Ideologisation of the Media: An Infractional Onslaught to Journalism Ethical Code

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Abstract

This research work was carried out to find out how the ideologisation of the media affects journalism ethical code. The study looks at the meaning of ideology, media, media ideology and factors responsible for the ideologisation of the media. The study also dwells on journalism ethical code and goes further to assess how the ideologization of the media is an onslaught on journalism ethical code. The study takes it further to look at media ideology in the face of Russian-Ukrain war and the international media perspective of ideologisation. The desktop research method was used in the study as the information was sourced from secondary materials like test books, journals, internet, newspapers and so on. The study shows that ideologisation of the media is real both locally and internationally and it negatively affects the media and its ethical code by deviating the media from its primary aim of disseminating information in an objective, fairness and balance manner devoid of any colouration and bias. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that media practioners need to guide against ideologisation of the media in order to uphold a highly professionasl media that work according to its ethical codes.

Key words: Ideologisation, Media, Onslaught, Journalism, Ethical Code

Introduction

Stuart Hall, a sociologist and one of the leading voices of cultural studies, has provided a sophisticated analysis of how mass media institutions fit into this conception of ideology. He argues that mass media are one of the principal sites where the cultural leadership, the work of ideology is exercised. Media are involved in what Hall calls "the politics of signification," in which the media produce images of the world that give events particular meanings. Media images do not simply reflect the world, they re-present it; instead of reproducing the "reality" of the world "out there," the media engage in practices that define reality.

As Hall (1982) puts it, "Representation is a very different notion from that of reflection. It implies the active work of selecting and presenting, of structuring and shaping; not merely the transmitting of an already- existing meaning, but the more active labour of making things mean".

Media representations are intertwined with questions of power and ideology because the process of giving meaning to events suggests that, potentially, there are multiple definitions of reality. Media have, as Hall (1982) says, "the power to signify events in a particular way." The question, then, is, "What are the patterns by which events are represented?" This is fundamentally a question about ideology because it

suggests that media are places where certain ideas are circulated as the truth, effectively marginalizing or dismissing competing truth claims.

The media is suppose to be ahead of any other institution when it comes to integrity but today, to an extent, the reverse is nearly almost the case as some media messages due to non adherence to ethical practices are laced with bias and subjectivity which posits a deviation from the media ethical codes. The media play various vital roles in the society hence they are seen as one of the units from which factual and genuine information is gotten.

However, media texts always reflect certain values or ideologies which sometimes we may not be aware of. An example might be that in some texts, such as action films like the Die Hard or Lethal Weapon series, solving problems with force is seen as acceptable value and reflects a certain iseology.

The media is a successful carrier of ideology because it reach such a huge audience. The study of the media allows us to to consider and question dominant ideologies and look for the implications of different ideologies and value systems. When studying a media text, you may look for the dominant ideology present and question whose world view is represented and which groups and their associated world view have been represented.

Many scholars argue that media generally adopt the dominant assumptions and draw on the commonsensical views of the world that everyone knows. As a result, media representations, while not fully closed, have the tendency to reproduce the basic stories and values that are the underpinnings of this ideology. As a result of this ideological concept of the mass media, this discourse will be delving into how it affects the journalistic ethical goal and other related issues sourrounding the whole concept of media ideology.

Statement of the Problem

The media is expected to perform the role of informing, educating and entertaining the audience. This has long been the role assigned to the media by the society. How well the media has performed this role has been subjected to a lot of debates. While some agreed that the media have lived up to expectation, other also argue otherwise based on the deviation by some media from the traditional role assigned to them which must be carried out in a fair, balanced and objective manner.

To safeguard the media from deviating from their duty, the media practitioners came up with ethical codes that should govern the practice of the profession. If these ethical codes were to be followed strictly, the media would have be able to perform their duty in accordance with best practices expected of them. But in as far as the media is not living in an isolated society, it means the society the media operate in goes a long way to decide how the media will operate. Being the mouth piece of the people and based on the fact that many people do not want their wrong doing to be layed bare before the public, it authomatically means that there will be tendency to influece the media content in one way or the other.

Nevertheless, the media is expected to maintain a very high professional standard as without this, information being dished out to the public will cause more havoc than good. Over time, the media have been seen to have deviated from this core value due to the practice of some persons or entity to make the media the mouth piece of their ideology and belief. This goes against the ethics of journalism by which without ethics, the media will stray from their purpose and aim. And true to realistic practice, it has been a battle of survival as the media experience various ideologies within and outside the media.

