENI also carries spot news, features and pictures about inter-faith relationships and the role of religions in developmental issues such as the fight against HIV and AIDS, trade and economic justice, civil society development and good governance. It distributes its news via email to media clients, but also “retails” news on its Web site as well as providing some free content, and it has a monthly printed publication.

ENI is a blip on the screen financially compared to mighty players such as the Big Three or even IPS, with an annual core budget of only 750,000 Swiss francs or about 750,000 US dollars in 2007 (Brown, 2007:1). It operates on the same principles and with the same goal in mind as the major news agencies: To get news out, mainly to other news distributors on the wire, via email, the World Wide Web and as a print product that is both timely and accurate (Kenny, 2006:1). It differs from IPS, in that the majority of its news is spot news and not features, while IPS concentrates on features. ENI has over its 15 years been gradually writing more features, but subscribers have shown in surveys they still like spot news as well. ENI has a loose cooperation with IPS Europe and has sought funding on at least one joint reportage project with IPS (Kenny, 2006:2). ENI raises barely 15 percent of its revenue through subscriptions (Brown, 2006:n.p), while IPS raises less than one third of its revenue from subscriptions (Giffard, 1998:2000), a situation that any news management would likely see as being financially precarious. ENI has cooperation agreements with the oldest wire service in Germany, epd (Evangelische Pressedienst) and it was during 2008 negotiating with two US news agencies for exchange agreements (Kenny, 2008:n.p.).

7.8 Obstacles

While Boyd-Barrett says IPS’s diverse coverage keeps it in business (Boyd-Barrett, 2003:376), Giffard asserts that “the philosophical perspective of IPS” is one reason for the agency’s precarious financial position. This made it difficult for the agency to break into mainstream markets in places such as the United States in order to pull in mainstream news subscribers (Giffard, 2004:n.p). IPS had been linked with NWICO (Boyd-Barrett & Thussu,

1992: 23). The proposed information system that caused such heated debate during the height of the Cold War was seen as being aligned with “the more ‘progressive’ movements” (Giffard, 1989:38) in areas of the developing world such as Africa, Latin America and the Middle East. Paterson (1998:95) argues that NWICO’s particular “demands” on global media “lingers in the consciousness of news agency journalists” in the manner of a “vaguely recalled bad dream”, evoking images of authoritarian regimes “and annoying academics trying to wrest control of the international news agenda”. Rauch (2003:90) concurs, saying that the links that IPS has to NWICO may be a “liability” and a factor holding back “mass audiences of the information mainstream”.

Giffard (1989:38), who serves on the board of IPS, counters bias assertions against the news agency by asserting that its close attention to coverage of the developing world does not mean it has a preconceived antipathy to the West. The IPS’ news services “are every bit as objective as those of the major agencies” and the differentiation comes in what is covered and the themes that are stressed. Rauch (2003:90) finds the perception of Third World bias regarding IPS has been challenged by some communication researchers who have found the agency’s news coverage to be “both critical and balanced”. While Joye’s study (2006:3) found IPS news stories question the establishment, it also indicated that if the agency were to “maintain its unique role” of raising awareness and “bridging the information gap between North and South”, it would need to offer “a faster and more professional news service”.

IPS has also been a victim of the global trend towards privatisation of business, says UNESCO (2001:19) on the effect of the Internet on news agencies. “The Internet has undercut IPS carrier services” which had been responsible for one third of the agencies revenues. There has also been a downturn in demand for technical services and the undercutting of other services due to “deregulation and privatisation” (2001:19).

Thussu (2002:252) has also discussed the “precarious” financial situation for IPS, which he asserts has “failed to make itself economically and commercially viable” having instead a dependency on funding from “Western aid agencies and the UN organizations”, while noting that it is recognised as an NGO by the United Nations.

“Consequently, it has become more of a pressure group, putting Southern concerns on the UN agenda rather than a news organization and the NGO approach to journalism is evident in its coverage of global issues (Giffard & Streck, 1998). By concentrating on news features it has retained a niche for itself in a highly competitive global news market” (Thussu, 2000:252).

7.9 Funding

According to Rauch (2003:89), IPS is funded mostly by Western civil society organizations as well as the UN system.

“IPS represents the redistribution of capital and technology resources from the wealthy North to the poorer South.”

It is for that reason that it is “historically associated with the dependency paradigm” (Rauch, 2003:89) that came to the fore in the mid-1960s and resulted in the demands by developing nations, international non-governmental organizations and some scholars for NWICO, through which “Southern media would be protected and subsidised”. When NWICO floundered after the United States withdrew from UNESCO in 1984, the onus fell on agencies in the current era to find their own funding, as there is no official global body that subsidizes news for world-wide distributors, although cases such as IRIN warrant further study.

During a joint-funding proposal ENI conducted with IPS on a reporting project, ENI learnt that IPS has developed a complex funding set up that links its different regions into specific projects as these are easier to resource than gaining core capital backing, something that ENI also has in its own business plan (Kenny, 2006:2). Just as ENI faces a precarious economic battle so does IPS. On its own Web site, IPS describes the situation:

“The challenges of our times are the greatest that IPS has faced in its history, but the current state of the communications media leaves an enormous space for our agency, and it is our responsibility to fill it” (IPS, 2007:n.p.).

Giffard carried out a study of comparative analysis on the coverage by wire services of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) that held its first plenary session in Geneva in 2003. In documents distributed by the WSIS secretariat, the aims of the summit were seen as seeking to narrow the gap between rich and poor countries through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) “as inequalities in access will make other development gaps even harder to bridge” (WSIS, 2002:2). Giffard notes (2004:29) that in comparing IPS with AP and AFP, it was not the intention of the study to suggest that IPS is in the “same league” regarding output and the depth of its coverage as the big agencies.

“IPS is, by comparison, a shoestring operation with a limited, but, as Lubetkin points out, a clearly defined set of news values and priorities.”

Giffard (2004:29) explains that his analysis shows that if IPS can garner sufficient resources it will be in a position to offer enhanced coverage of matters that inhabitants in developing nations find of key interest. In addition to people in the North who seek “a different perspective on the news, IPS is a valuable alternative”.

Joye also alludes to the tight financial situation facing IPS in the region where he studied its role. “Like its big brother, IPS Flanders has always been balancing on a thin financial line” (Joye, 2006:16). While IPS has lost some important subscribers, Joye says it has still been able to “build up a sound and loyal client base”.

“Apart from the daily press, subscribers include portal Web sites, specialised magazines and NGOs (e.g. Oxfam). Nowadays the agency receives substantial financial support from the Flemish government” (Joye, 2006:16).

In the case of ENI (2007), the news agency is dependent on the annual membership fee that it gets from its biggest funders, namely its four main sponsors. They are the World Council of Churches, the Lutheran World Federation, the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and the Conference of European Churches, four groupings that represent Anglican, Protestant and Orthodox Christians with more than 550 million members worldwide. At the October 2007

meeting of ENI's executive committee, the agency's president reported to other board members that any decrease in funding for the agency by any one of its sponsors at the current time, would be tantamount to a desire to shut it down (ENI, 2007a:2).

In Weibull's analysis of special models of media subsidies (in Couldry & Curran, 2003:105) that have been debated in Sweden for more than three decades, he asserts that the subventions were brought in to sustain a "broad political debate but also that they have stimulated pluralism in the press". Still the subsidies, while playing a key role for many years, appear to have declined in "their significance in terms of the pluralism of the Swedish newspaper market" (Weibull, 2003:106).

Press subsidies might be rejected in markets such as the United States, whereas they have been used in countries like Sweden and they seem to exist in other mature democracies. In developing countries, there is the paradox of a lack of funds to subsidise media, but also the fears of those who believe in freedom of the press that subsidies can be used as a lever to control rather than allow news diversity (De Beer, 1998:19). The UN report (2001:30) on news agencies explains that subsidies "are not in vogue" in the current climate in some Asian countries where "political authorities either cannot or will not continue to subsidise national agencies" and the wire services are "under the most severe threat of collapse".

7.10 Conclusion

Lewis (2007;n.p) writing on non-profit journalism in North America, asserts that there has never existed a greater need for "independent, original, credible information" about the complex world at a time when technology has enabled such "instantaneous global transmission of pictures, sounds, and words" .

"But all this is occurring in a time of absentee owners, harvested investments, hollowed-out newsrooms, and thus a diminished capacity to adequately find and tell the stories. The standard euphemism to characterise these peculiar times is that the news media are undergoing a historic "transformation", which is certainly true" (Lewis, 2007:n.p.).

Lewis suggests the founding of “non-profit online newspapers serving their communities” that would be supported by “local citizens and area foundations”, or even in association with higher educational institutions, or by trying to pull in mass subscribers who are members, such as those who belong to the National Geographic Society.

“Such things are absolutely possible, and absolutely sustainable, with the right combinations of people, resources, and timing -- and they are certainly needed” (Lewis, 2007).

The importance of what Lewis suggests is not so much that it is new on a global scale. An examination of much of the funding mechanism of news agencies such as IPS and ENI would reveal that they have similar membership/subscriber patterns built into their business models (IPS, 2007; ENI, 2007). What is important is that the argument in favour of non-profit models for newspapers and news agencies is growing in places such as the United States, where profit as the bottom line has been a non-negotiable tenet for much of the media.

7.11 Summary

This chapter has scrutinised wire services as purveyors of news in a range of areas, but focused on national and niche news agencies that operate separately to both the big commercial players and the national wire services. Many national news agencies face the same problems relating to resources as the niche wire services.

National and niche news agencies often deliver coverage of issues relating to development of the less wealthy countries of the world rather than to that of the big financial movers and shakers that are intertwined with the world’s commercial system and international politicking. The chapter has looked at the financial disadvantages those offering such alternative news suffer against the big players, such as the Big Three (AFP, AP and Reuters).

The chapter has also examined the flows and ebbs of the smaller agencies' struggles for survival. While their need to paint a more diverse picture of the world is affirmed, the models they can use to sustain themselves successfully are less clear. Although the role of the Internet has grown at an astronomical rate, it is still in its infancy and the overall impact of it on alternative news agencies has not fully emerged (UNESCO, 2001:20).

“Given that the kind of information that IPS has committed to gather and distribute is now widely and directly available on the Internet, have the ‘alternative’ news agencies outlived their purpose, and if not, what is their function now?” (UNESCO, 2001:20).

Certainly it is a question that can only be solved by more quantitative and qualitative scholarly research into news agencies and their importance for media, which will be raised in Chapter 8, the concluding one. The final chapter will seek to synthesise the main points in this study, and also to make some recommendations in regard to measures that could be instituted to create and sustain more diverse wire services, which better explain societies to themselves.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

Chapter 7 presented a global canvas by examining the purveyance of news by national and alternative news agencies that operate separately to the transnational agencies and the biggest global commercial players. The penultimate chapter examined alternative wire services or niche news agencies.

This study is based on the assumption that the theory applicable to news should be one that incorporates a combination of social responsibility and development, so as to broaden societal discourse in a manner that allows for freedom of expression and of the media.

In critically examining the literature on the history of wire services, a significant observation of this study is that the big players in the news agency world gained an initial advantage when they started at the time of the invention of the telegraph. This gave them a head start, through the strategic placement of their initiators, such as Julius Reuter and Charles Havas (Read, 1992:11; Loomis, 2007), in the socio-political system of the mid-19th century. That era, in which the current transnational agencies came to the fore, coincided with the global dominance of Western European and North American nations. They were at the forefront of the Industrial Revolution, and agencies such as Havas (which became AFP), Reuters, and later AP, were able to consolidate on the powers of their nations in the colonial and imperialist systems of the 19th and 20th centuries.

The domination of big European and North American news agencies persists in the Internet era in perhaps an even more concentrated form, which Tunstall (1999:191-200) calls the World News Duopoly, between the United States and Britain. Despite a “modest boom in the growth of news agencies” (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 1998:2) in the 1970s and 1980s and the fact that before the Internet era, “retail audiences” (1998:3) had not existed for news agencies, Boyd-Barrett asserts that social scientists have lost their interest in news agencies after taking a “brief look” at them in the mid-1980s.

Chapter 8 will summarise the chapters and discuss the central research questions of this study as well as the findings of this study. It will synthesise the main points and make recommendations in regard to making wire services more diverse entities which better explain societies to themselves and which can broaden the public discourse.

8.2 Summary

Chapter 1 introduced the background and rationale to this study as well as the central research question and why a mediahistoriographical approach was used, which entailed a critical review of the literature pertaining to the history of news agencies. The first chapter presented an outline of the research design. It dealt with the introduction to the topic: what are news wire services all about, and what are some of the problems around news agencies that can be investigated?

Chapter 2 provided context to the study. Firstly, it elaborated on explaining the importance of news agencies. Secondly, it gave a historical overview, and thirdly it explained the current 21st century background to news agencies. The chapter also included definitions including those concerning news agencies.

Chapter 3 examined the theories or concepts that can be applied to what news agencies should be, and do, as instruments of the media. It in turn raised the question of who should make the decision on what the media theories seek to explain. To engage in such a discourse, the study noted the various theories of the press that have been postulated, mainly since the middle of the 20th century. A theoretical model for this study that combines aspects of both the development and social responsibility theories was found suitable.

