



# Watchdog or Lapdog: Limits of African Media Coverage of the Extractive Sector

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the quality of African media coverage of the extractive industries. This sector plays prominently on the African political, economic, social and journalistic landscape, yet coverage of these industries remains a challenge for African journalists. The financial and technical aspects of the extractive sector are complex, and both governments and companies often have a vested interest in withholding information from journalists. Many reporters lack sufficient training, resources and/or journalistic freedom to publish accurate, well-researched, in-depth coverage. As a result, what are arguably some of the most critical industries on the continent operate in relative freedom from public scrutiny. By making a careful study of African media coverage of the extractive sector in three countries, this report hopes to identify key strengths and weaknesses in extractive industry reporting as well as opportunities for media support and the expansion or revision of current media training efforts.

The discovery of oil in Uganda in 2006 and in Ghana in 2007 brought both a great deal of excitement and a considerable level of worry to these countries. While extractive resources (oil, gas and mining) are a leading source of wealth for many African countries, this wealth often leads to corruption and conflict. In fact, countries with abundant natural resources tend to fall below less resource-wealthy countries in terms of human development, a paradox economist Richard Auty and subsequent researchers have labeled the “resource curse.”

This report is based on two premises: first, that if Africans are to benefit from the immense resource stores that lie beneath their soil, great efforts must be made toward transparency in how these resources are handled. Second, the call for transparency cannot come from non-governmental organizations and individual political leaders alone. The African media have a critical responsibility to push toward government and corporate openness in the extractive industries.

African media have made great strides since the latter half of the twentieth century, but they continue to struggle to fulfill their role as society’s watchdog. Instead of keeping

governments in check through enterprising stories or investigative pieces, most African media have instead been leashed by a confluence of factors. Lack of resources, government intimidation and interference, media ownership, revenue structures and declining educational quality all make the job of the African journalist difficult. To mitigate some of these constraints, local and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), media outlets and in some cases government agencies are training journalists to more fully understand the intricacies of the areas that they cover.

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## COUNTRY PROFILES

### Nigeria

#### **A brief history**

Nigeria is, and in many ways always has been, a country of extremes. Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and Lagos, its largest city, is estimated to have up to 17 million people—large enough to put it on the United Nation’s list of mega cities. Nigeria is also the sixth-largest supplier of crude oil in the world. The fruits of that resource wealth, however, have largely been squandered. The mismanagement of the country’s natural resources follows the country’s larger historical struggles; corruption, dictatorial rule and massive corruption are recurrent themes throughout its history.

The pre-colonial history of Nigeria begins in the 11<sup>th</sup> century where what is now known as Nigeria was populated by a number of kingdoms that developed extensive trading networks between each other and stretching across the Sahara. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the end of the slave trade led to increased trade between Africa and Europe. The area around Lagos became a British colony in 1861. This became a base from which the British expanded their political and economic sphere of influence. The British consolidated their rule and by 1914 the Northern and Southern territories were united into one.<sup>1</sup> To accommodate the divergent political and cultural groups within Nigeria, the federal government was responsible for certain duties like national defense, customs and banking while regional governments maintained significant autonomy and administered health, agriculture and educational duties. In 1947 a federal system of government was established, dividing the nation into three regions: Northern, Southern and Eastern.

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<sup>1</sup> “Nigeria: History,” *Nation’s Encyclopedia*,  
<http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Nigeria-HISTORY.html>.



The Federation of Nigeria gained independence on October 1, 1960. The early years of independence were marred by ethnic rivalry and clamoring for greater regional independence.<sup>2</sup> In 1963, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe became the nation's first president. The late '60s through the '70s were characterized by a series of turbulent military interventions and civil war. During this time, General Yakubu Gowon promoted a 12-state system that was established to give smaller ethnic groups a greater voice within the government. He was also a key proponent of ECOWAS, a Nigerian-funded initiative aimed at increasing the economic capacity of the West African states. Military rule continued until General Gowon was coerced into retirement and Brigadier Murtala Ramat Muhammed assumed control. Muhammed dismissed the 12 state governors, purged large segments of the civil sector and announced a much-lauded return to civilian rule.<sup>3</sup> Before he could realize this goal he was assassinated by a disaffected army officer. His successor continued with these reforms and a new constitution was adopted in 1978. The constitution called for a executive presidency with a legislative and judicial branch all sharing powers. The second republic spanned from 1979-1983 and dealt with a host of challenges.