Apart from this, nations of the world are always in the game of power play and supremacy. This make some nations want to enforce their ideologyy on other nations and the media happen to be the easiest way to do this. This is not unconnected with their power to dessiminate information to a large, scattered and hetoregenous audience both at local and international level.

It is with all these that this study is set to find out if actually there is ideology in the media and how this ideology has affected the media discharge of their duty. It is also meant to assess the different ideological perspective to media and how it has affected journalism ethical codes that are meant to guide the media in the discharge of their duties.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this work are:

1. To find out whether the media is ideologised.

2. To find out how the media is being ideologised .

3. How media ideology affects the journalism ethical code.

Theoretical Framework

This work is based on the Social Responsibility Theory (SRT). The Social Responsibility Theory traces its root to the Hutchins Commission, but the model was designed formally by Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in 1956 (Petrusenko, 1976).

This theory emphasises on the freedom and independence of the media who at the same time should be responsible and make public interest their watchword in the course of discharging their duties. It states that the media should maintain a high professional standard of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance while excesses by the press will justify the intervention by the government of the day (Obaze, Samson 2014).

Ideolosising the media will colour and run against the true practice of journalism that this theory set to correct. Media ideology is no doubt against independence, truth, balance, objectivity, accuracy and fairness which are the hallmark of a professional media in accordance with the tenets of the Social responsibility theory.

Media should not also be ideologised for it to maintain its ethical goal and standard. If this must be achieved, the tenets of this theory that preaches public interest and a responsible media must be upheld and colouring of media messages clearly goes against this. The social responsibility therefore portrays this discourse in it right perspective.

Meaning of Ideology

There are factors that influence media content and language and one of the major factors is Ideology. According to William (1977), ideology is a relatively formal and articulated system of meaning, values and beliefs, of a kind that can be abstracted as a world view or a class outlook. In other words, ideology means doctrine, philosophy, body of beliefs or principles belonging to an individual or group. It is a system of values, attitudes and beliefs which an individual, group or society holds to be true or important; these are shared by a culture or society about how that society should function. Ideology is a set of ideas and opinions, which may present the world from various points of view.

In his contribution, Becker (1984) believes that Ideology is responsible for our perception of the world and us. It has the control over our opinion about what is normal and common. According to Lancy (1998), ideology is quite flexible and try to adapt according to new circumstance.

Mass Media

Mass media refers collectively to all media technologies including the internet, television, newspaper, magazine, film and radio which are used for mass communication and the organisations which control these technologies. Mass media are described as the organised means of communicating openly and at a distance to many receivers within the short space of time. Media refer here basically to several medium or channels used in an organised fashion to communicate information to groups of people as a service to the the public.

Media itself is a shifter. Sometimes it refers to the material forms people use to communicate, from bodies to smartphones (Kittler 1997). Media can also refer to the channels of communication (Jakobsonm 1989).

Media Ideologyy

Al-beshr (2007) identifies media ideology as a system of thoughts, expressed via the communicational process, which includes the communicator, their method of using the text, the language, or the image (static or dynamic) which the printed, heard, or seen media process conveys. He noted that the communicator is affected by the orientation of the media organisation and the social system.

Media expansion in industrialized countries and especially in the United States, has led to the formation of a kind of media imperialism. Media monopoly or imperialism is the transmission of a nation's worldview (fundamental ideas) through the media by maximum production of content (Schiller, 1969). The views of the ruling class in every age are the views of the ruling class, because this class is the ruling

material force in society, and at the same time, it is the ruling thinking force. The class that possesses the means of material production also controls the means of mental production.

As a result, the ruling class effectively dominates the production, regulation and dissemination of ideas. "Instead of protesting against power and monopoly patterns, the media become agencies that affirm the ideas and values of the ruling class" (Miliband, 1979). 90% of the international news in the world media is from the four major Western news organizations: United Press International (UPI), the Associated Press, Reuters and Agence France-Presse (AFP), two of which are American, one British, and one French and their news is complemented by multinational giants (McQueen, 1998).

Media monopoly has been around since the 1920s when most countries complained about the influence of Hollywood on their culture. Since then, governments, especially western governments, have seen the importance of the media in conveying their worldview by conveying ideological messages to other countries. Thus, in such media, the ownership of the means of production and distribution of content (news, images, and commentaries, etc.) by the rulers of the capitalist system is to strengthen the power of the Western empire. Today, most of the world media is monopolized by large media companies. The media follow the goals of these companies. These companies have several TV channels that penetrate the depths of society which controlled audio and means of mental production (Marx & Engels, 1970).

