



## Global 24/7 news providers

### Emissaries of global dominance or global public sphere?

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#### ABSTRACT

The study of international and global news to date has focused on the operation of foreign news values, the unequal flows and emergent contra-flows of transnational news as well as the phenomenology of 24/7 live broadcasts. Today these debates are often played out under opposing 'global dominance' and 'global public sphere' positions. Each in its own way is concerned about communications democracy – whether its discerned curtailment by processes of geo-political economy or temporal-spatial extension by increased global cultural flows. In this article we contend that there is a 'democratic lacuna' at the heart of these debates. This silence concerns how exactly leading world news channels – principally CNNI and BBC World but also international competitors such as Sky and Fox News – communicatively present the voices, views and values of contending interests and identities from around the world. Elaborating a new conception of 'communicative frames' based on contemporary positions of social and political theory and applying this to a large corpus of news output, we begin to evaluate generalizing theoretical claims, both critical and celebratory, about the contribution of global 24/7 news to processes of global dominance or an emergent global public sphere.

#### KEY WORDS

BBC World ■ CNNI ■ communicative frames ■ Fox News ■ global dominance  
■ global news ■ global public sphere ■ Sky

#### Introduction

The field of international and global news study is structured by competing paradigms and theoretical approaches. These generally help to reveal different dimensions or aspects of the formations and flows of news above and beyond the level of the nation state. Inevitably they spark debates about how we should best conceptualize, theorize and investigate the international news field. Currently, at their core, are deep-

seated theoretical tensions about globalization centring on processes of geo-political dominance and inequalities rooted in political economy on the one hand, and issues of cosmopolitan citizenship and a possible emergent global public sphere sustained by new regional and transnational cultural flows on the other. Developing on recent positions of social and political theory and elaborating a new conception of 'communicative frames' we argue that there is a communicative complexity in the different structures routinely delivering television news and that this has gone largely unrecognized and unexplored. This theoretical blind spot constitutes a 'democratic lacuna' in the field of international and global news study and needs to be redressed.

The communicative structures by which contending views, voices and cultural values are disseminated and deliberated within global television news provision, we suggest, are democratically consequential. This is because they variously enable, or disable, the public elaboration of conflicting interests and identities and, as such, are imbricated in processes of democratic deliberation and display, or its curtailment. How global news providers mediate conflicts and communities to wider audiences (potential publics) around the world today is therefore crucial for any serious evaluation of how television news is implicated in reproducing structures of dominance or enhancing democracy and its contribution to 'global civil society' (Kaldor, 2003; Keane, 2003). It is surprising, we think, that media researchers have, with few exceptions, been so empirically neglectful of the mediating forms and deliberative structures of global TV news.

This article focuses its analytical sights on the two leading satellite global news providers, CNNI and BBC World, and two emerging global news channels, Fox News and Sky News (Australia). Whereas the Fox News Channel represents a US-based, globally distributed news network, Sky News Australia operates on the basis of a national subsidiary of a major international network. Both Fox News and Sky News may be considered more regional in their news orientation than the global providers CNNI and BBC World but they are substantial international players nonetheless in terms of their growing international distribution and reach (Rai and Cottle, 2007). The article first briefly reviews the contemporary field of international and global news study, observing the democratic lacuna in its midst and underlining how closer engagement with the communicative structures of news delivery and dissemination is now needed if we are to begin to evaluate current claims about the role of global 24/7 news providers in processes of global dominance or the constitution of a global public sphere. Current

positions of social and political theory help to give credence to these arguments. We then elaborate and illustrate our new(s) conceptualization of 'communicative frames' before systematically demonstrating how this repertoire of communicative structures features in and across our four global news providers and their respective news outputs.

### **International and global news studies: the democratic lacuna in the field**

Johan Galtung and Marie Ruge's famous study of the structures of foreign news, written over 40 years ago, proved seminal (Galtung and Ruge, 1965). Subsequent studies of international news agendas evidently remain indebted to this early study with its identification of recurring news structures such as 'frequency', 'threshold', 'cultural proximity', 'consonance' and 'reference to elite nations', 'elite people', and 'something negative' and so on. What Galtung and Ruge's study did not do, however, and this is perfectly understandable given its informing 'transmission' ideas about communications based in its chosen metaphor of 'broadcasting signals', was attend to exactly *how* the news media, whether press or broadcasting, organize and present conflicts in terms of the contending arguments and perspectives in play. The archetypal news form assumed in this, and seemingly most other subsequent analyses of international news agendas and news values, appears to be the 'news report'. This is evident in Galtung and Ruge's famous list of foreign news structures that included 'reference' to elite persons and elite nations and so on but not to how exactly these elites or their detractors featured in the different forms of news entry and conflict elaboration. As we explore below, the 'communicative frames' routinely deployed by global news channels, many of them inter-discursive and deliberative in nature, are more than about simply reporting events, and some can even contribute meaningfully to processes of public deliberation and the display of cultural differences (see Figure 1).