In Chapter 4, the methods used to carry out the study were elaborated upon. It explained the inclusion of an extensive literature review of scholarly and mass media information on news agencies, as well as interviews with media scholars and news agency professionals.

Chapter 5 was a critical assessment of the main theoretical journalism and media historiographical literature that formed a substantial part of the readings. The readings included research papers in scholarly media journals relating to news-flow, the role of news wire services in globalisation and a discussion on the debate regarding the New World Information Order, pertinent to the discourse on news agencies during the Cold War era, and which still resonates. This chapter also examined analyses of wire agencies by leading practitioners and writings from technical as well as popular publications.

Chapter 6 focused on the rapid development of news agencies in the 19th century, in the early part of the 20th century and how later they transformed to cope with the age of television, and subsequently the arrival of the Internet. The Internet has become a key platform for dissemination of news in the 21st century and the chapter also further examined the role of wire services in globalisation and the impact that process has had on their development. Other processes that have impacted on the development of news agencies, such as prevailing social or political factors, as well as using advanced technology to move market information and enhance brand image, were also discussed.

Chapter 7 focused on news agencies as global operators. It discussed the rise of the national news agencies and their importance as nation-building tools in the 20th century, as well as their prospects in the 21st century following the rise of the Internet. This chapter also scrutinised South Africa's news agencies and it examined smaller, niche and alternative news agencies that operate separately to the transnational agencies, the big commercial players and the national wire services. The chapter also looked at lessons for those seeking to rectify the news-flow imbalances mentioned by the Communication Rights in the Information Society (CRIS), a coalition for democratisation of the media that came to the fore during the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in Geneva, in 2003 and in Tunis, in 2005.

Chapter 8 draws final conclusions after studying the state of large and small agencies in the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries and how they are faring. It attempts to answer the central research questions and offers some prognostications for the future of wire agencies, as well as suggestions to sustain a much greater diversity of news agencies. The study concludes with

recommendations that could provide some assistance in making news agencies more diverse purveyors of news.

8.2.1 Recap of central research questions

The recommendations of this study should be linked to the central research questions of this study, which were two questions with the second one having two parts:

1. What is the mediahistoriographical development of news agencies as “purveyors of news”?
2. (a) What is the contribution of technological development to wire agency development?
(b) What is the contribution of wire services to the diversity of news-flow?

The main thrust of the mediahistoriographical development of news agencies was outlined in Chapter 5: the Literature Review; Chapter 6: Historical and technological evolution of big agencies and in Chapter 7: Wire services as purveyors of news.

8.3 Findings

Firstly, in studying the history and development of news agencies, a finding that stands out is the constant linkage to technology, such as the telegraph initially, to enable the vehicle named after it, wire services, to purvey news ever faster. While news agencies had first used pigeons (Shrivastava, 2007:1) to disseminate news, this had been done between cities or areas in the same region. It was the distribution of data via the telegraph (Jenks, 2006:11; Thussu, 2000:20) which enabled news agencies to take off and become global players. Yet, probably as important, was that global expansion of news agencies assisted advancements in the telegraph and helped it expand its reach.

A second finding of the study is that news agencies, as the “oldest electronic media” (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2004a:37), have, since their very beginning in the 19th century, contributed to the processes of globalisation. Globalisation in turn has impacted on news agencies, so there is a two way interaction.

A third finding is that at the end of the 20th century the number of news agencies “that can be described as ‘global’” (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2004a:41) had declined. Whereas there was once the “Big Five” -- AFP, AP, Reuters, TASS and UPI -- by the mid-1990s there were Reuters and AP in the top tier, followed by AFP in third slot. UPI’s decline (Moisy, 1996) during the 1980s and 1990s was a significant event for the world news business, and especially for the access of the media in the United States to international news. Regarding news agency television news, by 1998 there were only two key players (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2004a:43), Reuters Television News and Associated Press Television News.

As a fourth finding, one can conclude that new technologies, such as the Internet, were seen to offer both opportunities and challenges to news agencies. Initially the Internet was seen to usher in a greater chance for news diversity in order to enhance the public discourse. Yet in the 21st century there is still a tendency for a few news agencies to continue to play a dominant role in the rapidly developing Internet era (Paterson 2006:4). The “lion’s share” of news from international sources derives from “a few original producers of content” providing for news aggregators such as Google and Yahoo, “despite the audacious pretence of source diversity which each promotes”.

In terms of funding, a fifth finding is that after the collapse of NWICO in the 1980s, the global tendency has not favoured publicly funding national news agencies and they have suffered (UNESCO, 2001). Globalisation, which the transnational players encourage in supporting media consolidation (McChesney, 2004: 107), has not benefitted many of the smaller, national, alternative or niche news agencies, such as IPS, the world’s biggest purveyor of information concerning developing countries (Giffard, 1998:191).

Even a tightly-financed operation like Sapa has been forced to scale-back on its coverage despite the commitment of international bodies to support news agencies and the potential there is for Sapa to be a regional news agency. In many parts of Europe even the “very viability of the institution of the national news agency” (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen 2000:86) faces grave difficulties, mainly stemming from the available economic resources to sustain them.

Given the above findings of this mediahistoriographical study, while technological developments still offer the potential for news agencies to increase their capacity, a sixth finding is that there is no indication that they have helped greater and sustained news diversity. Rather as news purveyors on the Internet grow in numbers, “the original sources of consequential international news stories remain few” (Paterson, 2003:1).

As a seventh and last finding, it seems the current situation results in news aggregators offering (Paterson, 2006:19) users the “bizarre spectacle of ... dozens of links to entirely irrelevant media outlets for every story”, which does not indicate that news diversity is growing. Despite innovating news services in recent years trying to offer an alternative to the major services “in on-line and television news distribution” (Paterson, 2003:i), there has been very limited success “due mostly to a lack of interest from investors”.

“The forces of information globalization and convergence have generally strengthened, rather than weakened, the dominant position of the traditional news wholesalers” (Paterson, 2003:i).

8.3.1 Discussion

Paterson’s research (2003:1), noted in the seventh finding, indicates that although there has been an increase in the number of news providers on the Internet, the “the original sources of consequential international news stories remain few” and the transnational giants AP and Reuters “dominate Internet news in various ways”. This is despite the claims of many cyber-news providers to have editorial independence.

Ó’Siochrú’ (2004:6) has asserted that there must be a “democratisation of media and communication” in order to move forward, rather than the efforts of governments or industry “to create new global orders [or systems]”. He does not, however, elaborate on how that process for democratisation can move forward. Yet, a greater recognition of how crucial news agencies are in the news-flow that exists in the 21st century, and a better understanding of the need for diversity in wire services, could be part of the process to which Ó’Siochrú is referring.

A constant thread of this study has been the linkage of positions of influence held by certain individuals to leverage advantage of technological advance in the development of news agencies. The three major all-round news agencies and media companies that exist today, AFP, AP and Reuters, which now comes under the umbrella of Thomson Reuters, were all starters in the wire service business with the rise of the telegraph during the 19th century. The link between British prestige, power and media had been patently obvious in the mid-19th century (Jenks, 2006:11). Like Thussu (2000:20), Jenks (2006:11) notes that in the 19th century, cables and the British flag circled the earth and Reuters followed. In the 20th century it was more of the same. “Power and news go together” (Jenks, 2006:11), as British capitalism and the news industry developed along with one another.

The Thomson Reuters amalgamation (Reuters, 2008) on 17 April 2008, between a Canadian financial information provider and one of the founding news agencies, forged one more powerful media conglomerate that could take on another giant financial information provider, Bloomberg. Reuters Media Solutions, which is a unit of Thomson Reuters, says “Reuters is the world’s largest international multimedia news organization” (Reuters 2008). AP (2008) describes itself as “the backbone of the world’s information system” in providing “daily newspaper, radio, television and online” subscribers with “coverage in all media and news in all formats”. These two agencies remain the strongest, with AFP following them, to make them the “Big Three” general news agencies.

One can conclude that the Internet, so far, has not been a panacea for news diversity, which can only exist with a greater number of news agencies. The role of the Internet has grown at an astronomical rate, yet it is still in its infancy and the overall impact of it on alternative or niche news agencies is still not clear, although the trends illustrated in this study do not bode well for diversity.

UNESCO (2001:20), despite being committed to global news diversity, poses the question that if a wire service such as IPS battles to survive, “alternative’ news agencies” could be an anachronism. It also poses the question: “if not, what is their function now?”

The fact that this question is posed in the UNESCO report is indicative of the lack of clarity regarding how to deal with news agencies, despite the widespread support for their existence as being necessary and desirable. Still, Internet data and analysis of its effect on wire agencies big and small, appears to be insufficient to enable clear analysis and accurate forecasting for news agencies.

The Internet itself, as well as the news it carries, lacks diversity and people are “excluded by language from participating online” (Curran, 2003:278) as about “85 percent of Web content is in English” despite less than 10 percent of people in the world having English as their first language.

Following the findings that indicate news diversity is not growing, but that major news agency dominance is persisting, the question arises, how can such disparities be rectified, given the need to broaden public discourse?

If national news agencies in the mould of Sapa can be viewed as development tools, why can they not also exist as credible vehicles for disseminating news, as is shown by the continuing attachment of South African commercially run newspapers to the agency, and also as is seen by the standing it has in the eyes of UNESCO? Sapa was mentioned and praised in the 2001 UNESCO report on news agencies in the Internet era that “could change as moves are made to assist the news agencies in the SADC” (Forbes, 2003:15).

If Sapa were to get official funding in the manner, say, that IPS (Inter Press Service) does, the South African agency could get access to valuable seeding capital. That could boost its aspirations of becoming a stronger regional player, supplying African news to Africans and to the rest of the world, acting as a facilitator in reversing the one way flow of global news to the continent.

There is a strong case for supporting national news agencies in the interests of the free flow of information and to facilitate freedom of expression. The question is, how is it to be done? Is it through State intervention? Or is it by bringing the question of news information

flow more prominently into the debates in the World Trade Organization, the global body that oversees international commerce?

As evidenced by the 2001 UNESCO (2002:39) report relating to national news agencies, and referred to earlier in this chapter and also in Chapter 1, action can be taken to help improve the situation for such wire services that need government assistance.

“In this event it is important that government funding should be adequate, to ensure that the basic mission of a national news agency is fulfilled -- which is to report on and to distribute news about the nation as a whole, for the benefit of local and international news consumers. Inadequate financing undermines the usefulness of the news product, and undermines the credibility of both the news agency and the government whose responsibility it is, in these circumstances, to support it” (UNESCO, 2002:39).

Yet support for national news agencies from an international body does not address how to implement financing and how to ensure independence from interference. Constitutional safeguards can be rolled out by governments, but these are also the responsibility for of society as whole.

Given the capacity restraints to the greater subsidisation of national news agencies and with the lack of evidence that the idea of financing news agencies is gaining ground, along with unpredictable outcomes of how the Internet will impact the free flow of news in the future, national news agencies face more uncertain times. Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen (2002: 68) note that a key question is whether national news agencies still have a role. There is also the question of how that role should best be performed in a global economy.

It can be argued that there is a role for national news agencies in developing countries where limited media are “likely to be concentrated in urban areas”. There could be logic for using them for “developmental campaigns”, and where the national agency can help the performance of “the government’s own internal channels of information”.

The world's future to a large extent will be contingent "on how modernity can be tamed" (Tehrani & Tehrani, 1997:164) so as to sustain an ongoing wealth production that does not have "disastrous consequences for the global natural, social and cultural environments". Tehrani and Tehrani (1997:163) have expressed support for NWICO, which was a "victim of the very imbalances it critiqued" (Boyd-Barrett, 2003:45). Some of the news agencies established under NWICO, such as Tanzania's Shihata (UNESCO, 2001:38) no longer exist. NWICO, however, focused on national news agencies, while not-for-profit smaller niche news agencies are a more recent phenomenon.

Change is also needed from wire services which "need to change and establish new business models" (Boyd-Barrett, 2004:43). Some of the newer news agencies have been able to adapt to the Internet era while "others find it a threat they find hard to cope with".

"The Internet, together with CNN and satellite channels, poses a real threat to the traditional role of news agencies as wholesalers that only reach their audience through other media" (Boyd-Barrett, 2004:43).

Little analysis appears to have been done on news agencies that are provided with UN and EU funding such as IRIN, EurasiaNet and the IWPR, but in the view of the author much of their reportage appears credible and offers a diverse insight into areas that do not appear to be fully covered by the transnational agencies. The same applies to alternative and niche news agencies such as SUNS and ENI.

The world haggles for degrees of subsidy, or what are sometimes known as "sweeteners" in business deals for differing aspects of commerce via tariff debates at the WTO. There is, therefore, an argument for greater global debate on how to allow for the development of global media and the news agencies that are so often the essential sustenance for the news purveyed on the screens, airwaves and in the newspapers of the world. The debate has been alluded to in the developments that have stemmed from WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society), but whether the discourse will continue to remain on the fringes, or join mainstream debate, is still open to debate.