In the age of capitalism, the capitalist class controls video and ordinary people are informed about their community through them. These top media companies did not limit the people's choices in the channels to cover their dominance over the media, and with the advancement of communication technology, they formed two-way communication in these media (Abbasi, 2019) to create the illusion of a democratic public sphere while bombarding people with ideas and inaccurate or one-sided self-propagating information (Havens and Lotz, 2017). The above was a brief description of the one-way flow of information from powerful countries to Third World countries, which has led to the ideologisation of the media.

It can be said that the internet and social media are shaped by the logic of capitalism, public service and civil society. However, the power of such new media is heavily skewed in favour of a capitalist Internet and capitalist social media.

One of the serious criticisms of cyberspace is the abuse of the journalistic nature of this space and the conversion of the citizen into a customer. Therefore, the cultural and scientific goals of cyberspace, through monopoly ownership, become a space for profiteering and thus ideologisation of this space. According to Habermas's normative ideal, journalism should be at the service of the public, providing them with participation in public policy debates and creating opportunities and resources for citizens to identify and address these issues and concerns. There is evidence to suggest that contemporary journalism does not play such a role, but rather, in a highly competitive media environment and market pressure, determines the trajectory of news performance.

As a result, media organizations assume their audiences as customers, not citizens of a democratic society. There is a great deal of concern that this large industry be run for profit, and that money be the first and last word, and that it controls the internet. Such a change is not in the interest of social equality, and the internet cannot pave the way for democracy and increase access to marginal voices, and it does not add to the quality of the news and it does not benefit society. On the other hand, this process strengthens large media companies and allows capital to be the driving force of the internet, silencing marginal voices, reducing public debate, accelerating the emergence of money-driven media, and creating social inequalities around the world through ideology.

Factors Responsible for the Ideologisation of the Media

1.Ownership: As the saying goes: He who pays the piper dictates the tune. Most media houses are tailored towards the ideology of the owners. Those owners normally have one interest or the other that the media house is expected to safeguard.

2. Government: The kind of government in a country goes a long way to decide the kind of ideology a media house will operate with. If the government is dictatorial, they will definitely bend the media to fit into their ideology.

3. Advertisers: Most media houses cannot do without advertisement as their source of getting income. In order not to loose advertiser, they usually slant the editorial content to tally with their ideology.

4. Elites: A large body of scholarly literature has explored the ways in which news media produce ideological visions of the nation and the world. One of the principal findings of this research is that news focuses on powerful people and institutions and generally reflects established interests. Whether this makes news "liberal" or "conservative" is another matter; some claim "the establishment" is liberal, while others argue that it is conservative. In either case, our reading of the research literature suggests that news reaffirms the basic social order and the values and assumptions it is based on.

5. Economic New: News coverage of economic issues is remarkable in the way it reproduces a profoundly ideological view of the world. Most news coverage of the economy is by and about the business community (Croteau and Hoynes, 1994). While individuals can play a range of roles in economic life - worker, consumer, citizen, or investor - economic news focuses overwhelmingly on the activities and interests of investors. One of the most striking examples of this phenomenon is the fact that virtually every newspaper has a Business section, while almost none has a consumer or labour section. As a result, economic news is largely business news, and business news is directed at corporate actors and investors.

Journalism Ethical Code

Ethics according to Baran (2004), are rules of behaviour or moral principles that guide our actions in given situations. It has to do with the rightness or wrongness of action. As journalist, they are the moral compass that guide our actions in the course of covering, writing and reporting news stories. Ethics helps to know the right thing to do at any given point in the course of our duty as journalist.

According to Ojo (2018), ethics are system of moral values that guide individuals in a society to maintain desirable standards of conduct. Merril and Lowenstein (1979) define journalists' ethics as "that branch of philosophy that help journalists determine what is right to do by giving the journalists standard by which he can judge actions to be right or wrong, good or bad, responsible or irresponsible".

The International Principles of Professional Ethics in Journalism emerged between 1978 and 1983 to serve as a meeting point for national and regional codes of ethics. The ten principles are: People's right to true information, the journalists dedication to objective reality, the journalist social responsibility, the journalists professional integrity, public access and participation, respect For privacy and human dignity, respect for public interest, respect for universal value and diversity of culture, elimination of war and other great evils confronting humanity and promotion of new world information and communication order.