The UNESCO debates about the 'New World Information and Communication Order' and its structured imbalances of communication flows (MacBride, 1980) also suffer from a similar blind spot or democratic lacuna – notwithstanding the title of its official report *Many Voices, One World* (MacBride, 1980). In fact, with the emphasis firmly placed on broad communication flows, little was said about how voices from around the world actually featured and fared *within* different forms of news. The powerful theoretical perspectives of media and cultural imperialism suffer from a similar representational deficit. Today's

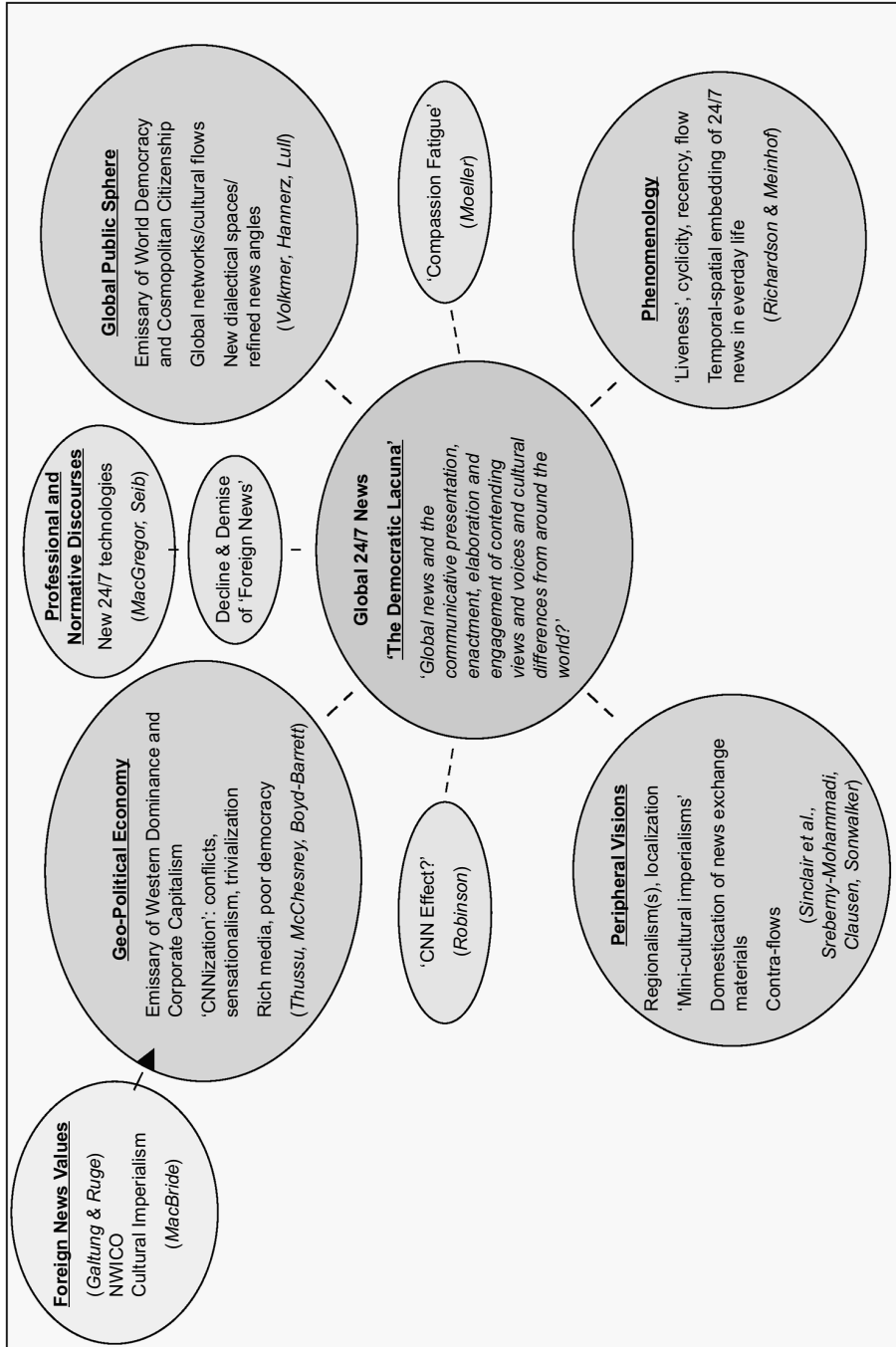


Figure 1 International and global news studies – the 'democratic lacuna' in the field

political economists, in spite of dissenting and qualifying arguments across the years (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1991; Tomlinson, 1991, 1999), continue this critical tradition but are now cognizant of the new geopolitical realities of Western hegemony including intensified global market competition, widespread privatization and deregulation. Studies examining the operations of global news agencies and transnational corporate media (Boyd-Barrett and Rantanen, 1998; McChesney, 1999) as well as processes of media conglomeration, convergence and the 'colonization of communication space' (Boyd-Barrett, 1998), for example, all generally concur that today's 'rich media' produce 'poor democracy' (McChesney, 1999) – but they do not do so on the basis of detailed empirical engagement with the communicative structures of news and its facilitation or curtailment of public speech and the elaboration of disagreements and differences.

Again this is understandable. The tradition of political economy is theoretically predisposed to focus on structures of media ownership, control and the competitive logic of regional and international markets, not the analysis of news texts or how the structures of news presentation mediate the public elaboration of conflicts. Too often, then, 'content' only figures in terms of documented product flows or within general critical statements about the ideological or obfuscating nature of news discourse. Daya Thussu, for example, warns that CNN's live 24/7 news operations have become increasingly entertainment driven and are contributing to the 'CNNization' of global 24/7 channels around the world (Thussu, 2003). War reporting, he suggests, has become sensationalized and trivialized through high-tech reporting and a video-game format where complex graphics and satellite imagery provide a 'largely virtual, even bloodless, coverage of war' (Thussu, 2003: 117). While Thussu's claims can find supporting empirical evidence we may nonetheless want to explore whether there is more complexity embedded in the communicative structures of global television news than this. Conflicts by their very nature are inter-discursive; they generate contending definitions, perspectives and accounts and frequently mobilize cultural myths, symbols and public performances. Though the news value and drama of conflicts are unlikely to be overlooked by news organizations in pursuit of ratings and revenue this need not be taken as the whole story. Conflict protagonists in diverse fields of contention seek to promote their aims and agendas via the media. How each becomes communicatively embodied (or evacuated) in the different presentational structures of TV news, and advances claims or symbolizes the differences at stake, needs careful analysis. The communicative

structures of TV news can display potent images and symbols, relay cultural myths and emotive testimonies as well as circulate propositional accounts, arguments and rhetoric. These communicative features, then, are often an integral part of mediatized conflicts (Cottle, 2006a) and global crisis reporting (Cottle, forthcoming). They demand increased theoretical salience and empirical inquiry in the field of news study.