8.4 Recommendations and conclusion

Early in this study the importance of news agencies as reliable providers of information and news to society was established. News diversity is important to the public discourse in order to better inform the inhabitants of the globe what is going on around them. Yet the number of news sources is not growing with demographic advancements and appears even to be shrinking with the strengthening of the “position of the traditional news wholesalers” (Paterson, 2003:i). This study has asserted that scholarly material on news agencies generally appears far less prominent than on other media components such as newspapers, radio, television and the Internet.

Given the importance of news agencies and the problems they face, a news paradigm for them is necessary. That means they should be given more backing and financing. In order for that to be done in a constructive manner aimed at lasting capacity building, more needs to be known about news agencies, how they operate, and how they can operate successfully.

8.4.1 More scholarly attention

This study recommends that greater resources should be devoted by governments, private enterprise, educational and research institutions into researching news agencies. A number of scholars cited in this study (Boyd-Barrett & Rantanen, 2004:42; Rauch, 2003:89) have said “news agencies deserve scholarly attention”.

The role of globalisation on news agencies and how some wire services have themselves helped propel the processes have been a thread in this study. Yet scholars have noted that globalisation is still not well understood in regard to news agencies. Rantanen (2002:4) has argued that neither the globalisation optimists nor the globalisation pessimists had considered the extent of “the role of media and communications in the process of globalisation”. Due to this omission in the role of communication and media, she asserts that an essential element of globalisation had been missed, namely “the relationship between the global and the national” (Rantanen, 2002:4).

There is some scholarly material on the big news agencies, but studies on alternative news agencies still appear to be in their infancy. Giffard, Rauch and others have done some studies on IPS. Rauch (2003:89) says, however:

“Alternative journalism such as IPS deserves more scholarly attention because it is vital to the mediascapes that enable audiences to imagine resisting a Northern knowledge monopoly and building more democratic news systems ... They are important for the survival of a ‘public sphere’ of democratic dialogue, and also for global as well as for national and regional security.”

8.4.2 More resources

If news agencies are to play a meaningful role, more resources need to be devoted to getting more news (Paterson, 2006:21), which means more trained journalists need to be deployed. Purveyors such as Reuters may still be the top players, but senior Reuters news professionals have said in private conversations with the author that less and less resources are being devoted to news gathering and more and more to the technological tools to transmit financial information ever faster to users in the financial industry, as they give the agency its biggest returns. Alternative news agencies face even greater problems, often for basic resourcing.

“In the longer term the industry must invest in more original reporting as an alternative to the few genuinely international news organisations now on offer, and give more prominence to buying, and properly translating, original non-English language reporting from around the world. Without such change, new media will continue to present to most users the dangerous illusion of multiple perspectives which actually emanate from very few sources” (Paterson, 2006:21).

Communitarian communication “as a Utopian aspect of globalisation” has facilitated the process of “changing the face of the media in the postcolonial period” (Banda, 2007:86). While the “donor funding” has enhanced “aspects of media development”, it has “also created dependencies and unsustainability”, and in some instances “let governments off the hook of their own responsibilities”.

“On the other hand, much media -- some that today is even commercially viable -- and much that is positive in the media environment, would be less advanced if it were not for external resources” (Banda 2007:86).

That leaves the question as to how to finance alternative news agencies, whose products many consumers expect to be cheap or even free. Financing is a quandary constantly confronted by niche wire service managers who battle to cover all operating costs merely with subscription fees or Internet advertising.

“There have been a few important, although ultimately unsuccessful, challenges to the dominance of the news agencies, leading this author to conclude that public policy must address the implications of their control over the international ‘public sphere’.” (Paterson, 2003:1).

While policy makers’ continue to debate and balk at allowing for payment of news that can be gathered and transmitted without fetters, one area of funding is philanthropic institutions (Gastrow, 2008). During a speech in South Africa in 2008, Shelagh Gastrow, executive director of Inyathelo (The South African Institute of Advancement), which helps train people and non-governmental organizations to raise funds to sustain themselves, gave the analogy of independent media in Zimbabwe which “survived through philanthropy and the doggedness of courageous journalists”.

“Our press freedom in many ways depends on civil society organisations to act as watchdogs and advocates for such freedom” (Gastrow, 2008).

WSIS (2003), when it met, committed international society to encouraging a “diversity of media ownership” that conforms to national law and takes “into account relevant international conventions”. Hamelink (2008:3), who argues for an “alternative to news”, postulates that a “new ‘information literacy’ is necessary” to free society from the “the oppressive effects of the institutionalised public media”. But while the debate will likely continue about public subsidising of news and news agencies, the news gathering and

dissemination process will go on, and means have to be found to keep them going. Capital is needed to run news agencies, small and large.

Speaking for South Africa, Gastrow asserts that “philanthropy and the non-profit sector address many of the issues that make daily news”. Among these she includes: xenophobia, AIDS, gender, environmental and human rights’ issues, groundbreaking research, universities, environmental issues and human rights.

If journalists are to seek the money of philanthropists, they need skills that are not learned in the newsroom to do that. Regarding training journalists in Britain, Phillips (2005:241) notes the “complete separation between the practical and the intellectual”. Aspiring journalism leaders, in their education might be served by learning not only practical computer skills, but attention could be given to imparting to journalists what is needed to raise funds to sustain themselves.

Some of the scholars who are studying news agencies, such as Boyd-Barrett, Paterson and Rantanen, do not seem optimistic about the chances for “real changes towards diversity in the news” (Paterson, 2006:21) under the new technology. Unless changes in the investment pattern occur, “new media” will carry on with presenting “the dangerous illusion of multiple perspectives” that really derives “from very few sources”.

If people are, however, presented with the opportunity to “intervene in their reality” (Hamelink, 2008:120) there must be “information channels” created that “permit the coherent organization of information”.

Until then, it seems that major news agencies will have to rely on the wisdom of those steering the markets, as, simultaneously, the alternative news agencies will depend on philanthropists and the skills of those managing them, to eke out resources from those who distribute their funds, in order for the alternative news agencies to serve those in need with information that serves diversity and development.

List of references

AAP (2007). Official Web site of Australian Associated Press. Retrieved 30 May 2007 from: aap.com.au/history.asp.

Aday, S. & Livingston, S. (2008). Taking the State out of State-media relations theory: How transnational advocacy networks are changing the press-state dynamic. *Media, War & Conflict*. 1: 99-107.

ADP (2004). African Development Bank Group Southern Africa regional assistance strategy paper (2004-2008), August 2004.

Africa Media Barometer. (2007). Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung. Media Project Southern Africa. Retrieved 31 May 2007 from: fesmedia.org.na/.

AFP (2006). Official Web site of Agence France-Presse. Retrieved 20 September 2006 from: afp.com/english/afp/?pid=history.

AFP (2007). Official Web site of Agence France-Presse. Retrieved 20 February 2007 from: afp.com/home/.

Aggarwala, N. K. (1979). What is Development News? *Journal of Communication*, 29(2): 180–185.

Alexseev, M.A. & Bennett, W.L (1995). For whom the gates open: News reporting and government source patterns in the United States, Great Britain, and Russia. *Political Communication*, 12(4): 395–412.

Ali, S. (2005). Overseas phone calls get cheaper: International wireless rates are finally starting to fall; six cents a minute to the U.K. In, *Wall Street Journal Online* 30 August. Retrieved 26 November 2007 from: online.wsj.com/public/article_print/SB112536357996626281-v2MfbMLeHw_hdEpQMB7RR1X5vrI_20060829.html.

Allan, S. (2005). (Ed). *Journalism: Critical Issues*. Open University Press.

Allan S. (2006). *Online news*. Journalism and the Internet. Open University Press.

Allan, S. & Zelizer, B. (2004). *Reporting war: Journalism in wartime*. Routledge.

ANC has no intention of stifling media freedom (2008). Report from SABC News Online 10 February 2008. Retrieved 17 February from: sabcnews.com/politics/the_parties/0,2172,163939,00.html.

AP (2006). Official Web site of The Associated Press. Retrieved 20 September 2006 from: ap.org/.

- AP (2007). Official Web site of The Associated Press. Retrieved 18 May 2007 from: ap.org/pages/about/about.html.
- APTN (2007). Official Web site of Associated Press Television News Retrieved 25 May 2007 from: aptn.com/.
- Artz, L & Kamalipour, Y. R. (Eds). (2007). *The media globe: Trends in international mass media*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Artz, L. (2007). The corporate model from national to transnational. In L. Artz & Y.R. Kamalipour (Eds), *The Media Globe: Trends in International Mass Media* (pp. 14-162). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Atton, C. (1999). A reassessment of the alternative press. *Media, Culture and Society* 21: 51–76.
- Atton, C. (2002). *Alternative media*. London: Sage.
- Atwood, L.E. (1987). News of US and Japan in each other's papers. *Gazette*, 39: 73–89.
- Aufderheide, P. (1998). Niche-market culture, off and on line. In D. Borden & K. Harvey (Eds), *The electronic grapevine: Rumor, reputation, and reporting in the new online environment*, (pp. 79-86). Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Ayish, M. I. (1992). International Communication in the 1990s: Implications for the Third World. *International Affairs* (Royal Institute of International Affairs 1944-), 68(3): 487-510.
- Bailey B. M. (2004). GOVNET Workshop on lessons learned in anti-corruption, OECD, Paris, 18-19 February.
- Baggerman, J.A. & Hemels J.M.H. (1985). *Verzorgd door het ANP: Vijftig Jaar Nieuwsvoorziening*. Utrecht and Antwerpen, Veen Uitgevers.
- Baker, P. (2005). In Russian media, free speech for a select few. In *Washington Post*, 25 February; p. A18.
- Bakker, G. (2007). Trading facts: Arrow's fundamental paradox and the emergence of global news networks, 1750-1900. London School of Economics. Retrieved 20 March 2008 from: lse.ac.uk/collections/economicHistory/pdf/FACTSPDF/FACTs17GB.pdf.
- Banda, F. (2007). Central Africa: Fifty years of media. In E. Barratt & G. Berger (Eds), 50 years of journalism: African media since Ghana's independence. Johannesburg, *The African Editors' Forum*, Highway Africa and Media Foundation for West Africa.
- Bartholomew, F.H. (1983). *Memoirs of Frank H. Bartholomew: President, United Press, 1955-58*, Sonoma, CA, Vine Book Press.

- Bartram, J. (2003). News agency wars: the battle between Reuters and Bloomberg, *Journalism Studies*, 4(3): 387-399.
- BBC (1999). Web is 'shrinking', 25 August. Retrieved 26 May 2008 from: news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/428999.stm.
- BBC (2007). News Sources. Retrieved 6 June 2007 from: [/news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/help/3281815.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/help/3281815.stm).
- Bizcommunity (2007). Where SA spends most time online. In Bizcommunity.com on 17 September 2007. Retrieved 24 September 2007 from: www.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/16/18119.html.
- Bloomberg, M. (2001). *Bloomberg by Bloomberg*. Wiley.
- Bloomberg (2007). about.bloomberg.com/index.html.
- Bloomberg (2008). about.bloomberg.com/index.html.
- Boczkowski, P. J. (2005). *Digitizing the news*. Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
- Bonning, H. (2005). African journalism and the struggle for democratic media. In H. De Burgh (Ed.), *Making journalists: Diverse models, global issues* (pp. 157-180). Routledge.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. (1977). Media imperialism: Towards an international framework for an analysis of media systems. In J. Curran, M. Gurevitch & J. Woollacott (Eds), *Mass communication and society* (pp. 116-135). London: Edward Arnold.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. (1980). *The international news agencies*. London: Constable.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. (1997). International communication and globalization: Contradictions and directions. In A. Mohammadi (Ed.), *International communication and globalization* (pp. 11-26). London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, Sage Publications.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. (1998). Global news agencies. In O. Boyd-Barrett & T. Rantanen (Eds), *The globalization of news* (pp. 19-34). London: Sage Publications.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. (2000). National and international news agencies, issues of crisis and realignment. *Gazette*, 62(1): 5-18.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. (2001). Final report of the workshop on news agencies in the era of the Internet. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved 29 October 2006 from: unesco.org/webworld/publications/news_agencies/news_agencies.rtf.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. (2003). Globalizing the national news agency. *Journalism Studies* 4(3): 371-85.