However, for a journalist to be able to observe ethical codes, the following ethical issues must always be considered:

1. Truth and Accuracy: Getting the facts is the ethical standard of journalism. We should check for the accuracy of facts and always strive to corroborate the information we gathered.

2 Independence: A journalist should be independent and avoid conflict of interest in order to be an unbiased reporter.

3. Fairness and Impartiality: A journalist should touch all sides to a story and avoid being partial.

4. Humanity and Objectivity: A journalist should avoid being harmful and be conscious of the fact that bias reporting will do more harm than good. He can feel emotion, yet tell the story in an objective way by detaching his emotions from the facts of the story.

5. Accountability: Journalist should be professional and responsible in the course of their duties. When there is mistake and error, he should hold up to it and correct them.

6. Sychophancy: Undeserved and unmerited praise singing of an individual probably for the journalist's personal interest or gain should be avoided.

7. Character Assassination: Giving a dog a bad name in order to hang the dog. Journalist should avoid portraying an individual in false light in order to give him a bad name before the society even when such individual does not deserve such attack.

8. Pressure: Pressure within and outside the profession normally make a journalist to go against the ethics of the profession. It can be pressure from colleagues, friends or family members.

9. Confidentiality of Source: A journalist is not allow to disclose source of information receive under confidence. Doing this will amount to dryness of information.

10. Bribery: As a journalist, you are not to receive any favour in form of cash or kind as this will compromise your professional ethics and integrity.

This list of jounalistic ethics is not exhaustive as we have others like sensationalism, plagerism, moonlighting, Afghanistanism, conflict of interest, self sensorship and so on.

How Ideologisation of the Media is an Onslaught to Journalistic Ethical Code

The ideolization of the media can also be see as bias of the journalists and news producers within the mass media in the selection of many events and stories that are reported and how they are covered. The term "ideologisation" implies a pervasive or widespread bias contravening the standards of journalism (Thomas 2019).

Practical limitations to media neutrality include the inability of journalists to report all available stories and facts and the requirement that selected facts be linked into a coherent narrative. Government influence, including overt and covert censorship, biases the media in some countries, for example China, North Korea and Myanmar (Merloe, 2015).

Politics and media ideology may interact with each other, the media has the ability to influence politicians and politicians may have the power to influence the media. This can change the distribution of power in society (Entman, 2007). Market forces may also cause ideological leaning. Examples include ideology introduced by the ownership of media, including a concentration of media ownership, the subjective selection of staff, or the perceived preference of an intended audience.

Media ideology occurs when the media support or attack a particular political party, candidate, or ideology and it can also be done through gatekeeping when stories are selected or deselected, sometimes on ideological grounds. It is sometimes also referred to as agenda bias, when the focus is on political actors and their preferred policy issues (Eberl, Boomgaarden and Wagner 2015).

According to Eberl, Boomgaarden and Wagner (2015), Statement ideology (also known as tonality bias or presentation bias) is when media coverage is slanted towards or against particular actors or issues. This gives room to the relegation of certain issues which the public has right to know. There is the common forms of political and non-political media ideology which include advertising, when stories are selected or slanted to please advertisers (Eberl, Boomgaarden and Wagner 2015).

Concision, a tendency to report views that can be summarized succinctly, crowding out more unconventional views that take time to explain and content, differential treatment of the two parties in political conflicts and to slant news that benefits one side (Entman, 2007). We have corporate ideology when stories are selected or slanted to please corporate owners of media who determine the content of the media to the detriment of unbiased reporting which is the hallmark of true journalism. There is decision-making ideology when the motivation, frame of mind, or beliefs of the journalist will have an impact on their writing and it is generally pejorative (Entman, 2007). This leads to the journalist portraying his emotions in the report and thereby removing objectivity from the work.

Distortion ideology is when the fact or reality is distorted or fabricated in the news (Entman, 2007). The reality is coloured to suit the journalist pre-informed perception and judgement and thus denying the public the true position of things. There is a tendency to report what everyone else is reporting and to avoid stories that will offend anyone even when this bandwagon ideology may not be the reality.

Following the crowd to report the wrong situation is an idealogical tendecy that does journalism no good. Sometime, journalists gallop towards sensationalism by favouring the exceptional over the ordinary, giving the impression that rare events, such as airplane crashes are more common than common events, such as automobile crashes. This is a kind of ideology that affects the journalistic practice.