Recent 'peripheral visions' (Sinclair et al., 2002) qualify the overarching claims of Western media dominance. Included here are studies of new regional media formations and regional media production (Chalaby, 2002; Cunningham et al., 1998; Sinclair et al., 2002; Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1991), contra-flows from new regional players (Azran, 2004; El-Nawawy and Iskandar, 2003), discerned 'mini-cultural imperialisms' enacted *between* former colonies (Sonwalkar, 2001), and the national 'domestication' of news exchange materials and the reporting of global events (Clausen, 2003; Cohen et al., 1996). Together these open up a host of new dynamics and complexities in the study of global communication formations and flows. But here too it seems the communicative forms of this differentiated and regionalized global news landscape are, at best, only glimpsed. El-Nawawy and Iskandar, for example, refer to Al-Jazeera's 'ability to air contending ideas and issues' in talk shows such as 'The Opposite Direction', maintaining that these can contribute to a vibrant civil society (El-Nawawy and Iskandar, 2003: 69). But they have yet, as with other 'peripheral visions', to systematically examine the communicative complexities of these journalism forms and hence their possible contribution to processes of public deliberation and democratic deepening (Giddens, 1994).

Scholars interested in the distinctive phenomenology of live 24/7 news broadcasts possibly take us a little nearer to detailed empirical engagement with the communicative forms of global television news. Here the temporal features of rolling news broadcasts including programme flow, cyclicity and an evident fetish for live news often assume theoretical pride of place (Hoskins, 2004; Richardson and Meinhof, 1999). This theorization of the temporal nature of 'live' 24/7 news certainly helps to recover how news form becomes, phenomenologically, an integral part of news reception in everyday life. But, transfixed on this experiential 'live' quality of TV news, these studies are often insufficiently cognizant of the repertoire of different communicative structures delivering 24/7 television news and how these differently mediate conflicts and contention. The cut and thrust of argumentative encounters and open-ended exchanges facilitated by at least some forms of news presentation, for example, as well as the

affective appeals of news visualization in others, become eclipsed within generalizing statements about 'liveness' and an essentialized view of 'news discourse'.

Professional and normative discourses about the changing technologies of satellite TV news production and delivery also focus on the seeming broadcasting fetish for live news and invariably lament its impact on the quality of broadcast journalism. Interestingly, a recent study of BBC World and other 24/7 UK channels has argued that professional claims about 'liveness' in terms of 'breaking news' are overstated given the statistical infrequency of the latter (Lewis et al., 2005). The pursuit of 'breaking news' as well as 'live two-ways' and 'hotel stand-ups' are professionally lamented, in any case, by many within the industry who argue that these have become a poor substitute for in-depth reportage delivered by knowledgeable correspondents based in the field (MacGregor, 1997; Seib, 2004). This normative refrain requires, however, a more grounded, analytical and conceptual approach to the communicative complexities of TV news presentation as does the debate about the decline in foreign correspondents and shrinkage of broadcast foreign news items (Hamilton and Jenner, 2004; Utey, 1997). Here too, it seems, we need to attend much more closely to the play of views and voices accessed in traditional and emergent forms of international news correspondence.

Global public sphere theorists, for their part, challenge the generally pessimistic accounts of those political economists and others above. Ingrid Volkmer, for example, maintains that CNN has 'invented a new form of international reporting, which extended the narrow, "national" journalistic concept by including new political contexts and enlarging the political horizon beyond a single-nation-state' (Volkmer, 2002: 245; see also Volkmer, 1999, 2003, 2005). News angles are thought to have become 'refined' and CNN is said to have played 'an important role in the global public sphere by reconfiguring journalistic styles and formats' (Volkmer, 2002: 245). The complex communications cross-traffic and counter-flows around the world today, she argues, underpin the network society and help to constitute 'a new concept of (world) citizenship' (Volkmer, 2003: 15). These global claims, it has to be said, are based on limited empirical engagement with the stated 'reconfiguration of journalistic styles and formats'. Much is made, for example, of CNNI's *World Report*, a distinctive programme in which journalists from around the world can broadcast their own stories and story angles on CNNI's platform. But to what extent *World Report* and similar news programmes are truly representative of CNNI news reporting or global news flows

more widely and open up, as claimed, 'new dialectical spaces' has yet to be empirically established.

Volkmer's emphasis on today's mediated global interconnectedness is nonetheless important and invites a deeper appreciation of how news can display cultural differences as well as communicate conflicts around the world. The anthropologist Ulf Hannerz similarly observes how a 'conspicuous part of reporting . . . is not devoted to hard news and unique events but to a continuous thematization of difference itself' (2000: 112). Some news features and the subjunctive style of news writing, he suggests, contribute to a 'thick cosmopolitanism', or feelings of being at home within a culturally heterogeneous world. And James Lull has recently argued that 'The open spaces of global communication promise not unity, but opportunity for meaningful dialogue and nurturance of the global public sphere' (2007: 169). The work of Volkmer, Hannerz, Lull and others advances suggestive but often speculative claims. They invite us to re-examine the cultural flows of global news and discover to what extent cultural disjuncture and difference are valorized in today's global 'mediascape' (Appadurai, 1996), and in what ways 'proper distance' may, or may not, be enacted (Silverstone, 2007). Clearly, this new cultural sensibility thought to be embedded within today's global news flows demands a more robust empirical examination.