- Boyd-Barrett O. (2003a). Global communication orders. In B. Mody (Ed.), *International and development communication: A 21st-Century perspective*. Sage Publications.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (Eds). (1998). *The globalization of news*. London: Sage Publications.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (2000). European national news agencies: The end of an era or a new beginning? *Journalism*, 1: 86-105.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (2002). Global and national news agencies: Opportunities and threats in the age of the Internet. In A. Briggs & P. Cobley (Eds), *The media: An introduction*, (pp. 57-69). 2nd Edition. London: Longman.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (2002a). Theorising the news agencies. In D. McQuail (Ed.), *McQuail's reader in mass communication theory* (pp 215-221). Sage Publications.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (2004). News agencies as news sources: A re-evaluation. In C. Paterson & A. Sreberny (Eds), *International news in the twenty-first century* (pp. 31-46). John Libbey Publishing for the University of Luton Press.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. & Rantanen, T. (2004a). Global and national news agencies: The unstable nexus. In A.S. De Beer, & J.C. Merrill (Eds), *Global journalism: Topical issues and media systems* (pp. 35-49). Boston: Pearson Education.
- Boyd-Barrett, O. & Thussu, D.K. (1992). *Contra-flow in global news: International news exchange mechanisms*. Published in association with UNESCO by John Libbey & Co. Ltd. London.
- Briggs, A. & Cobley, P. (Eds). (2002). *The media: An introduction*. Pearson Education Ltd.
- Brook, S. (2007). Dow Jones agrees to Murdoch deal. 1 August. Retrieved 17 March 2008 from: guardian.co.uk/media/2007/aug/01/newscorporation.pressandpublishing1.
- Brown, S. (2007). Yearly report of ENI Managing Editor to ENI General Assembly.
- Bua News. (2007). Official Web site of Bua News: buanews.gov.za/.
- Burmaster, A. (2007). Where SA spends most time online. In *Bizcommunity.com* on 17 September 2007. Retrieved 24 September 2007 from: bizcommunity.com/Article/196/1618119.html.
- Carnegie Reporter (2005). Bandwidth and copyright: Barriers to knowledge in Africa? In *Carnegie Reporter*. 3(2). 1-5. Retrieved: 27 November 2007 from: carnegie.org/reporter/10/bandwidth/index2.html.
- Cassidy, W.P. (2006). Gatekeeping similar for online, print journalists. *Newspaper Research Journalist*, 27(2): 6-23.

- Cassidy, W. P. (2007). Online news credibility: An examination of the perceptions of newspaper journalists. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(2), article 7. Retrieved 10 May 2008 from: jcmc.indiana.edu/vol12/issue2/cassidy.html.
- Centre for Civil Society, (2008). Official Web site of London School of Economics: lse.ac.uk/collections/CCS/what_is_civil_society.htm.
- Chapman, J. (2005). *Comparative media history: An introduction -- 1789 to the present*. Polity Press.
- Charney, C. (2005). Cable raises its voice. On CNet News Web site. Retrieved 28 May 2008 from: news.cnet.com/Cable-raises-its-voice/2100-7352_3-5597111.html.
- CIA. (2008). World Fact Book. Retrieved 18 May 2008 from: cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2001rank.html.
- Civil Society International (2003). Official Web site of Civil Society International: scivilsoc.org/whatisCS.htm.
- CNN (2001). Study: Four sites account for half of Web surfing, 5 June. Retrieved 17 May 2007 from: archives.cnn.com/2001/TECH/internet/06/05/internet.consolidation/index.html.
- CNN (2008). CNN official Web site. Retrieved 27 March 2008 from: edition.cnn.com/about/.
- Cohen, B.C. (1963). *The press and foreign policy*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Cohen, A. A., Levy, M. R., Gurevitch, M. and Roeh, I. (1996). *Global newsrooms, local audiences: A study of the Eurovision news exchange*. London: John Libbey.
- Cohen, R. E. & Gregory G. (1990). *Down to the wire: UPI's fight for survival*. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing Co.
- Cook, P.S., Gomery, D. & Lichty, L.W. (Eds). (1992). *The future of news: Television, newspapers, wire services and news magazines*. The Woodrow Wilson International Center, Washington D.C.
- Cooper, K. (1958). *Kent Cooper and the Associated Press: An autobiography*. Random House, New York.
- Couldry, N. and Curran, J. (Eds). (2003). *Contesting media power: Alternative media in a networked world*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Couldry, N. and Curran, J. (2003). The paradox of media power. In N. Couldry & J. Curran (Eds), *Contesting media power: Alternative media in a networked world* (pp. 3-16). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.

- Cozens, C. (2005). AFP sues Google over copyrighted content. *Guardian*, March 21. Retrieved 27 March 2007 from: media.guardian.co.uk/newmedia/story/0,7496,144270300.html.
- Cross, G. (2004). From Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, ENI covers it. *ENI report*, 30 September. Retrieved from ENI electronic archive.
- Curran, J. (2002). *Media and power: Communication and society*. Routledge.
- Curran, J. (2003). Global journalism: A case study of the Internet. In N. Couldry & J. Curran (Eds), *Contesting media power: Alternative media in a networked world* (pp. 227-242). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Curran, J., Gurevitch, M., and Woollacott, J. (Eds). (1997). *Mass communication and society*. London: Edward Arnold.
- Curran, J. & Park, M. (Eds). (2000). *De-Westernizing media studies*. London & New York: Routledge.
- De Beer, A.S. (1998). *Mass media: Towards the millennium. The South African handbook of communication*. J.L. Van Schaik Publishers.
- De Beer, A. S. & Merrill J.C. (2004). *Global journalism: Topical issues and media systems*. Boston: Pearson Education.
- De Burgh, H. (Ed). (2005). *Making journalists*. Routledge.
- Dennis, E. E. (1992). *Of media and people*. US: Sage.
- Deuze, M. (2000). Considering theory and changes in contemporary journalism. *Ecquid Novi*, 21(1): 137-152.
- Deuze, M. (2003). The Web and its journalisms: Considering the consequences of different types of news media online. *New Media & Society*, 5(2), 203–233.
- Deuze, M., Bruns, A., Neuberger, C. (2007). Preparing for an age of participatory news. *Journalism Practice*. 1(3): 322-338.
- Du Boff, R.B. (1984). The rise of communications regulation: The telegraph industry, 1844-1880. *Journal of Communication*, 34(3): 52–66.
- Dupagne, M. Garrison, B. (2006). The meaning and influence of convergence. *Journalism Studies*, 7(2): 237-255.
- EANA (2007). Official Web site of European Alliance of News Agencies. Retrieved 29 January 2007 from: pressalliance.com/about.htm.

Ecommerce Times (2007). AFP, Google settle copyright infringement, 9 April, AP story carried on newspaper's Web site. Retrieved 25 May 2007 from: ecommercetimes.com/story/56765.html.

Editor & Publisher (2007). Over the wire. *E&P* April edition, pp. 34-36.

Editor & Publisher (2007a). EFE: The fourth largest news agency in the world. Advertisement *E&P* May edition, p. 50.

Editorsweblog (2005). Africa: northern countries to set up joint news. *AFP* report on 4 April. Retrieved 19 September 2006 from: editorsweblog.org/print_newspapers/2005/04/.

Editorsweblog (2005a). Africa: New paper advocates media reforms in Zambia. Retrieved 20 October 2005 from: wef.blogs.com/editors/2005/04/africa_new_pape.html.

EFE. (2007) Official Web site of EFE News Service. Retrieved 10 June 2007 from: efe.com/principal.asp?opcion=0&idioma=INGLES.

Eko, L. (2007). Life in the margins of globalization. In L. Artz & Y.R. Kamalipour (Eds), *The media globe: Trends in international mass media* (pp. 7-32). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Encyclopædia Britannica online (2007). Britannica online edition. Retrieved 16 March 2007 from: britannica.com/ebc/article-205411.

ENI (2007). Official Web site of Ecumenical News International. Retrieved 4 May 2007 from: eni.ch/.

ENI (2007a). Minutes of ENI Executive Committee Meeting 5 October 2007. Available on request.

epd (2008). Official Web site of Evangelische Presspressedienst. Retrieved 28 March from: epd.de/.

Eribo, F. (2001). *Search of greatness: Russia's communications with Africa and the world*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

Esipisu, I. & Kariithi, N. (2007). New media development in Africa. In *Global Media Journal -- African Edition* Vol 1.

EurasiaNet (2008). Official Web site. eurasianet.org/about/index.shtml.

Evans, R. (2008). Interview with the author on 19 March concerning inter-agency cooperation in the former Soviet Union. Full notes available on request.

Fenby, J. (1986). *The international news services*. Schocken Books.

- Fenton, N. (2006). Another world is possible? *Global Media and Communication* 2: 355-367.
- Fenton, T. (2005). *Bad news: The decline of reporting, the business of news, and the danger to us all*. Paperback. Harper.
- Fletcher, K. (2005). *The journalist's handbook*. Macmillan.
- Forbes (2007). America's 400 Richest Americans. Retrieved 16 September 2007 from: forbes.com/finance/lists/54/2004/LIR.jhtml?passListId=54&passYear=2004&passListType=Person&uniqueId=C610&datatype=Person.
- Forbes, D. (1998). From apartheid to pluralism. In O. Boyd-Barrett & T. Rantanen (Eds), *The globalization of news* (pp. 154-172). London: Sage Publications.
- Forbes, D. (2001). Independent news and public responsibility: The case of the African Eye News Service (AENS). In K.G. Tomaselli & H.S. Dunn (Eds), *Media, democracy and renewal in Southern Africa*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman.
- Forbes, D. (2003). *The national news agency -- the end of an era?* Paper presented at Media in Africa Seminar, Stellenbosch University, 11-12 September.
- Gasher, M. (2007). The view from here. *Journalism Studies*, 8(2), 299-319
- Gareau, F.F. (2002). *The United Nations and other international institutions: A critical analysis*, Rowman & Littlefield.
- Gastrow, S. (2008). Philanthropy crucial to press freedom. Address to media and academics at a roundtable discussion in Johannesburg on 2 July. Retrieved 7 July 2008 from: marketing.bizcommunity.com/Article/196/15/26132.html.
- Geertsema, M. (2005). *Gender mainstreaming in globalized news: Cultural globalization and the Inter Press Service*. Dissertation for Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Texas at Austin.
- Gerbner, G. & Marvanyi, G. (1992). The many worlds of the world's press, *Journal of Communication*, 27(1): 52-56.
- Giffard, C.A. (1984). Inter Press Service: News from the Third World. *Journal of Communication*, 34(4), 41-59.
- Giffard, C.A. (1989). Chapter 2. *UNESCO and the media*. New York: Longman.
- Giffard, C.A. (1990). The Role of the media in a changing South Africa, *Gazette*, 46:(3): 143-153.
- Giffard, C.A. (1996). *News agency coverage of the Fourth World Conference for Women*, Rome: IPS.

- Giffard, C.A. (1998). Alternative news agencies. In O. Boyd-Barrett & T. Rantanen (Eds), *The globalization of news* (pp. 191-201). London: Sage Publications.
- Giffard, C.A. (1998a). *Inter Press Service: Keeping pace with globalization*. Washington: University of Washington Press.
- Giffard, C.A. (1999). The Beijing Conference on Women as seen by three international news agencies. *Gazette*, 61(3-4): 327-41.
- Giffard, C.A. (2004). *International news agency reporting on the World Summit on the Information Society*, Rome: IPS.
- Giffard, C.A. (2007). *News agency coverage of the Millennium Development Goals*. IPS.
- Giffard, C.A. & Hachten, W. A. (1984). *The press and apartheid*. University of Wisconsin Press.
- Giffard, C.A. & Rivenburgh, N. (2000). News agencies, national images and global media events. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 42(1): 8-21.
- Giffard, C.A. & Streck J.M. (1999). News agency coverage of the UN Conference of Human Rights. *Journal of International Communication*, 5(1 & 2): 149-164.
- Giffard, C.A. & Van Leuven, N. (2005). *Five views of development: How news agencies cover the Millennium Development Goals*. University of Washington Department of Communication.
- Gillmor, D. (2004). *We the media*. O'Reilly Media Inc.
- Giliomee, H. (2003). *The Afrikaners: Biography of a people*. Cape Town, Tafelberg.
- Glaser, M. (2004). Reuters, AP follow different paths in search of revenues. USC Annenberg, *Online Journalism Review*, 4 May. Retrieved 1 August 2007 from: ojr.org/ojr/glaser/1083716199.php
- Glasser, T. L. (1992). Professionalism and the derision of diversity: The case of the education of journalists. *Journal of Communication*, 42(2): 131-140.
- Globalstar, (2006). Satellite airtime rates and hardware costs fall to earth. Press statement on 30 March from Globalstar, a global provider of mobile satellite voice and data services to businesses. Retrieved 28 November 2007 from: globalstar.com/en/news/pressreleases/press_display.php?pressId=401.
- Glocer, T. (2006). Ask the experts: Should old media embrace new? Ask the Expert. In FT.com, 7 March. Retrieved 27 July 2006 from: ft.com/cms/s/3ff08cbc-ae06-11da-8ffb000000779e2340.html.