Other ways by which media are ideologised are when an actor or issue receives more or less favorable coverage as a result of newsworthiness and media routines. False balance is when an issue is presented as even-sided, despite disproportionate amounts of evidence. Media also introduce undue weight when a story is given much greater significance or portent than a neutral journalist or editor would give.

Speculative content occurs when stories focus not on what has occurred, but primarily on what might occur, using words like "could," "might," or "what if," without labeling the article as analysis or opinion. This gives the impression of a news story to the reader which may be far from the facts. False timeliness comes in by implying that an event is a new event, and thus deriving notability without addressing past events of the same kind. The issue of ventriloquism is also common. This is when experts or witnesses are quoted in a way that intentionally voices the author's own opinion and thereby misleading the public. Demographic is also a common form of media ideology caused by factors such as gender, race, social and economic status (Ribeiro et al)

Media ideology is also manifested when there is bias reporting that favours or attacks a particular race, religion, gender, age, sexual orientation, ethnic group, or even person. It is expected in the journalistic field that biased reporting should not in any way be welcomed as journalism is anchored on the ideal of fair, balance and objective reporting and contrary ideology gives room to abuse and unethical practice.

Media Ideology in the face of Ukraine – Rusian War

On 24 February, Russia commenced a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. This marked the start of the biggest war in Europe since the Second World War. Major news organisations around the world have have sent reporters in Ukraine to cover the war. In the face of all these, each news outlet seem to have ideology through which they project their report of the war.

Since there is little research on this war so far, the study of Eddy and Fletcher (2022) which was carried out to assess the overall media coverage of the war become a centre point to assess the ideological perspective of various media in the face of the war.

In their study, five countries were selected for the research and these countries are Brazil, Germany, Poland, the UK and the US. These countries were selected because they represent different levels of proximity to the conflict, ranging from Poland which borders Ukraine to Brazil and the US which are on different continents. Fieldwork took place from 29 March to 7 April, 2022 – roughly one month after the invasion began. around 1,000 respondents were polled in each country and samples were assembled using the same quotas as the main survey.

In their findings, majority of the people were following the Russia–Ukraine conflict somewhat closely. The study found out that most people turn more to TV news to get information about the crisis. When asking respondents which news source they are paying the most attention to when it comes to the Russia–Ukraine conflict, television tops the list.

On people`s opinion about the media coverage of the Russia–Ukraine conflict, the media were rated high in keeping the people up to date of the happening in Ukraine, providing a range of different perspectives on the conflict. Nearly half or more of respondents in all five countries agreed that the media have done a nice job with this.

But in general, they feel the media have not performed quite as well for explaining the wider implications of the conflict or providing a different range of perspectives on it which might be based on ideological leaning – clearly illustrating, across all five countries, where news organisations could be doing a better job as the crisis continues to unfold. In general, people in the older age groups, and those with more formal education, tend to rate the coverage more favourably.

In the wake of thousands of deaths and the displacement of more than six million Ukrainian refugees and with Russia now being accused by the international community of widespread human rights violations, the war in Ukraine continues to attract global attention. Across the five countries studied, a majority are following the conflict at least closely, especially those nearest to it through media coverage even when some media may look at the war with the prism of their ideology.

One of trhe major highlight of this study is that people are turning to television news for the latest information on the conflict – illustrating the continuing resonance of broadcast media in times of crisis. This may not be surprising, particularly given concerns about false or misleading information circulating on social media platforms. But in some countries, such as the US and Poland, attention to news from online sources (including mainstream and alternative news sites as well as social media) is also high.

Given the difficult and at times traumatic nature of war coverage, the study discovered evidence of accelerating news avoidance across several countries like Germany. And while short-term news behaviours and attitudes have appeared to change in Poland – with increased news use and interest in the country closest to the conflict – even a story as newsworthy and significant as the war in Ukraine has not reversed declining levels of news interest in most countries.

As the conflict continues, it will be important for media to priotize their ideology around explaining its wider implications. People do not feel as positively about news organisations providing different range of perspectives on the conflict based on different ideologies. However, as the invasion continues and as new carnage occur daily, providing other perspectives is unlikely to be seen by journalists as the most pressing task due to different ideologies by different media houses.