Finally, two prominent debates in the current field of international and global news study are also impaired by their lack of attention to the mediating forms of global television news. Both the so-called 'CNN effect' (Robinson, 2002) and its theoretical opposite, the 'compassion fatigue' thesis (Moeller, 1999) respectively argue for a strong policy media impact or a morally depleted capacity to empathize with others and do so on the basis of claims made about media scenes of human suffering. But, with two notable exceptions only, these have yet to empirically engage with the communicative complexities involved in their news mediation (Hawkins, 2002; Jakobsen, 2000; Moeller 1999; Shaw, 1996; Tester, 1994). Here the work of Piers Robinson (2002) and Lillie Chouliaraki (2006) is unusual, given the former's attention to the presence or absence of critical framing and emotive pictures in humanitarian disaster news reports, and the latter's sophisticated semiotics of so-called 'adventure', 'emergency' and 'ecstatic' news or the different regimes of pity encoded in the news mediation of suffering. The communicative architecture of television news, however, exhibits further complexities and differentiations than these and those which variously open up or close down opportunities for engaged deliberation



and emotive display. We need, then, to better map how the different communicative structures of TV journalism can convey information, ideas and arguments, as well as elicit sentiments and emotions, and possibly thereby help to sustain bonds of moral solidarity via a mediated ethics of care (Cottle, 2004, forthcoming).

Enough said. From our review of some of the principal approaches and positions in the field of international and global communications we observe a democratic lacuna in the field in that each has failed to refine its theoretical sights and analytically engage with the communicative complexities of global TV news. More analytically, we argue that we need to attend much more closely to *how* opposing views and voices and cultural differences more generally are presented, deliberated and displayed in the circulating forms and representations of global news. This silence in the communications field is no doubt symptomatic of the differing social ontologies, theoretical outlooks and research priorities informing current approaches but it is out of step nonetheless with contemporary positions of social and political theory. As argued elsewhere (Cottle and Rai, 2006), in late modern societies, traditions, political institutions and scientific and other authorities must vie and contend for public legitimacy on the media stage and they do so at a time of diminishing deference and a global profusion of migrating ideas, beliefs and values (Beck, 1999; Castells, 1997; Dryzek, 2006; Giddens, 1990, 1994). New social movements and different cultural identities compete for media attention and recognition along with the 'public relations state' and the 'argumentation craftsmen' of corporate businesses operating in 'world risk society' (Beck, 1999). In today's conflicted social formations calls for 'democratic deepening' and the 'democratizing of democracy' (Giddens, 1994) are premised on the agonistic nature of civil societies (Mouffe, 1996) and, increasingly, global 'inter-dependency crises' (Beck, 2006).

Theorists of deliberative democracy (Benhabib, 1996, 2002; Dryzek, 2000, 2006; Habermas, 1996) argue that people talking in public, embodying differing interests and advancing contending views and values and ideas about the 'social good' are fundamental to processes of democracy. In today's globally interconnected and inegalitarian world however, deliberative democracy is not best conceived as 'genteel conversation' but rather as a 'series of embattled fields of contention, insurgency and reflexivity that are local to transnational in scope' (Dryzek, 2000, 2006). With the partial exception of Habermas (1996) these theorists have yet to acknowledge both the actual performance and potential of the media in facilitating processes of public delib-

eration, though others clearly point to the role of global communication systems and news flows in facilitating a global public sphere (Lull, 2007; Volkmer, 1999).

Deliberative democracy's interlocutors usefully broaden ideas of political communication beyond parliamentary preconceptions and rationalistically conceived understanding of argument and consensus formation (Mouffe, 1996; Young, 1996). Understanding the Other, agreeing to disagree and living with difference are all necessary capacities, they say, for successful co-existence in agonistic, culturally diverse and interdependent societies. Rhetoric as well as reason, performance as well as public speech, image as well as ideas and affect as well as analysis all play their part in processes of political communication, now broadly conceived. Dramatic re-enactments, visualized narratives, experiential accounts and emotive testimonies can contribute, for example, to processes of recognition and understanding of competing world outlooks (Cottle, 2006a). Deliberative processes of political communication when enacted in the media, as they must be in contemporary mediated societies, inevitably involve communication modes of *display* as well as the more obvious *deliberation* of claims and counter claims, argument and analysis. It is against this theoretical backdrop that we can now return to our interrogation of contemporary global television news.

### **Global news and communicative politics**

We focus on four world leading news providers – CNNI, BBC World, Fox News and Sky News (Australia) – to introduce a comparative dimension to our analysis of 24/7 news; a dimension that has often been missing in wider debates which often tend to presume a certain homogeneity of form and output (Rai and Cottle, 2007). As we demonstrate below, a number of 'communicative frames' have become 'naturalized' throughout the global TV news ecology though these are often put to work differently in the news presentation of different global TV news outputs (Cottle and Rai, 2006). Unlike conventional academic thinking about 'news frames' which are generally seen as issue-specific, discourse-dependent and, frequently, relatively closed (Entman, 1993; Gitlin, 2003: 6–7), our conception of 'communicative frames' refers to the established repertoire of communicative structures deployed by news professionals and which serve to organize and facilitate news presentations and delivery. These can often be more rooted in the pragmatics and conventions of news production than in the realm of discursive

ideas or ideological commitments. They prove no less consequential for this though. As we shall illustrate and then systematically map below, they provide differing opportunities for the public elaboration and enactment of conflicting views and voices, interests and identities, and are variously discursively 'open' or 'closed'. At the core of the established communicative architecture of TV news is the classic *reporting frame* which delivers basic information and propositions about 'news events' – both conflictual and consensual. However, a number of more elaborate communicative frames also routinely communicate news stories about disagreements and conflicts and these can be analytically differentiated as *dominant, contest, contention, campaigning* and *exposé/investigative* communicative frames. Not all news though is structured around conflicts or framed in such propositional ways.