- Glocer, T. (2006a). Trust in the age of citizen journalism. In Tom Glocer's Blog. Retrieved 15 July 2007 from: tomglocer.com/blogs/sample_weblog/archive/2006/12/12/142.aspx.
- Glocer, T. (2007). No, I am not dead nor silenced by the PR machine. In Tom Glocer's Blog. Retrieved 18 September 2007 from: tomglocer.com/blogs/sample_weblog/archive/2007/09/16/660.aspx.
- Golding P. & Elliott P. (1999). Making the news (Excerpt). In Tumber, H. (Ed.). *News: A reader* (pp. 112-120). Oxford University Press.
- Google. (2007). Front Page of Google News South Africa. Retrieved 26 July 2007 at 12:14 CET from: news.google.ch/news?ned=en_za.
- Gramsci, A. (1996). *Prison notebooks, vol II*. Buttigieg, J.A. (Ed & trans). Columbia University Press.
- Guensburg, C. (2008). Nonprofit news. In, *American Journalism Review*. February/March. Retrieved 15 March 2008 from: ajr.org/Article.asp?id=4458.
- Gurevitch, M. & Levy, M. (1990). The global newsroom. *British Journalism Review*, 2: 27-37.
- Habermas, J. (1992). Further reflections on the public sphere. In, C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Habermas and the public sphere* (pp. 421-61). London: MIT Press.
- Hachten, W. A. & Scotton, J. F. (2002). *The world news prism*. Iowa State Press.
- Hadland, A. (Ed.). (2005). *Changing the fourth estate. Essays on South African journalism*. Human Sciences Research Council Press.
- Hamelink, C.J. (1997). International communication: Global market and morality. In A. Mohammadi (Ed.), *International communication and globalization*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, Sage Publications.
- Hamelink C.J. (1984). Responses to the decision by. *Journal of Communication*, 34(4), 103-104.
- Hamelink, C.J. (1976). An alternative to news. *Journal of Communication*, 26(4), 120-123.
- Hamelink, C.J. (2007). Foreword. In L. Artz & Y.R. Kamalipour (Eds), *The media globe: Trends in international mass media* (pp vii-ix). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Hamelink, C.J. (2008). On being critical. *Communication, Culture & Critique* 1(1): 3-7.
- Hamelink, C.J. (2008a). Media between warmongers and peacemakers. *Media, War & Conflict*, 1(1): 77-83.

Harcup, T. (2003). The unspoken -- said: The journalism of alternative media. *Journalism*, 4(3): 356-376.

Hardman, T.H. (1909). *A parliament of the press*. Horace Marshall, London.

Harnett, R.M. & Ferguson, G.G. (2003). *UNIPRESS: United Press International: Covering the 20th century*. Fulcrum International.

Harrison, J. (2006). *News*. London: Routledge.

Harvey, S. (2002). Policy: Making media policy. In A. Briggs, & P. Cobley (Eds), *The media: An introduction* (pp. 217-230). Pearson Education.

Havas (2008). Official Web site of Havas. havas.fr/havas-dyn/en/introduction-introduction.1.html.

Headrick, D.R. (1981). *The tools of empire: Technology and European imperialism in the nineteenth century*. New York, Oxford University Press.

Held, D. & McGrew, A. (2002). *Globalization/anti-globalization*. Polity Press.

Herbert, J. (2003). *Practising global journalism, exploring reporting issues worldwide*. Focal Press.

Herman, E.S. & Chomsky, N. (1988). *Manufacturing consent*. New York: Pantheon.

Herman, E. S. & Chomsky, N. (1999). Manufacturing consent (Excerpt). In H. Tumber (Ed.), *News: A reader* (pp. 166-179). Oxford University Press.

Herman, E. & McChesney, R. (1997). *The global media*. New York: Cassell.

historiography. (2008). Encyclopædia Britannica. *Encyclopaedia Britannica 2008 Ultimate Reference Suite*. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica

Hopperton, J. (2007). Will newswire monopoly end impartial news? *The Editor's Weblog*, 6 February. Retrieved 25 May 2007 from: editorsweblog.org/analysis/2007/02/news_wire_agencies_and_their_role_in_onl.php.

Horvit, B. (2006). International news agencies and the war debate of 2003, *International Communication Gazette*, 68(5-6): 427.

IAJ (2006). IAJ Trainers. From Web site of Institute for the Advancement of Journalism. Retrieved 17 December 2006 from: journalism.co.za/iaj/iaj-trainers-5.html.

IFJ (International Federation of Journalists) (2007). IFJ Warns of 'New intolerance' in Russia as BBC FM is axed and European Court condemns press violation. Carried on 23 August.

Retrieved 1 September 2007 from: ifj.org/default.asp?index=5242&Language=EN.

Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) (2008). Official Web site: iwpr.net/.

Internet World Stats (2007). Retrieved 10 September 2007 from: internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm#africa.

IPI (International Press Institute) (1953). *The free flow of news*, Zurich: IPI.

IPI (International Press Institute) (1996). *Warsaw Declaration on news agencies*, Vienna: IPI.

Ivačać, P. (1978). The flow of news: Tanjug, the pool, and the national agencies. *Journal of Communication* 28(4): 157–162.

IPS (2000). *IPS 2000: The evolution and implementation of editorial policy*.

IPS (2007). Official Web site of the Inter Press Service association. Retrieved 18 July 2007 from: ips.org/.

IPS (2007a). Official Web site of the Inter Press Service news service. Retrieved 30 May 2007 from: ipsnews.net/.

IPS (2007b). IPS Africa. Retrieved 10 June 2007 from: ips.org/regionalcenters/africa.shtml.

IPS (2007c). WAM and IPS to boost cooperation. WAM story carried by IPS. Retrieved 17 June 2007 from: ipsnotizie.it/wam_en/news.php?idnews=4061.

IPS (2008). IPS: Our financing. Retrieved 24 July 2008 from: ips.org/institutional/get-to-know-us-2/our-financing/.

ITAR-TASS (2007). Official Web site of ITAR-TASS. Retrieved 16 September 2007 from: itar-tass.com/eng/.

ITU (International Telecommunications Union) (2007). African ICT Indicators. Retrieved 25 July 2007 from: itu.int/ITU-D/ict/statistics/at_glance/af_ictindicators_2005.html.

Jacobs, S. (1999). Tensions of a free press: South Africa after apartheid. Research Paper R-22, June 1999, Joan Shorenstein Center, Harvard University.

Joye, S. (2006). Raising awareness, challenging establishment; The surplus value of a global and local alternative news agency. Working Papers Film & TV Studies, WP 2006/1. University of Ghent.

Journalism.co.za (2007). Sanef condemns Polokwane handling of media. Retrieved 26 July 2008 from: journalism.co.za/news/sanef-condemns-polokwane-handling-of-media-12.html.

Journalism Studies (2008). New media, new scholarship (No author cited). *Journalism Studies*, 9(4): 595-604,

Kashangroup. (2006). South Africa and the Internet. Retrieved 10 November 2006 from: kashangroup.com/About_SA/southafrica.htm.

KCOM, (2004). UK expertise and lowered costs enables launch of new satellite DTH platform for Nigeria. Press release from KCOM Group on 10 February. Retrieved 30 November 2007 from: kcom.com/mediacentre/news/news_article.asp?ArticleID=DA_21474.

Keeble, R. (1998). *The newspapers handbook*. Routledge.

Kenny, P. (2004). From Afghanistan to Zimbabwe, ENI covers it. *ENI report* 30 September. Retrieved from ENI electronic archive: eni.ch.

Kenny, P. (2006). Yearly report of ENI Editor-in-Chief to ENI General Assembly. (Document available on request).

Khor, M. (2008). Interview with the author. 2 March 2008. (Transcript available on request).

Kim, S. J. (1989). EFE: Spain's world news agency. New York: *American Journalism*, 1989, 9(3-4) (Summer-Fall 1992): 196. (rev. Babcock, W.A.).

Knight, A. (2003). *Globalised journalism in the Internet age*. ejournalist.com.au, Issue 03/02, 2003. Central Queensland University. Retrieved 16 June 2007 from: ejournalism.au.com/ejournalist/knightr.pdf.

Kramer, A.E. (2007). 50% Good news is the bad news in Russian radio. In *The New York Times*, 22 April. Retrieved 19 July 2007 from: nytimes.com/2007/04/22/world/europe/22russia.html?_r=1&pagewanted=print&oref=slogin.

Krüger, F. (2000). East Cape News Agencies: Reporting on a black hole. In L. Switzer & M. Adhikari (Eds), *South Africa's resistance press. Alternative voices in the last generation under apartheid* (pp. 260-282). Ohio University Press.

Krüger, F. (2007). Interview about ECNA on 5 June 2007.

Kupe, T. (2004). Media policies for democratising and developing countries: forum section: conference paper. *Ecquid Novi*, 25(1): 122-128.

Kuper, A. & Kuper J. (2001). Serving a new democracy: Must the media 'speak softly'? Learning from South Africa. *International Journal of Public Opinion*, 13: 355-376.

L'Ange, G. (2005). *The White Africans: From colonization to liberation*. Johannesburg & Cape Town, Jonathan Ball Publishers.

- Lefebure, A. (1992). *Havas: Les arcanes du pouvoir* (The intricacies of power). Paris, Bernard Grasset.
- Leung, L. Wei, R. (2000). More than just talk on the move: Uses and gratifications of the cellular phone. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, 77(2): 308-321.
- Lewis, C. (2007). The nonprofit road: It's paved not with gold, but with good journalism. In *Columbia Journalism Review* September/October. Retrieved 20 September 2007 from: cjr.org/feature/the_nonprofit_road.php?page=all.
- Lexdon Business Library (2005). Guild reaches first contract with Spanish news agency EFE. Carried by Lexdon, 29 December. Retrieved 16 August, 2007 from: lexdon.com/article/guild_reaches_first_contract_with/68173.html.
- Linington, E. (2007). SA 'still adapting to press freedom'. In 20 September 2007 *Sapa* report carried by iol.co.za. Retrieved 20 September 2007 from: int.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3015&art_id=vn20070920050036218C575481.
- Loomis, C.J. (2007). Bloomberg's money machine: Battle of the business news. In *Fortune* 5 April, carried on CNN.com. Retrieved 18 August 2007 from: money.cnn.com/magazines/fortune/fortune_archive/2007/04/16/8404302/index2.htm
- Lopez-Escobar, E. (2004). The mainstream media and the Internet before the emergence of the global civil society. University of Navarra paper. Retrieved 17 June 2007 from: cim.anadolu.edu.tr/pdf/2004/1130849238.pdf.
- Louw, P.E. (2005). *The media and political process*. Sage.
- Louw, P.E. and Tomaselli, K. (1991). Impact of the 1990 reforms on the 'alternative media'. In K. Tomaselli & P.E. Louw (Eds), *The alternative press in South Africa* (pp. 222-227). Bellville, South Africa, Anthropos Publishers.
- Lozano, J-C. (2007). Latin America: Media conglomerates. In L. Artz & Y.R. Kamalipour (Eds), *The media globe: Trends in international mass media* (pp. 99-118). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Lubetkin, M. (2006). Address by Mario Lubetkin, Director-General, Inter Press Service, at a ceremony to honour UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, recipient of the IPS International Achievement Award 2006, on 19 December 2006. Retrieved 7 June 2007 from: ips.org/UN/AddressbyMarioLubetkin.pdf.
- Mail & Guardian online (2006). Official Web site of *Mail & Guardian*. Retrieved 6 October 2006 from: mg.co.za/.
- Manning White, D. (1950). The 'gatekeeper': A case study in the selection of news. Reproduced in H. Tumber (Ed.). (1999), *News: A reader* (pp. 66-72). Oxford University Press.

- Masmoudi, M. (1979). The New World Information Order. *Journal of Communication*, 29(2): 172-179.
- Matsuura, K. (2004). Address by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on the occasion of the World Congress of News Agencies, Moscow, 22 September.
- Mattelart, A. (1984). Responses to the decision by. *Journal of Communication* 34(4): 96-97.
- Mattelart, A. (1994). *Mapping world communication*. University of Minnesota Press.
- MacBride, S. (2006). Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved 30 September 2006, from: Encyclopædia Britannica 2006 Ultimate Reference Suite DVD.
- MacBride, S. et al (1980). *Many voices, one world*, Paris: UNESCO.
- McChesney, R. W. (1996). The Internet and US communication policy-making in historical and critical perspective: McChesney. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 1(4): 0-0.
- McChesney, R. W. (1997). The global media giants: The nine firms that dominate the world. *Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting* (November/December), Retrieved 19 March 2008 from: fair.org/extra/9711/gmg.html.
- McChesney, R.W. (2004). *The problem of the media: US communication politics in the twenty-first century*. Monthly Review Press.
- McCombs, M. & Bell, T. (1996). The agenda-setting role of mass communications. In M.B. Salwen & D. W. Stacks (Eds), *An integrated approach to communication theory and research* (pp. 93-110). Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- McCombs, M. & Shaw, D. (1999). The agenda-setting function of mass media. In H. Tumber, (Ed.), *News: A reader* (pp. 320-328). Oxford University Press.
- McLuhan, M. & Fiore, Q. (1967) *The medium is the message*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- McNeill, W.H. (1999). *A world history*, Oxford University Press.
- McQuail, D. (1987). *Mass communication theory: An introduction*. London: Sage Publications.
- McQuail, D. (Ed). (2002). *McQuail's reader in mass communication theory*. Sage Publications Ltd.
- Media convergence and podcasting (2008). Encyclopædia Britannica, In Encyclopædia

Britannica 2008 Ultimate Reference Suite DVD.