International Media Perspective on Ideologisation

When most African states attained independence during the last half of the 20th century, their pre-occupation with power and the politics of redress as characterised by electoral and judicial reforms dominated the transition period from colonialism to independence (Nyamnjoh, 2005). Key among these issues was the pressure on the newly elected African leaders to rebrand and join the bandwagon as complaisant nationalists in order to court favour with the international community.

Often, this was done with oversight from international bodies such as the United Nations(UN), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank, Commonwealth, Non-Aligned Movement and/or direct influence from former colonial masters, chiefly the French and the British. The situation was premised and compounded by existence of conditional demands clandestinely attached to the so much needed donor support and provision of funding towards post-war reconstruction and rural development efforts (Makuwira, 2017). As in the colonial past, the western media were the major carriers and interpreters of these transition-transformation discourses, albeit located within the western paradigm or dominant ideology

The global media, also called transnational media are synonymous with big media companies that can be understood in terms of their imperial domination of the world's cultural industry through the dissemination of cultural products such as news, music, film, cartoons, and other forms of artistic expressions (Herman & McChesney, 2006). While they operate on an institutional outlook, they are not simple companies or government agencies, but are complex organisations with symbolic functions (Stevens, 2003), and turnovers amounting to millions of dollars (Sparks, 2009:157). Their operations comprise technology, politics, economics, culture as well as art. Examples of the global media giants include the British Broadcasting Corporation, Reuters, Sky News, CNN, Disney, Time Warner, Media 24 and America Online. Their operational practice often highlight tendencies of media concentration which occurs when the means of production in the media market are owned by few and mostly large groups of companies (Devereux, 2014). This ownership structure usually emanates from mergers that incorporate the ownership of some of the world's largest media companies to form global networks such as Cable Network News (CNN), TransNational Telecomms (TNT) and Disney cartoon networks. Consequently, fewer and fewer corporations end up dominating the media markets (McPhail, 2006), a situation that often leads to monopolistic (or oligopolistic) tendencies with the potential to undermine the sovereignty and democratic values of smaller states.

While local forms of the media have played a significant educational and informational role by filling the knowledge gap that most social institutions have not breached (Coronel, 2003), the global media have advanced these matters beyond national borders. They have assumed the role of educational institutions and civic structures of society as purveyors of unfettered information access to millions of people who previously lacked basic information. Daily news reports through the news media alert the international public to the latest events about the larger environment beyond their immediate experiences through multiple technological signals that highlight major global events.

Through specific news selection criteria, news editors and programmers re-focus their audiences' attention to influence their perceptions on how to relate to important issues in the world (McCombs, 2013). This confirms the agenda setting role of the news media that intends to influence the salience of particular issues which may not have ordinarily being important to certain sections of society. The process occurs regardless of whether any significant numbers of potential audiences really view the subject in question as worthwhile to hold an opinion about or not. These include news such as the global economic recession, terrorism and celebrities. While many issues compete for public attention, only a few succeed in doing so, confirming that dominant media exert significant influence and ideology on media users' view about reality (McCombs, 2004).

Therefore, the global media have the power to set the agenda for public thought and discussion wherein their content becomes, to a considerate degree, the agenda of the world's public (Stevens, 2003; McCombs, 2013). It is these pre-determined news and programming dynamics that make global media ideology an interesting area of study in post-colonial Africa.

International media are considered as one of the principal sources of information about public affairs globally. They possess unprecedented power to shape public ideas and opinions (Stevens, 2003), and those who control them have the power to make or break political reputations and careers (Doyle, 2013). They communicate a host of cues about the relative salience of topics to influence audiences' views about the developed nations' public image globally, thus fostering their ideology in the world. As such, this indirectly prescribes societal discourse and influences opinions regarding matters of importance including the manner in which audiences judge the actions of the powerful nations.

Public opinion matters often revolve around specific issues of the moment or the perceived collective will of society that is usually externally constructed. Perspectives on public opinion as a process stress the role of international dialogue and deliberation as core elements in the description and evaluation of public opinion (McCombs, Hubert, Kiousis & Wanta, 2011). Therefore, carefully packaged news frames usually become the source of information for leaders and governments, who use them to interpret the social world for target audiences. This eventually places the media in a potentially powerful position in influencing public opinion in the public sphere (Firmstone, 2013).

In this regard, global media play an important role as part of the broad multi-media environment to facilitate international publicity among global citizens. As public opinion shapers, these media giants bring issues of international interest to public attention and affect how global issues are framed, often at the expense of the world populace.