A number of consensual frames that are based more on 'cultural display' than reporting information and argumentative deliberation also characterize television news and these can be differentiated as *community service, collective interests, cultural recognition* and *mythic tales*. While the content of some of these news presentations may be premised on structural or hidden conflicts, these communicative frames nonetheless present consensually, with no obvious issue or contending perspective in play. They work at a more culturally expressive level, visually displaying resonant symbols, affirming communal identities and values or recycling cultural myths, rather than deliberating propositionally. Finally, an in-depth communicative frame, termed here the *reportage frame*, provides 'thick descriptions of reality' by bearing witness and recovering something of the lived, experiential reality of news subjects and/or providing depth, background and analysis that purposefully seeks to move beyond the temporal/spatial delimitation of news event reporting. As such, it can often draw upon both analytic/propositional and aesthetic/expressive, that is, *deliberative* and *display* modes of communication and does so in relatively in-depth and professionally crafted packages.

The following now provides some illustrations and further elaboration of these communicative frames before we move to map their presence in and across a two-week sample of 2272 news items broadcast by our four satellite news networks – CNNI, BBC World, Fox News and Sky News (Australia) (see Table 1 for further sample details, p. 174). The 'classic' *reporting frame*, illustrated below, serves to convey information and survey current events and is generally, though not always, of short duration. It helps to ground journalism's professional mission 'to inform' and lends some factual support to ideas about accuracy and even

objectivity, but delivers at best 'thin' accounts of events which are often presented as occurrences without context, background or competing definitions and accounts.

Newscaster: Malaysian authorities have placed the whole of the north-eastern state of Kelantan under quarantine to prevent the spread of bird flu. Roadblocks have been set up at the state border to stop birds being taken to other parts of the country. And the government is to talk to neighbouring Thailand about tougher security along their frontier. Earlier this week Malaysia's agriculture minister suggested using anti-terrorism legislation against people found smuggling poultry. (BBC *Asia Today*, BBC World, 16 September 2004)

Closely aligned to, but deliberately developing beyond the news controlled reporting frame, is the *dominant frame*. This frame refers to news stories which are clearly dominated and defined by a single external news source. This source may derive from authority or challenger groups within the social hierarchy, but it is their perspective or view which clearly 'dominates' the communicative frame and which either remains unopposed or receives, at most, marginal challenge. When the latter, challenges are typically confined to responses that are prefigured by the agenda set by the dominant 'framing' source. This frame, then, comes closest to the classic view of 'primary definition' as elaborated by Stuart Hall and his colleagues (Hall et al., 1978).

Newscaster: Two key players in the Bush administration are throwing their support behind the creation of a new National Intelligence Director. The Secretary of State Colin Powell and the Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge, both telling lawmakers the position is essential to America's security. And both say the new Intel Tsar should have full budget authority. Molly Henneberg with a Fox Report live tonight from DC., Molly.

Reporter: Secretary Powell says a National Intelligence Director, or NID as it's called, should be someone he says who can be an 'empowered quarterback' to coordinate the nation's 15 intelligence agencies. Both Secretary Powell and Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge testified today before the Senate government affairs committee, which is working to craft intelligence reform legislation. Secretary Powell says it's important for the new Intel Chief, the NID, to manage not only the people, but also the purse strings.

Colin Powell: In this town it's budget authority that counts. Can you move money? Can you set standards for people? Do you have the access needed to the President? The NID will have all of that so I think this is a far more powerful player . . . (Fox Report, Fox News, 14 September 2004)

Global television news also presents news stories in terms of *contest* and *contention frames*. Here conflictual news stories are framed either in

terms of binary opposition, with opposing views and arguments generally given approximately equal weight or representation and structured in adversarial terms, or, more unusually, as a contention involving a more complex array of contending views, voices and interests (and most conflicts, of course, are characterized by more than two perspectives). Here we provide an excerpt from an example of the *contest frame* in action.

Newsreader: In London, anti-hunt activists are pushing for a law to stop the sport that they call 'mediaeval barbarism'. But hunters say even if it passes they won't obey. In a Fox Report now from Greg Palkot in London.

Reporter: Class, or at least cultural, warfare broke out in London this week. Some say it is the last stand of rural aristocratic conservatives fending off urban new-age liberals.

Nicola Lyde, pro-fox hunting demonstrator: I'm afraid the government is now going to reap the whirlwind of its own making because there will be civil disobedience.

Reporter: This ungentee activity is all about the very genteel sport of fox hunting. It's a centuries-old pursuit in which hounds spot foxes, folks gallop around on horses, and the dogs finish the fox off when it's cornered. That's what's got anti-hunt activists upset. They call the sport nothing short of mediaeval barbarism . . .

Douglas Bachelor, anti-hunt campaigner: You can still do all the things you do, apart from abuse and be cruel to animals for sport . . . (*Fox Report*, Fox News, 18 September 2004)

Two highly performative communicative frames are the *exposé/investigation frame* and the *campaigning frame* – both rarely deployed in global television news. In the former, journalists actively set out to investigate, expose and uncover information and practices that would not otherwise be revealed. This frame includes, therefore, traditional investigative journalism based on intensive research and exploratory fact-finding as well as *exposé* journalism of public or private affairs. Television news journalism also has the capacity to actively and performatively campaign for particular causes and issues, though, unlike the press, it may rarely elect to do so. The *campaigning frame*, then, declares the news outlet's stance on a particular issue or cause and typically seeks to galvanize sympathies and support for its intervention, political or otherwise, beyond the world of journalism.