Media Stakeholders from Southern African Countries (2007). Memorandum on the transformation of state newspapers and news agencies, meeting 17-18 June 2006 in Pretoria. Retrieved 17 July 2007 from: fesmedia.org.na/powerpresen/Brainstorming%20Combined%20Memo%20Partlist.doc.

Media Tenor. (2006). Covering, or covering up corruption? In *Media Tenor* Forschungsbericht Nr. 156-4. Quartal 2006.

Merrett, C. & Saunders, C. (2000). The Weekly Mail, 1985-1994. In L. Switzer & M. Adhikari (Eds), *South Africa's resistance press. Alternative voices in the last generation under apartheid* (pp. 458-486). Ohio University Press.

Miller, J.H. (1992). Mikhail Gorbachev and the end of Soviet power. Palgrave Macmillan.

MISA (2006). So this is democracy. Media Institute of Southern Africa. State of media freedom in Southern Africa 2004/2005.

MISA (2007). So this is democracy? Media Institute of Southern Africa. State of media freedom in Southern Africa 2006.

Mody, B. (Ed.) (2003). *International and development communication: A 21st-Century perspective*. Sage Publications

Mohammadi, A. (Ed.). (1997). *International communication and globalization*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, Sage Publications.

Moisy, C. (1996). The foreign news-flow in the information age. *Discussion Paper D-23* November. The Joan Shorenstein Center, Harvard University, John F. Kennedy School of Government.

Molefe, P. (2004). Setting the agenda for news coverage in Africa, *Ecquid Novi*, 25(1): 118-122.

Molina, G.G. (1990). *The production of Mexican television news: The supremacy of corporate rationale*. Ph.D. dissertation, Leicester.

Moony, B., Simpson, B. (2003). *Breaking news: How the wheels came off at Reuters*. London, Capstone Publishing.

Mosco, V. (1997). *Last Rights: Revisiting Four Theories of the Press*. Edited by John C. Nerone. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995. In Book Reviews *Journal of Communication* 47(1):144-187.

Mouton, J. (2001). *How to succeed in your masters and doctoral studies*. J.L van Schaik Publishers.

Musa, B. A. & Domatob, J.K. (2007). Who is a development journalist? Perspectives on media ethics and professionalism in post colonial societies. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics*, 22(4): 315-331.

Nerone, J. C. (Ed). Berry, W.E., Braman, S., Christians, C., Guback, T.G., Helle, S., Liebovich, L.W. & Rotzoll, K.B. (1995). *Last rights: Revisiting Four Theories of the press*. University of Illinois Press.

Nerone, J.C. (2002). Social responsibility theory. In D. McQuail (Ed.), *McQuail's reader in mass communication theory* (pp. 183-193). Sage Publications Ltd.

New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) (2007). Retrieved 15 March 2007 from: nepad.org/.

New York Times (2001). Company News; Bridge Information faces involuntary bankruptcy. In *The New York Times* 3 February 2001. Retrieved 18 July 2006 from: query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9503E0DC133EF930A35751C0A9679C8B63.

New York Times (2007). Times to stop charging for parts of its Web site. In *The New York Times* 18 September 2007. Retrieved 22 September 2007 from: nytimes.com/2007/09/18/business/media/18times.html?_r=1&oref=slogin.

News agency. (2006). Encyclopædia Britannica. In *Encyclopædia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite* DVD 30 June. Chicago: Encyclopædia Britannica.

News Media Guild (2007). Official Web site of the News Media Guild. Retrieved 24 March 2007 from: newsmediaguild.org/.

Nossek, H. (2004). Our news and their news: The role of national identity in the coverage of foreign news. *Journalism*, 5: 343-368.

NUJ (National Union of Journalists) (2003). NUJ Training. Types of journalism. National and local news agencies. 10 March. Retrieved 31 May 2007 from: nujtraining.org.uk/page.phtml?id=891&category=Careers%20in%20Journalism&finds=0&string=&strand=.

NYC (2007). Official Web site of the Office of the Mayor of New York City. Retrieved 30 August 2007 from: nyc.gov/portal/site/nycgov/menuitem.e985cf5219821bc3f7393cd401c789a0/.

OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) (2007). South Africa. In *African Economic Outlook*. OECD.

Ó'Siochrú, S. (2004). Will the real WSIS please stand-up? The historic encounter of the 'Information Society' and the 'Communication Society'. Paper for: *Gazette - The International Journal for Communication Studies*, 66(3/4).

- Ostini, J., Fung Y.H. (2002). Beyond the four theories of the press: A new model of national media systems. *Mass Communication & Society*, 5(1): 41-56.
- PA (2007). Official Web site of the Press Association. pressassociation.co.uk/.
- Paletz, D. & Entman, R. (1981). *Media power politics*. New York: Free Press.
- Palmer, M. (2003). Parisian newsrooms in the late nineteenth century: how to enter from the agency back office, or inventing news journalism in France, *Journalism Studies*, 4(4): 479-487.
- Palmer, M., Boyd-Barrett O. and Rantanen, T. (1998). Global financial news. In O. Boyd-Barrett. & T. Rantanen (Eds), *The globalization of news* (pp. 61-78). Sage Publications Ltd.
- Palmer, M. (1998). What makes news. In O. Boyd-Barrett & T. Rantanen (Eds), *The globalization of news* (pp. 177-190). Sage Publications Ltd.
- Park, H-W. (1998). A Gramscian approach to interpreting international communication *Journal of Communication* 48(4): 79–99.
- Paterson, C. (1998). Global battlefields. In O. Boyd-Barrett & T. Rantanen (Eds), *The globalization of news* (pp. 79-102). London: Sage Publications.
- Paterson, C. (2003). *Prospects for a democratic information Society: The news agency stranglehold on global political discourse*. Presented to the EMTEL: New Media, Technology and Everyday Life in Europe Conference, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, April 23-26, 2003.
- Paterson, C. (2005). News agency dominance in international news on the Internet. In D. Skinner, J.R. Compton, M. Gasher (Eds). (2005), *Converging media, diverging politics: A political economy of news media in the United States and Canada* (pp. 145-164). Lexington Books.
- Paterson, C. (2006). News agency dominance in international news on the Internet. Centre for International Communications Research. Papers in international and global communication. No. 01/06. Retrieved 20 November 2006 from: ics.leeds.ac.uk/papers/cicr/exhibits/42/cicrpaterson.pdf.
- Paterson, C. & Sreberny, A. (Eds). (2004). *International news in the twenty-first Century*. John Libbey Publishing for the University of Luton Press.
- Pavlik J.V. (2000). The impact of technology on journalism. *Journalism Studies*, 1(2), 229-237.
- Pavlik, J.V. (2001). *Journalism and new media*. Columbia University Press.

PEJ (Project for Excellence in Journalism) (2006). The state of the news media 2006. An annual report on American journalism. Retrieved 14 December 2006 from: stateofthenewsmedia.com/2006/.

PEJ (Project for Excellence in Journalism) (2007). News investment. In *State of the news media 2007. An annual report on American journalism*. Retrieved 19 August 2007 from: stateofthenewsmedia.org/2007/narrative_overview_newsinvestment.asp?cat=6&media=1.

PEJ (Project for Excellence in Journalism) (2007a). Overview. In *State of the news media 2007. An annual report on American journalism*. Retrieved 19 August 2007 from: stateofthenewsmedia.org/2007/printable_overview_contentanalysis.asp.

PEJ (Project for Excellence in Journalism) (2007b). State of the news media 2007. An annual report on American journalism, Executive Summary. Retrieved 14 April 2007 from: www.stateofthenewsmedia.org/2007/execsummary.pdf.

PEJ (Project for Excellence in Journalism) (2008). State of the news media 2008. An annual report on American journalism. Retrieved 23 April 2008 from: stateofthenewsmedia.com/2008/narrative_overview_intro.php?cat=0&media=1.

PEJ (Project for Excellence in Journalism) (2008a). Content analysis. In *State of the news media 2008: An annual report on American journalism*. Retrieved 30 June 2008 from: stateofthenewsmedia.org/2008/narrative_online_contentanalysis.php?cat=1&media=5.

PEJ (Project for Excellence in Journalism) (2008b). The Web: Alarming, appealing and a challenge to journalistic values: Financial woes now overshadow all other concerns for journalists. In *State of the news media 2008: An annual report on American journalism*. Retrieved 29 June 2008 from: stateofthenewsmedia.com/2008/Journalist%20report%202008.pdf?cat=2&media=3.

People's Daily Online. (2004, 25 June). China plays major role in globalization. Editorial, *People's Daily*. Retrieved 20 December 2006 from: english.people.com.cn/2004/0422/eng20040422_141173.shtml.

Pérez-Peña, R. (2007). Times to stop charging for parts of its Web site. In *The New York Times Online* 18 September. Retrieved 19 September 2007 from: nytimes.com/2007/09/18/business/media/18times.html?_r=1&oref=slogin.

Pew (2006). For many home broadband users, the Internet is a primary news source. Pew Internet & American Life Project, 22 March. Retrieved 18 March 2007 from: pewinternet.org/pdfs/PIP_News.and.Broadband.pdf.

Phillips, A. (2005). Who's to make journalists? In H. De Burgh (Ed.), *Making journalists* (pp. 227-244). Routledge.

PoynterOnline (2008). Official Web site. poynter.org/.

- Pronk, J. (2008). Quoted on official Web site of SUNS: sunsonline.org/about.html.
- Putnis, P. (2004). Reuters in Australia: the supply and exchange of news, 1859-1877. In *Media History*, 10(2): 67-88.
- Rabe, L. (2004). A modern version of the African drum: editorial. *Ecquid Novi*, 25(1): 1-3.
- Rabil, S. & Thiel, S. (2008). Thomson Reuters to Focus on New York Integration. Report on 17 April 2008 on bloomberg.com. Retrieved 29 April 2008 from: bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601082&sid=arsEDn3tO0ho.
- Rao, S., Uose, Y. & Luetchford, J.C. (Eds). (1996). *Global information infrastructure (GII)*. IOS Press.
- Rantanen, T. (1990). *Foreign news in imperial Russia: The relationship between international and Russian news agencies, 1856–1914*. Helsinki: Suomalainen Tiedakatemia.
- Rantanen, T. (1998). From communism to capitalism. In O. Boyd-Barrett & T. Rantanen (Eds), *The globalization of news* (pp. 125-136). London: Sage.
- Rantanen, T. (1998a). The struggle for control of domestic news markets. In O. Boyd Barrett & T. Rantanen (Eds), *The globalization of news* (pp. 35-48). London, Sage.
- Rantanen, T. (2002). *The global and the national. Media and communications in post-communist Russia*. Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Rantanen, T. (2005). *The media and globalization*. Sage.
- Rantanen, T. (2005a). Cosmopolitanization - Now! An interview with Ulrich Beck. *Global Media and Communication* 1(3): 247-263.
- Rantanen, T. (2007). The cosmopolitanization of news. *Journalism Studies*, 8(6): 843–861.
- Rantanen, T. Palmer, M. & Boyd-Barrett O. (1998). Global financial news. In O. Boyd-Barrett & T. Rantanen (Eds), *The globalization of news* (pp. 61-78). London: Sage.
- Rantanen, T. & Boyd-Barrett, O. (2002). News agencies in the age of Internet. In A. Briggs, & P. Cobley (Eds), *The media: An introduction* (pp. 57-69). London: Longman.
- Rantanen, T. & Boyd-Barrett, O. (2004). Global and national news agencies: the unstable nexus. In A.S. De Beer & J.C. Merrill (Eds), *Global journalism. Topical issues and media systems* (pp. 35-49). Pearson, Boston.
- Rauch, J. (2003). Rooted in nations, blossoming in globalization? A cultural perspective on the content of a “northern” mainstream and a “southern” alternative news agency. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 27(1): 87-103.

Read, D. (1992). *The power of news, the history of Reuters*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rector, K. (2008). Murky boundaries: what are the guidelines for the personal blogs of journalists who work for mainstream news organizations? *American Journalism Review*, 30(3): 40-47.

Reed, K. (2007). A Reuters-Thomson deal could have fallout in Hub. In, *The Boston Globe* 11 May. Retrieved 11 June 2007 from: boston.com/business/globe/articles/2007/05/11a_reuters_thomson_deal_could_have_fallout_in_hub/.

Reporters of the Associated Press (2007). *How the Associated Press has covered, war, peace and everything else*. Princeton Architectural Press.

Reporters Without Borders (2004). Annual Report 2003.

Reporters Without Borders (2007). New regulations reinforce *Xinhua's* control over foreign news agencies. (2006, 11 September) Retrieved 24 January 2007 from: rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=18819.

Reporters Without Borders (2008). Predators of press freedom. Retrieved on 3 May 2008 from: rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=6696.

Reporters Without Borders (2008a). Worldwide press freedom index. Retrieved 10 February 2008 from: rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=24025.

Reuters (2006). Reuters 2005 and Beyond. Reuters Group PLC Annual Report. 17 March. Retrieved 10 June 2006 from: about.reuters.com/home/materials/investorrelations/investorinformation/archivedreportsandaccounts/2005_2.pdf.