In economic terms, the global media are powerful forces of capitalism because they are hugely wealthy and they wield political as well as cultural and ideological power (Stevens, 2003). Beyond being modes of economic production, dominant media also play important economic and symbolic roles, including limiting diversity and controlling key economic factors. This is evident in nations such as the United States of America, Britain, France, Canada, and Japan, where the state has traditionally insisted on

principles of public service broadcasting. However, developments in the last few decades have seen new entities being run on commercial enterprise modes in the form of "maverick capitalism" (ibid p39). For this reason, the global media have been criticised for perpetuating a "deeply and starkly inegalitarian" process that favours a privileged minority as it compounds the impoverishment of the majority through closure and containment (Golding & Harris, 1997:7). They have achieved this by not only taking control of the global markets but also controlling the global consciousness that encourages a number of monopoly concerns which command a disproportionate share of the global markets (McChesney, 2001).

Thus, the neo-liberalist rhetoric has hoodwinked most peripheral nations to function within national and regional policies in tune with the capitalist orientation that minimise countervailing traditions, customs and expectations (Nyamnjoh, 2005). Arguably, this has given rise to the increase of unpoliced flow of ideologically biased global news that influence local political and economic discourse in poor nations.

Discussion of Findings

Based on this research, it was discovered that there is actually ideology in the media. Al-beshr (2007) identifies media ideology as a system of thoughts, expressed via the communicational process, which includes the communicator, their method of using the text, the language, or the image (static or dynamic) which the printed, heard, or seen media process conveys. He noted that the communicator is affected by the orientation of the media organisation and the social system. What this entails is that media ideology is real and is embedded in the editorial content of the media which many unsuspecting reading public may not easily grasp as ideology

This study found out that media ideology is done in several ways. According to Eberl et al (2015), media ideology occurs when coverage is slanted towards or against particular actors or issues. This gives room to the relegation of certain issues which the public has right to know. There is the common forms of political and non-political media ideology which include advertising, when stories are selected or slanted to please advertisers.

It is discovered that some of the biggest ideological media in the world are from the western world whose ideology seem to penetrate all corners of the world due to their size and penetration. The global media, also called transnational media are synonymous with big media companies that can be understood in terms of their imperial domination of the world's cultural industry through the dissemination of cultural products such as news, music, film, cartoons, and other forms of artistic expressions (Herman & McChesney, 2006). While they operate on an institutional outlook, they are not simple companies or government agencies, but are complex organisations with symbolic functions (Stevens, 2003), and turnovers amounting to millions of dollars (Sparks, 2009:157). Their operations comprise technology, politics, economics, culture as well as art. Examples of the global media giants include the British Broadcasting Corporation, Reuters, Sky News, CNN, Disney, Time Warner, Media 24 and America Online.

It is revealed by the study that media ideologisation affects journalistm ethical codes as according to Miliband (1979), the ruling class effectively dominates the production, regulation and dissemination of ideas. "Instead of protesting against power and monopoly patterns, the media become agencies that affirm the ideas and values of the ruling class". In this way, the media abandon their ethical code of balance, fairness and objectivity and become mouth piece of government.

Conclusion

Ideologisation of the media is real and it comes in different forms and ways. It can come through the journalist and other internal and external forces that beat the purpose of an ideal media. As can be seen, media are channels of Communication meant to perform sacrosanct functions of information, communication and entertainment in a balance, objective and fair manner. Till date, people depend on the media for these functions. Ideologising the media therefore goes a very long way to affect these functions in the society.

As journalists, there are ethical goals they are expected to attain in the course of their professional duty. The profession calls for high moral standard because of their high standing in the society as conveyor of information. Anything that mars this process will automatically lead to the dissemination of wrong information which will adversely affect the society. The ideologisation of the media is therefore a clog in the effective function of the media which must be done away with in order to give room to free flow of genuine information. Ideologisatiion of the media is against the effective practice of the ethics of the profession which are needed for the effective function of the media.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Since it is discovered that media is ideologised, there is need for more enligthment and sensitation campaign on the part of media handlers on the important of a free media devoid of any ideology.

2. All media organisations need to always edit and proof read their editorial content to prevent any room for ideological content.

3. All the media governing bodies both at international and local level should strengthen and enforce the ethical codes of the profession and educate media practitioners on the need to strictly adhere to the codes.

4. Media practioners should see the profession as a call to serve public interest and therefore uphold high professional standard at all times.

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