The *communicative service frame* moves beyond the reporting frame to explicitly advise the audience on what a news story and its information may mean in terms of its possible impacts on them. Information

that is essentially consensual (as opposed to conflictual, which would suggest a media-led *exposé/investigative frame*) is represented as useful or essential advice and may be presented in a pedagogic and/or paternalist way. In today's news ecology the latter may variously address or seek to 'interpellate' audiences in terms of citizenship or consumption.

Newscaster: Now the message about adding salt to food just isn't getting through, or so it seems. To prevent thousands of deaths, and to save the NHS hundreds of millions of pounds, health watchdogs are today upping the pressure on corporations and consumers. Now the food standards agency says each of us eats nearly 9.5 grams of salt each and every day. We should only be eating about 6 grams to keep healthy. So it's starting a new ad campaign to really get that message across . . .

Reporter: Well, it's high blood pressure which leads to some of those conditions . . . So let's just give you a quick guide to how much salt you might be eating. Two rashers of bacon. Not much is it? That contains 2.3 grams of salt. A bowl of tinned soup has about the same. And what about a blueberry muffin? Well that in itself contains just under a gram of salt. Food for thought perhaps? (*Sky News UK, Sky News Australia, 13 September 2004*)

Like the community service frame, the *collective interests frame* structures its representation consensually. Here, however, news stories do not simply report on news events or provide advice but rather elaborate and visualize shared, communal or collective interests through their identification of presumed 'common interest' subject matter.

Newscaster: Now, if you're too busy to meet your ideal partner, there may be a virtual solution – a girlfriend who lives on your mobile phone. A company in Hong Kong has come up with the idea. From there, our correspondent Chris Hogg reports.

(visuals of a Hong Kong city street, with many people talking on mobile phones)

Reporter: Hong Kong is in love with its mobile phones. There are more subscribers here than there are people. A new obsession though could be just around the corner.

(visuals of the 'virtual girlfriend' – an animation)

Meet the virtual girlfriend. She pouts, she flirts, but she's no bimbo. Created using artificial intelligence technology, she reacts to what you say, remembers how you treat her, and she lives on your mobile phone. A whole world is being created for her. The detailed animations and interactive features will work only on the very newest phones.

Virtual girlfriend: Hi! Just a second, I am in the shower . . . (*BBC Asia Today, BBC World, 23 September 2004*)

The *cultural recognition frame* not only represents but also symbolizes and/or affirms cultural values and community ideals – by, inter alia, acknowledging and/or celebrating cultural groups and differences, by recognizing Others (Cottle, 2007; Hannerz, 2000; Taylor, 1994). This consensual frame, then, can variously be deployed to display and endorse views of cultural differences around the globe.

Newsreader: Happy is the bride that the sun shines on, the phrase goes. But that is not the only reason an American woman and an Australian man decided to exchange vows at this exotic destination in Malaysia. RTM invites us to witness this special day in their lives.

(visuals of beaches and traditional dancers)

Reporter: Serenity and tranquillity are the Carey Island way and the simple lifestyle of the indigenous people of Malaysia, the Mahmeri community, have always fascinated Gloria Grace Wallace from the United States. It is no wonder when she and Mark Anthony from Australia decided to tie the knot, they wanted to perform it according to the Mahmeri culture.

(visuals of the bride and groom performing rituals, with the help of an indigenous elder)

The big day began with the engagement and the exchange of rings to symbolize their union. The chieftain of the Mahmeri community, the medicine man and the couples' parents play a major role in the ceremony . . . Before the wedding, the couple have to undergo the teeth filing ceremony, a unique ritual among the Mahmeri community to ward off ghosts . . . (*World Report*, CNNI, 26 September 2004)

The *mythic tales frame* also functions culturally, activating and displaying cultural myths that have resonance for contemporary cultures. It is not principally about imparting new information but resurrecting and/or recycling established values, symbols and affective narratives. *Mythic tales* may focus on people or objects that symbolize values or ideals that are exceptional or extraordinary in some way and/or which are felt to be normative cultural 'goods'. Stories here may include those focusing on war veterans and heroic tales, acts of selflessness or the pomp and pageantry, for example, of some anniversaries and special events.

Finally, TV news also includes in its communicative repertoire a frame that aims to go behind the scenes of 'thin' news reports and provide 'thick' descriptions of reality (Geertz, 1973). The *reportage frame*, given its affinity with observational documentary modes, invariably makes use of film and visual authentication as well as personal testimonies and can position itself (and us the viewer) as 'bearing witness'. Reportage often 'moves' (performatively, diachronically and emotion-

ally) from the *indicative* to the *subjunctive* in its story treatment (Cottle, 2004, 2006b) and can creatively draw upon both deliberative and display modes of communication in relatively lengthy televisual packages. Analysis and background, as well as first-hand testimony accounts and authenticating scenes of the human plight of others, can all feature in in-depth *reportage*.

Newscaster: Amid the daily reports of violence and death in Iraq, there are other tragic stories that don't make headlines. Diana Muriel reports on the day to day struggle a group of Iraqis endures in Baghdad.

Reporter: Down an anonymous backstreet in Baghdad's Kadamir district is a boarding house that is home to a small army – a small army of beggars. A series of one-room hovels, 150 people crammed in together.

(visuals of children playing in dilapidated, cramped slum area and washing dishes under dirty water tap)

Reporter: With just one communal tap and one latrine, the stench is overwhelming. There weren't many people around the day we visited, most of the inhabitants out working. Each day a Dickensian Fagin figure, who runs this establishment and several others like it, collects the children and puts them to work begging in the streets. Each child must earn the equivalent of \$3.50 a day. For that, they and their families get living space. But not all the children here are with their parents.