Reuters (2007). Reuters 2006. Faster: Reuters Group PLC Annual Review. Retrieved 18 May 2007 from: about.reuters.com/home/materials/investorrelations/investorinformation/reportsandaccounts/Reuters_2006_Annual_Review.pdf.

Reuters (2008). Reuters Group PLC Annual Report and Accounts 2007. Retrieved 1 May 2008 from: thomsonreuters.com/content/PDF/corporate/pdf_reuters/AR07_Reuters.pdf.

Reuters (2008a). Reuters News Web site. Retrieved 20 September 2008 from: reuters.com/

Righter, R. (1978). *Whose news? Politics, the press and the Third World*, London: Burnett Books.

RNS (2007). Official Web site of Religion News Service. religionnews.com/about_history.html.

Robinson, S. (2007). Someone's gotta be in control here: The institutionalization of online news and the creation of a shared journalistic authority. *Journalism Practice*, 1(3): 305 – 321.

Robinson, W. I. (2004). *A theory of global capitalism: production and State in a transnational world*. The Johns Hopkins University Press.

Ruether, K. (2003). African Studies Quarterly. University of Florida. Review of: Switzer, L. & Adhikari, M. (2000) *South Africa's resistance press: Alternative voices in the last generation under Apartheid*, Ohio: Ohio University Press. Retrieved 16 October 2006 from: africa.edu/asq/v7/v7i1a6.htm.

Salwen, M.B., Stacks, D.W. (1996). *An integrated approach to communication theory and research*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Samarajiwa R. (1984). The history of the New Information Order. *Journal of Communication* 34(4).

Sanef condemns Polokwane handling of media (2007). In *Journalism.co.za*, 27 December 2007. Retrieved 6 January 2008 from: journalism.co.za/news/sanef-condemns-polokwane-handling-of-media-12.html.

Sanef (2007). Sanef worried about govt threat to Times ads. In *journalism.co.za* 11 September, Retrieved 14 September 2007 from: journalism.co.za/news/sanef-worried-about-ad-threat.html.

Sanef concerned at proposed media tribunal. (2008). Sapa report in *Mail & Guardian* newspaper online 2 May. Retrieved 4 May from: mg.co.za/articlepage.aspx?area=/breaking_news/breaking_news__national/&articleid=338322.

Sanef (2008). Media statement following AGM of the SA national editors' forum. Issued 27 July. Retrieved 29 July 2008 from: sanef.org.za/press_statements/690847.htm.

Sanef (2008a). South Africa: Editors oppose statutory media tribunal. In South African National Editors' Forum press released on 27 July 2008. Retrieved 29 July 2008 from: allafrica.com/stories/200807270007.html

Sapa (2007). Official Web site of South African Press Association. sapa.co.za/.

Sapa (2007a). SA 'still adapting to press freedom'. In *iol.co.za*. Retrieved 20 September from: int.iol.co.za/index.php?set_id=1&click_id=3015&art_id=vn20070920050036218C575481.

Scherer, R. (2008). Michael Bloomberg's political future? Report in *The Christian Science Monitor* online 14 August 2008. Retrieved 14 August 2008 from: fatures.csmonitor.com/politics/2008/08/14/michael-bloombergs-politicalfuture/.

School of Foreign Studies, Nanjing University (2006). Retrieved 3 July 2006 from: sfs.nju.edu.cn/journalism/concepts/what_is_news_agency.htm.

Schramm, W. (1960). *One day in the world's press: Fourteen great newspapers on a day of crisis*, Stanford: Stanford University.

Schwarzlose, R.A. (1979). The American wire services: A study of their development as a social institution. Submitted 1965 for PhD thesis at the University of Illinois. Ayer Publishing.

Schwarzlose, R.A. (1989). *Nation's newsbrokers Volume 1: The formative years: From pretelegraph to 1865*. Northwestern University Press.

Schwarzlose, R.A. (1992). The Associated Press and United Press International. In P.S. Cook, D. Gomery & L.W. Lichty (Eds), *The future of news: Television, newspapers, wire services and news magazines* (pp. 145-166). The Woodrow Wilson International Center, Washington D.C.

Sherry, R. (2007). Covering the world: as US news organizations have backed away from foreign news coverage, the Associated Press' international report has become increasingly vital. *American Journalism Review*, 29(6): 32-40.

Shoemaker, P. J. (1999). Gatekeeping (Exerpt). In H. Tumber (Ed), *News: A reader* (pp. 73-78). Oxford University Press

Shultz, G.P. (1984). The Secretary of State Washington. *Journal of Communication*, 34(4): 82-84.

Siebert, F.S. (1956). The authoritarian theory of the press. In F.S. Siebert, T. Peterson & W. Schramm (Eds), *Four theories of the press: The authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility, and Soviet Communist concepts of what the press should be and do* (pp. 9-38). Urbana: University of Illinois.

Siebert, F.S, Peterson, T., & Schramm, W. (Eds). (1956). *Four theories of the press: The Authoritarian, Libertarian, Social Responsibility, and Soviet Communist concepts of what the press should be and do*. Urbana: University of Illinois.

Singel, R. (2003). Aggregators attack info overload. In *Wired* 18 August 2003. Retrieved 24 July 2008 from: wired.com/techbiz/it/news/2003/08/60053.

Singer, J. (2008). Publish (and be popular) or perish: Value metrics for scholarly work in a digital environment. In new media, new scholarship, *Journalism Studies*, 9:4: pp 595-604.

Singer, J. (2004). Strange bedfellows? The diffusion of convergence in four news organizations. *Journalism Studies*, 5(1); pp. 3-18.

Skinner, D., Compton J.R., Gasher, M. (Eds). (2005). *Converging media, diverging politics: A political economy of news media in the United States and Canada*. Lexington Books.

Smith, A. (1980). *The geopolitics of information: How Western culture dominates the world*.

Boston, London: Faber & Faber.

Sonwalkar, P. (2004). News imperialism: Contra view from the South. In C. Paterson & A. Sreberny (Eds), *International news in the twenty-first Century* (pp. 11-126). University of Luton/John Libbey.

South Africa: Editors oppose statutory media tribunal (2008). In South African National Editors' Forum press released 27 July 2008. Sanef. Retrieved 29 July 2008 from: allafrica.com/stories/200807270007.html.

SUNS (South North Development Monitor). (2008a). Official Web site of SUNS. Retrieved 12 April 2008 from: sunsonline.org/trade/other/introduction.htm.

Sparks, A. (1994). *Tomorrow is another country*. Struik.

Sparks, C., Reading A. (1998). *Communism, capitalism, and the mass media*. London: Sage Publications.

Sparks, C. (2000). Media theory after the fall of European communism: Why the old models from East and West won't do any more. In J. Curran and M-J. Park (Eds), *De-westernizing media studies* (pp. 35-49). London: Routledge.

Sreberny-Mohammadi, A. (1984). The "world of the news" study. Results of international cooperation, *Journal of Communication*, 34(1): 121–134.

Sreberny-Mohammadi, A., Nordenstreng, K., Stevenson, R. & Ugboajah, F. O. (1985). *Foreign news in the media: international reporting in 29 countries*. UNESCO.

Starr, P. (2004). *The Creation of the media: Political origins of modern communication*. Basic Books.

Stanford University Library (2006). African Newspapers. Retrieved 12 November 2006 from: library.stanford.edu/africa/current2.html.

Stephens, M. (1989). *A history of news. From the drum to the satellite*. Penguin Books Australia.

Stephens, M. (2007). *A history of news*. Oxford University Press. Third Edition.

Stephens M. (2007a). Beyond the news. *Columbia Journalism Review*. January/February 2007 edition. Retrieved 19 November 2007 from: cjr.org/feature/beyond_the_news.php.

Stevenson, R.L. (1984). Pseudo debate. *Journal of Communication* 34(1): 134–137.

Stevenson, R.L. and R. Cole (1984). Patterns of foreign news. In R.L. Stevenson & D.L. Shaw (Eds), *Foreign news and the New World Information Order* (pp. 37-62). Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press.

Storey, G. (1951). *Reuters' century 1851-1951*, London: Max Parrish.

Strupp, J. (2007). Getting wired: New image for AP. In, *Editor & Publisher (E&P)*. April edition: pp 34-36.

Sullivan, D. (2007). Google News now hosting wire stories & promises better variety in results. On Web site Search Engine Land. 31 August 2007. Retrieved 4 September 2007 from: searchengineland.com/070831-130842.php.

SUNS (2008). What is SUNS? From Third World Network Web site. Retrieved 27 March 2008 from: twinside.org.sg/title/sun-cn.htm.

Switzer, L. & Adhikari M. (Eds). (2000). *South Africa's resistance press. Alternative voices in the last generation under apartheid*. Ohio University Press.

Taylor, D. & Proctor, M. (2007). The Literature Review: A few tips on conducting it. Writing Support, University of Toronto. Retrieved 19 January 2008 from: utoronto.ca/writing/litrev.html.

Teer-Tomaselli, R., Wasserman, H. & De Beer A.S. (2007). South Africa as a regional media power. In, D. K. Thussu (Ed), *Media on the move: Global flow and contra-flow* (pp. 153-164). Routledge.

Tehrani, M & Tehranian, K. (1997). Taming modernity: Towards a new paradigm. In A. Mohammadi, (Ed.), *International communication and globalization* (pp. 119-167). London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, Sage Publications.

The Associated Press and Subsidiaries (2005). Consolidated Financial Reports with Report of Independent Auditors for Years ended 31 December 2004 and 2003. Retrieved 20 April 2007 from: ap.org/media/pdf/financials05.pdf.

The University of Arizona Library (2006). What is the Literature Review? Retrieved 20 January from: library.arizona.edu/help/tutorials/litreviews/whatis.html.

Thomas, H. (2000). *Front row at the White House: My life and times*. Scribner.

Thompson, A. (Ed). (2007). *The media and the Rwanda genocide*, Kampala, Fountain Publishers for the IDRC.

Thompson, A. (2007). The responsibility to report: A new journalistic paradigm. In, A. Thompson (Ed.), *The media and the Rwanda genocide* (pp. 443-446). Kampala, Fountain Publishers for the IDRC.

Thomson Reuters PLC (2008). US Securities and Exchange Commission, Washington D.C. 20549. Form-20-F. Filed: April 17, 2008 (period: December 31, 2007). Registration of securities of foreign private issuers pursuant to section 12(b) or (g).

- Thurman, R. (2007). The globalization of journalism online: A transatlantic study of news websites and their international readers. *Journalism*, 8(3): 285–307.
- Thussu, D.K. (2000). *International communication*. Hodder Arnold.
- Thussu, D. K. (Ed) (2007). *Media on the move. Global flow and contra-flow*. Routledge.
- Thussu, D. K. (2007a). Mapping global media flow and contra-flow. In D. K. Thussu (Ed.), *Media on the move: Global flow and contra-flow* (pp. 11-32). Routledge.
- Tleane, C. (2006). The great trek north: The expansion of South Africa media and ICT companies into the SADC region. Article for Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa. Freedom of Expression Institute, with the assistance of OSISA.
- Tomlinson J. (1997). Cultural globalization and cultural imperialism. In, A. Mohammadi. (Ed.), *International communication and globalization*. (pp. 170-190). London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, Sage Publications.
- Tomaselli, K.G. (2000). South African media 1994-7. Globalizing via political economy. In J. Curran & M-J. Park (Eds), *De-westernizing media studies* (pp.22-35). London & New York: Routledge.
- Transparency International (TI) (2007). transparency.org/.
- Transparency International (TI) (2008). UN Corruption Conference: Failure to act on critical issue a ‘major setback’ for the fight against corruption. Bali, 1 February 2008. Retrieved 24 February 2008 from: transparency.org/news_room/latest_news/press_releases/2008/2008_02_01_uncac_final.
- Trew, T. (2004). Input at the agenda-setting conference: Mass media and public opinion, Bonn 22 September 2004. Retrieved 19 May 2007 from: gcis.gov.za/media/dceo/040922.htm.
- Tumber, H. (Ed) (1999). *News: A reader*. Oxford University Press.
- Tunstall, J. (1999). The world news duopoly. In H. Tumber (Ed.), *News: A reader*. (pp. 191-200). Oxford University Press.
- TWN (2007). Main Web site of Third World Network. Retrieved 24 September 2007 from: twinside.org.sg/.
- Tyson, R. (2008). The role of journalism in Namibia. Column in the *Namibian*. Retrieved 27 March 2008 from: namibian.com.na/2008/March/columns/08EF942576.html.
- UNDP (2007). Making globalization work for all. United Nations Development Programme Annual Report, 2007, UNDP. Retrieved 29 August 2007 from: undp.org/publicationsannualreport2007/.

UNESCO (1986). *A documentary history of a New World Information and Communication Order as an evolving and continuous process 1975-1986*. UNESCO.

UNESCO. (1994). Intergovernmental Council of the International Programme for the Development of Communication (Fifteenth session) Paris, 14-21 November 1994 Final Report. UNESCO.

