

Title: Vox Populi: The International Biases in Western Mass Media and the Efforts to Equalize Global News Coverage

Presenter: Tony Maquiling, Irvine Valley College

Mentor: Emily Liu

Multinational media outlets have and continue to fail in delivering equal coverage of the world's diverse regions, harming Western foreign policy and supporting human rights abuses. They produce more content for regions that are more similar culturally or closer geographically to their home country and other coverage is often negatively framed (Hawkins, 2011). Relatively short-sighted, the resulting news publications or broadcasts tend to ignore developing regions that suffer from insecurity or humanitarian crises because of their distance from industrialized nations.

The ramifications of a new era of journalism began with the "CNN Effect", explaining how CNN and similar news networks change American political agendas. Scholar Eytan Gilboa (2005) analyzed CNN's new technology during the Gulf War, which some believe prompted greater military intervention because the American public was more aware of fighting. Similar effects on foreign policy are seen with magazine coverage of the Rwandan Civil War, whose negative framing may have contributed to international apathy and the 1994 Tutsi Genocide (Wall, 2008). These historical accounts support the theory that major news coverage directly influences international policy through setting public agendas and applying political pressure.

The International Council on Human Rights Policy's white paper seeks fundamental changes in news organization through greater partnership between developed and developing newsgroups (ICHRP, 2002). Their call has fallen on deaf ears, especially those executives who profit from news media. Balanced news coverage is essential in protecting vulnerable groups from human rights abuse and requires greater international cooperation and government support.

References

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