(visuals of young woman surrounded by several children)

Reporter: This woman, who was too frightened to give her name and age, says she and her husband found seven kids in the street. They bring in just enough for rent and food, she says. She has two sons of her own, but barely enough food to give them. She herself grew up in this compound after being picked up off the street. She found her husband here. The only man in the community with a legitimate job, he works at a sewage pipe-laying company. Once inside, there is almost no way out. People here live in fear of the man who runs their lives. Only a few of the prettiest young girls can escape. This one, too frightened to show her face to the camera, has been sold to a man she has never met in Syria. She knows she is destined to be a prostitute. She is just happy to be leaving.

(visuals of elderly woman sobbing and her husband crying)

Reporter: The oldest members of the community are perhaps the most pitiful. 'We have nothing', wails this woman. Tears run down her husband's face as he explains how he has suffered a stroke and she was forced to go out into the streets to beg. She demonstrates her technique to the camera.

Reporter piece to camera: This is one of the most profitable places to beg in Baghdad, outside the mosques. And it's here the beggars congregate. But even so, there are few pickings and little pity for some of the city's most desperate. (*World News*, CNNI, 18 September 2004)



As we have begun to see above both in terms of news deliberation and the appeals of news display, communicatively there is often a lot more going on in global news provision than is often suggested by theoretical approaches within the field. But how have these identified communicative frames featured across our sample of global satellite 24/7 news channels?

### **The communicative architecture of global satellite 24/7 news channels**

Systematically examining the sample of global news items produced by our four satellite networks has revealed some stark patterns as well as interesting differentiations (see Table 1).<sup>1</sup>

Far and away the most commonly used communicative frame, as might have been anticipated on grounds of political economy as well as journalist convention, is the *reporting frame* delivering 'thin' updates and event-oriented information (66.3%). Two-thirds of all global satellite news in fact take this communicative form, though it is also important to remember that these items are invariably of very short duration in comparison to some of the less frequent, but longer, communicative frames such as *contention*, *mythic tales* and *reportage*. Interestingly, in Fox News both the *reporting frame* (70.2%) and *dominant frame* (14.2%) are noticeably higher than in the other channels and, when combined (84.4%), clearly indicate a highly controlled and discursively uncontested field of news presentation. *Contest* and *contention frames* taken together (9.2%) demonstrate how conflict reporting is routinely structured as an engagement of contending voices and, noticeably, CNNI is also prepared to examine conflicts as a contention between multiple voices and views marginally more often (4.3%) than our other channels. Both *exposé/investigation* and *campaigning frames* barely register in the world of global news provision, however, and those frames that communicate more consensually and expressively by means of display (*community service*, *collective interests*, *cultural recognition* and *mythic tales*) also feature as a minority only (7.2%), though here too CNNI is found to make more use of these cultural frames than the rest (13.4%). Finally, the potential 'depth' communicative frame of *reportage* (6.3%) featured routinely across the global satellite providers (and noticeably higher than terrestrial TV, Cottle and Rai, 2006) and again noticeably so in CNNI (7.9%), BBC World (9.9%) and Sky News (8.4%) but rarely at all in Fox News (1.5%). These basic findings statistically establish the preponderance of different communicative structures in and across our sample of

Table 1 Satellite TV news – communicative frames

Frames	CNN International <sup>1</sup>										BBC World <sup>1</sup>							
	World Report Freq %	Newsnight Freq %	World News Freq %	WN Asia Freq %	Total Freq %	Asia Today Freq %	Biz Rpt Freq %	World News Freq %	Total Freq %	Asia Today Freq %	Biz Rpt Freq %	World News Freq %	Total Freq %					
Reporting	35	33.0	29	39.2	79	63.2	128	68.8	271	55.2	13	33.3	53	79.1	121	72.9	187	68.8
Dominant	11	10.4	21	28.4	12	9.6	14	7.5	58	11.8	8	20.5	3	4.5	18	10.8	29	10.6
Contest	5	4.7	7	9.5	10	8.0	11	5.9	33	6.7	4	10.3	1	1.5	9	5.4	14	5.1
Contention	5	4.7	11	14.9	3	2.4	2	1.1	21	4.3	1	2.6	0	0.0	4	2.4	5	1.8
Exposé/Investigation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0
Campaigning	2	1.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.5	3	0.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Community Service	3	2.8	1	1.4	0	0.0	3	1.6	7	1.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Collective Interests	31	29.2	3	4.1	3	2.4	5	2.7	42	8.6	2	5.1	0	0.0	2	1.2	4	1.5
Cultural Recognition	9	8.5	0	0.0	2	1.6	2	1.1	13	2.6	3	7.7	0	0.0	2	1.2	5	1.8
Mythic Tales	2	1.9	1	1.4	1	0.8	0	0.0	4	0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	0.6	1	0.4
Reportage	3	2.8	1	1.4	15	12.0	20	10.8	39	7.9	8	20.5	10	14.9	9	5.4	27	9.9
Total	106	100.0	74	100.0	125	100.0	186	100.0	491	100.0	39	100.0	67	100.0	166	100.0	272	100.0

continued . . .