UNESCO (2001). *Report of UNESCO workshop: News agencies in the era of the internet*. (Jan 28 – 31, 2001).

UNESCO (2003). Report on 11 August 2003 workshop: *News Agencies Pivotal of Democracy, Poverty Alleviation and Citizens' Empowerment*. Retrieved 26 September 2006 from: portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=12350&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

UNESCO (2004). *Address by Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO at the World Congress of News Agencies, Moscow, 22 September 2004*.

UNESCO (2005). *Towards knowledge societies: UNESCO world report*, Paris.

UNESCO (2005a). Media pluralism online. Bureau of Information Report. Retrieved 28 March 2008 from: unesco.org/bpi/pdf/memobpi46_mediapluralism_en.pdf.

UNESCO (2008). UNESCO Web page, section on Communication and Information: portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1657&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

UNOCHA (2007). OCHA's humanitarian news and analysis service re-launches Web site. UNOG press release from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 15 February 2007. Retrieved 19 August 2007 from: ochaonline.un.org.

Van der Velden, M. (2007). How is the digital age influencing newspapers? Interviewed at 14th World Editors Forum, 3-6 June Cape Town. Retrieved 10 June 2007 from: editorsweblog.org/.

Van der Velden, M. (2007a). E-mail interview with author about Sapa on 28 June 2007. (Notes available on request).

Van der Velden, M. (2007b). The vital, but unfulfilled, role of news agencies in Africa. In E. Barratt. & G. Berger (Eds), *50 Years of Journalism: African media since Ghana's independence*. Johannesburg, *The African Editors' Forum*, Highway Africa and Media Foundation for West Africa.

Vilanilam, J.V. (2005). *Mass communication in India: A Sociological perspective*. Sage.

Vivendi SA (2008). Official Web site: <http://www.vivendi.com/corp/en/group/profile.php>.

- Volkmer, I. (2005). News in the global public space. In Allan, S. (2005) *Journalism: Critical Issues* (pp. 357-369). Open University Press.
- WAN (1999). New approach to development: the role of the press. Retrieved 10 April 2008 from: wan-press.org/rubrique45.html.
- Wasserman, H. (2005). Renaissance and resistance: Using ICTs for social change in Africa. *African Studies*, 64(2), 177-199.
- Watson, J. & Hill, A. (2003). *Dictionary of media and communication studies*. Arnold.
- Weaver, D.H. (2007). Thoughts on agenda setting, framing, and priming. *Journal of Communication*, 57(1), 142-147
- Weaver, D.H. & Wilhoit, G.C. (1981). Foreign news coverage in two U S. wire services. *Journal of Communication*, 31(2), 55-63.
- Weaver, D. H., Wilhoit, G.C., Stevenson, R. L., Shaw, D. L., Cole, R. R. (1985). The news of the world in four major wire services. A study of selected services of the AP, UPI, Reuters and AFP, in A. Sreberny-Muhammadi, et al. (Eds), *Foreign news in the media. International reporting in 29 countries: Final report of the 'Foreign images' study undertaken by UNESCO by the LAMCR*, Paris: UNESCO.
- Weibull L. (2003). The press subsidy system in Sweden. A critical approach. In N. Couldry & J. Curran (Eds), *Contesting media power: Alternative media in a networked world* (pp. 89-110). Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Welch, M. (1999). Is reliance on the AP draining the life from online news? *Online Journalism Review*, 20 May, retrieved April 2006, from: ojr.org/ojr/business/1017968544.php.
- Wilke, J. (1998). Control of domestic news markets (2) In O. Boyd-Barret. & T. Rantanen (Eds), *The Globalization of News* (pp. 49-60). London, Sage Publications.
- Williams. F. (1953). *Transmitting world news*. UNESCO.
- Wittebols, J.H. (1996). News from the non-institutional world: US and Canadian television news coverage of social protest, *Political Communication*, 13: 345-61.
- World Bank, (2006). Countries: South Africa, Country brief. Retrieved 20 April 2007 from: web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/AFRICAEXT/SOUTHAFRICAEXTN/0,menuPK:368086~pagePK:141132~piPK:141107~theSitePK:368057,00.html.
- WSIS (World Summit on the Information Society) (2002). Document WSIS/PC-1/DOC/4-E, 31 May 2002. WSIS.

Wu, H.D. (2000). Systemic determinants of international news coverage: a comparison of 38 Countries. *Journal of Communication*, 50(2), 10–130.

Wu, H.D. (2004). The world's windows to the world: An overview of 44 nations' international news coverage. In C. Paterson & A. Sreberny (Eds), *International news in the twenty-first Century* (pp 95-110). John Libbey Publishing for the University of Luton Press.

Wu, H.D. (2007). A brave new world for international news? Exploring the determinants of the coverage of foreign news on US Websites. *International Communication Gazette*, 69: 539 - 551.

Wung, C.W. (2007). It [is] important to cover good examples of harmony diplomacy. In *China View* 26 June 2007. Retrieved 14 July 2007 from: news.xinhuanet.com/english/2007-06/25/content_6287247.htm.

Yahoo (2007). Retrieved 26 July 2007 from: news.yahoo.com/.

Yu, F.T.C. (1981/2) The international news-flow problem - what can be done about it? *Journal of International Affairs*; 35(2): 189–97.

Xin, X (2006). A developing market in news: Xinhua News Agency and Chinese newspapers. *Media, Culture & Society*, 28(1): 45-66.

Xinhua News (2007). Official Web site of Xinhua News. Retrieved 20 June 2007 from: xinhua.org/english/.

Appendix A

Memorandum on the transformation of state newspapers and news agencies

Since the launch of government-run newspapers and national news agencies in the SADC region, the understanding of the role of the media in a democratic society in general, and the media landscape in particular, has changed substantially.

There is now an African consensus that

- freedom of expression is a fundamental human right,
- the media plays a key role in promoting the free flow of information and ideas,
- pluralism of media ownership, diversity of content and editorial independence from all undue influences is indispensable in a democratic society;

as recognised by the Declaration of Principles on Freedom of Expression in Africa by the African Commission on Human & Peoples' Rights of October 2002.

While an independent press is flourishing and the transformation of state broadcasters is under way in a number of countries, there has been little discussion on the future of state controlled/owned newspapers and state controlled/owned news agencies.

For this reason, media stakeholders from Southern African countries meeting in Stellenbosch/South Africa on 28/29 May 2005 to deal with newspapers and in Pretoria/South Africa on 17/18 June 2006 to discuss news agencies, resolved the following to encourage further debate:

Newspapers

1. Government controlled/state owned newspapers as a tool of communication for governments have outlived their purpose in view of the emerging multitude and plurality of independent media voices.
2. Governments' responsibility to inform citizens on government issues is best served through their professional public relations and information departments.
3. Governments have the responsibility to create an enabling environment for a free press and must ensure a level playing field for all sectors, e.g. in regard to use of government facilities, access to capital, taxation, (duty free) import of newsprint and equipment as well as the widest possible distribution of newspapers. All government advertising should be placed by an independent

agency (selected through a tender process) according to criteria of impact. Government publications should not carry commercial advertising.

4. States should not own, and governments should not control or operate newspapers.
5. State newspapers should be privatised. This process should be based on
 - a. decisions by an institution that operates at arm's length from government;
 - b. documentation submitted by the bidder in regard to editorial independence and professional quality standards;
 - c. the avoidance of monopolies with a view to increasing media diversity and pluralism.
6. The process of privatisation will take different forms according to specific circumstances in the various countries (e.g. vibrancy of private market, number and types of state newspapers):
 - a. State newspapers should not be necessarily sold to the highest bidder.
 - b. Additional conditions could be set to ensure editorial independence through boards of trustees and/or editorial staff rights in appointing top editorial staff.
 - c. Shares could be offered to citizens in general in certain (limited) amounts for each individual/group, with restricted rights of resale, to ensure broad-based ownership.
 - d. Staff and management could be offered a buy out.

An appropriate solution might also be a mix of the above options.

7. Wherever such a transformation is presently not possible due to lack of political will, the danger of creating a new (now private) monopoly, or no buyer being found, state newspapers should be transferred to a public legal entity as a transitional solution. This entity must be accountable to the public at large through a board protected against any political or economic influence, and appointed in an open and transparent manner involving the participation of civil society.
8. Whenever the information needs of citizens are not sufficiently catered for by the mainstream press, media development agencies should be put in place to promote community and local media. Such agencies must be independent

even if public funds are used. Proceeds realised from the sale of state-owned newspapers should go into such agencies.

News agencies:

1. While governments have the legitimate right and duty to engage in information and public relation activities to communicate their positions to a national and international audience, the process of news gathering and distribution – the classical task of a news agency – should be held clearly distinct from such government controlled communications.
2. There is a need for a domestic news agency with a nation-wide collection and dissemination network to help meet the public interest and the right of the citizenry to be informed on all events and developments across the country.
3. Market-driven media outlets do not adequately cover certain aspects of people’s lives for commercial imperatives, such as developments in rural and peri-urban areas, environmental and health issues, performance of local governments, delivery of services and the like. Domestic news agencies should therefore strive to include in their coverage areas which are not sufficiently reported by the mainstream media. This would enable them to produce quality stories and features that are of real interest and value to the public at large.
4. Given the relevance of the coverage of these issues, the domestic news agencies serving the public interest must be credible to the media in the country which have to carry the stories and the public at large.
5. For this reason the Declaration on Principles of Freedom of Expression in Africa states that media “published by a public authority should be protected adequately against undue political interference” and that “media owners and media professionals shall be encouraged to reach agreements to guarantee editorial independence and to prevent commercial considerations from unduly influencing media content”. The adequate way to achieve these goals is to guarantee editorial independence of the domestic news agencies.
6. At least two options for the restructuring of domestic news agencies should be further examined:
 - the public service model follows the principles for public service broadcasting outlined by the Declaration. Accordingly, domestic news agencies should be “accountable to the public through the legislature rather than the government” and they “should be governed by a board which is protected against interference, particularly of a political or economic nature”;

- the stakeholder model aims at a cooperation of media houses and civil society organisations in a not-for-profit company. Both parties delegate representatives to a supervising board that appoints the director and the editor-in-chief to implement a jointly agreed editorial policy.

7. News agencies should endeavour to earn their own revenue. In cases where this is not achievable due to the economic constraints in a country, the state has the responsibility to enable the flow of information through the news agency by providing public funds. In such cases, the principles outlined by the Declaration in regard to public service broadcasting apply, i.e. that they “should be adequately funded in a manner that protects them from arbitrary interference with their budgets”. This means that funding from public funds must be insulated from influences from the executive, long term and assured. These funds must be accounted for to Parliament.

8. To bring this debate further, more thorough research into the status of news agencies in the region and elsewhere, and possible options, is needed.

9. In order to promote the flow of information within the SADC region, bilateral and multilateral pooling and news exchanges by news agencies with each other is encouraged.

Participants (Meeting, 17-18 June 2006)

Hon. Charles Banda, MP, Zambia; Prof. Fackson Banda, Rhodes University, SA; Prof. Guy Berger, Rhodes University, SA; Hendrik Bussiek, Consultant, SA; Luckson Chipare, Consultant, Namibia; Pamela Dube, Press Council Botswana; Paul Fauvet, AIM, Mozambique; Fernando Gonçalves, Editors’ Forum Mozambique; Chris Kabwato, Highway Africa, SA; Prof. Tawana Kupe, Wits University, SA; Zoe Titus, MISA; Roze Moodly, Bua News Service, SA; Basildon Peta, Journalist, SA; Augustine Phiri, Zambia News and Information Services (ZANIS); Mark van der Velden, SAPA, SA; Tangeni Amupadhi, Insight Magazine, Namibia; Peter Schellschmidt, FES; Felicita Büchner, FES

APPENDIX B

Statement agreed at the ENI Advisory Board* meeting on 2 September 1994 and ratified by the General Assembly on 22 May 2008

1. Purpose of ENI:

To create greater understanding of the work and mission of the church and the ecumenical movement by distributing news about the worldwide church to the secular and church-related media.

2. Operational policies and editorial guidelines:

- a. to provide a journalistically credible, global, ecumenical news service;
- b. to be editorially and organisationally distinct from the partners who join to sponsor it;
- c. to offer journalistic coverage of the life and witness of the church, including its unofficial and informal forms;
- d. to cover developments in other spheres in which the Christian community has direct interest or involvement;
- e. to prepare material with special sensitivity to differences in language, culture, traditions and emphasis which mark the global Christian community;
- f. to cover different parts of the world by using the services of people from those areas, to the greatest extent possible;
- g. to use original reporting, to the greatest extent possible;
- h. to offer, in the case of widely covered events and trends, supplementary material or perspectives not widely available;
- i. to report accurately, fairly, comprehensively and clearly, to treat with respect matters about which it reports and to report events and trends in context;
- j. to treat material from a global perspective, and to write and edit its material so as to be understandable by people unfamiliar with the subject;
- k.. not to fail to report news, or soften or obscure facts, because of pressure or threat.

* In 1994 before ENI had become an independent organization under Swiss law, the agency's Advisory Board was its highest governing body.