Table 1 Satellite TV news – communicative frames continued

Frames	Fox News					Sky News Australia												
	Fox Report Freq	O'Reilly Ftr %	OT Record %	Total Freq	Total %	Five Live Freq	Sky News %	UK News %	News OTH %	Total Freq	Total %	Sample Total Freq	Sample Total %					
Reporting	474	81.7	16	18.8	16	28.6	506	70.2	242	66.1	138	69.7	163	72.8	543	68.9	1507	66.3
Dominant	39	6.7	50	58.8	13	23.2	102	14.2	35	9.6	10	5.1	12	5.4	57	7.3	246	10.8
Contest	44	7.6	12	14.1	4	7.1	60	8.3	28	7.7	7	3.5	20	8.9	55	7.0	162	7.1
Contention	5	0.9	3	3.5	4	7.1	12	1.7	3	0.8	5	2.5	2	0.9	10	1.3	48	2.1
Exposé/Investigation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Campaigning	0	0.0	1	1.2	0	0.0	1	0.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	0.2
Community Service	7	1.2	0	0.0	8	14.3	15	2.1	3	0.8	2	1.0	6	2.7	11	1.4	33	1.5
Collective Interests	11	1.9	0	0.0	3	5.4	14	1.9	16	4.4	10	5.1	14	6.3	40	5.1	100	4.4
Cultural Recognition	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	18	0.8
Mythic Tales	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	0.5	3	1.5	1	0.4	6	0.8	11	0.5
Reportage	0	0.0	3	3.5	8	14.3	11	1.5	37	10.1	23	11.6	6	2.7	66	8.4	143	6.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>580</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>721</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>366</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>788</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>2272</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Notes:

Cohen's kappa statistic for inter-coder agreement: 0.944. The sample of 2272 items was coded by 4 different coders. On completion, a random sample of 350 items was selected by the SPSS program. This sub-sample was re-coded by co-author Rai, to measure for levels of agreement. The Cohen's kappa statistic for the 4 coders varied from 0.91 to 1 and the statistic above is an aggregate of these.

Sample Details: 2-week period (13–26 September 2004) comprising the following daily news programmes: CNNI – World Report, Newsnight with Aaron Brown, World News, World News Asia; BBC World – Asia Today, Asia Business Report, World News; Fox News – Fox Report, O'Reilly Factor, On the Record with Gretar, Sky News Australia – Five Live, Sky News UK, News on the Hour.

<sup>1</sup> For CNNI and BBC World, the Asia-Pacific beam of their programming was collected.

global news providers, revealing a hitherto unexplored complexity that we argue impacts the public delivery, deliberation and display of voices and views within and across the global news mediascape.

### Conclusion

The analytical conceptualization and empirical findings offered above point to an inherent complexity in the communicative structures of global TV news and how these deliver, deliberate and display conflicts and cultural differences in and around the contemporary world. It is through these communicative enactments that notions of mediated global citizenship, a global public sphere and processes of 'democratic deepening' find a degree of empirical purchase. How the global cacophony of contending interests and identities, conflicts and communities registers in and becomes played out through the communicative forms of global television news demands careful empirical analysis and theoretical reflection. Here we have only begun to recover something of this complexity and how it variously constitutes a democratic resource or deficit in the global flows of communication, a focus that is generally occluded or minimized by the leading theoretical approaches in the field of international and global news studies. Enough has been documented nonetheless to demonstrate that there is indeed a communicative complexity both within and across global news channels, a complexity that should no longer be simply ignored or collapsed in reductionist fashion under theoretical positions of 'global dominance' or 'global public sphere' – though both can summon empirical findings in partial support of their respective claims.

The predominance of communicatively restricted frames, such as the *reporting* and *dominance frames*, can certainly be interpreted as likely vehicles for dominant messages, discourses or ideology, especially when deployed so heavily, as they are, by the highly partisan US channel Fox News (but noticeably less so by CNN). But so too have we documented how some communicative frames are capable of displaying and valorizing cultural differences and exploring conflicts in dialogic and relatively open ways and these cannot so easily be read through the lens of dominance and discursive control. We have also seen how the repertoire of news frames provides at least some opportunities for the deliberative engagement of opposing interests and outlooks in global TV news and does so by means of contest and contention frames. Of course the micro-politics and contingencies played out in these demand further analysis than has been possible here (see Clayman and Heritage, 2002) and such analysis will

have to attend to the technical infrastructure infused in their production and delivery, including, for example, news personnel 'two-ways', pre-recorded, edited and single interviews as well as the use of live, un-edited and group interviews and elaborate video packages and so on. Depth *reportage*, though relatively infrequent in the communicative scheme of global TV news, is nonetheless a potent journalism form and demonstrably capable of producing high meaning and affect. These professionally crafted packages can 'bear witness' and do so by aiming to communicate something of the lived experiences of distant others or elaborating analyses and discussion that provide 'thick descriptions of reality'. These, as we have documented, feature differently within and across today's global news channels and give some credence to global public sphere claims.

To conclude, there is a communicative politics embedded in the range and deployment of communicative frames that structure and give shape to global news across our sample of global and international news channels, and this complexity, hitherto overlooked and under-theorized, has direct bearing on contending theoretical paradigms and perspectives concerned with questions about global dominance and an emergent global public sphere and possible global civil society. To be clear, we are not arguing that detailed analyses of the communicative structures of global television news channels are sufficient for a comprehensive understanding of global news provision, its determinants and imbrication within processes and structures of dominance and democracy. Clearly this is not so and other theoretical approaches remain indispensable for this wider task. But we are saying that it is time to engage much more closely and empirically with exactly how disparate conflicts and cultural differences around the world are publicly enacted and elaborated in and through the communicative structures of global news channels. Only then will we be able to arrive at a more considered and evidence-based evaluation of global news output and performance and its potential contribution to communicative democracy. We need to move beyond the theoretical standoffs and tendency toward generalization that characterize positions in the field of international and global news study today and recover the democratic lacuna in its midst.

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### Note

- 1 The sample includes the main daily news and current affairs programmes from each network. Other TV journalism formats including, for example, weekly current affairs and documentaries were excluded for the purposes of this paper, but are included in research currently underway.

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