The newly elected President, Alhaji Shagari struggled to adopt the provisions of the new constitution. Corruption, extremism and economic volatility created by the worldwide petroleum crisis at the time were all prominent problems; many of these issues persist today. Amid widespread civil unrest and dissent, Shagari was deposed in a bloodless coup led by Maj-Gen. Muhammed Buhari. Buhari embarked on a program to rid the government of its corrupt elements with a return to civilian rule to follow. In 1985, the government announced that there were no plans to make good on this promise and any political dissent was correspondingly squashed.

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<sup>2</sup> "Nigeria," *Infoplease*, <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107847.html>.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



In August 1985, Buhari's regime was deposed in a peaceful military coup, led by Maj.-Gen. Ibrahim Babangida.<sup>4</sup> The Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC), led by Babangida along with his chief of army staff, Maj.-Gen. Sani Abacha, ruled the country from 1985 to 1993. Babangida promised to restore democracy but found it difficult to achieve amidst mounting corruption, a declining economy under the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) and violent clashes between Christians and Muslims, particularly over the adoption of Sharia law.<sup>5</sup> In June of 1993 the SDP party won a majority of votes in the presidential elections. General Babangida, however, annulled the results and further escalated repression. General Sani Abacha took power in 1993 following Babangida's resignation. Nigeria continues to play a significant role in West African and, to a larger extent, African affairs. In the mid-90s, however, its tepid embrace of democratic governance strained Nigeria's relations with the West. The death of General Abacha in 1998 ushered in the current era of democratic rule.<sup>6</sup> The transitional government handed power over to a democratically elected government and has continued to engage in reforms toward greater democratic rule ever since.

The struggle today is to maintain this momentum. Democracy must not simply be seen as non-military rule but as a system of government that is responsible and responsive to its people. Accountability, corruption and civil rights continue to be areas of serious concern.

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<sup>4</sup> "Nigeria: History," *Nation's Encyclopedia*, <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Nigeria-HISTORY.html>.

<sup>5</sup> "Nigeria," *Infoplease*, <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0107847.html>.

<sup>6</sup> "Nigeria: History," *Nation's Encyclopedia*, <http://www.nationsencyclopedia.com/Africa/Nigeria-HISTORY.html>.



### **Extractive industry**

The extractive sector in Nigeria is dominated by the oil and gas industries. The country is currently the largest oil producer in Africa and, as of 2008, 97.5 percent of the country's export revenue was derived from oil and gas.<sup>7</sup> Despite its profitability, the oil industry has suffered many setbacks; instability in the Niger Delta region, dependence on foreign direct investment and uneven distribution of revenues have all degraded the industry and have negatively affected the population.

The resultant corruption and exploitation within the industry have proven problematic for the media to cover. In-depth or investigative journalism are few and far between and affected by the lack of transparency within the industry. Most stories barely scratch the surface and fall into three main categories: press release-driven articles, coverage of crises (oil pipeline explosions, for example) or changes in oil prices or other widely-known industry or company figures. There is reason to be optimistic, however. According to EITI, the government has committed to implementation of the Nigeria Extractive Industry Transparency Initiative and was the "first EITI-implementing country with a statutory backing for implementing EITI."<sup>8</sup> EITI aims to cut down on the corruption that has plagued the extractive sector through transparency and accountability. Nevertheless, a freer and more vibrant press would no doubt promote more awareness among the population and expose the degree of corruption that surrounds the oil and gas industry.

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<sup>7</sup> "Nigeria: Country Brief," World Bank, September 2009, <http://web.worldbank.org/wbsite/external/countries/africaext/nigeriaextn/0,,menupk:368906~pagepk:141132~pipk:141107~thesitepk:368896,00.html>.

<sup>8</sup> "Nigeria," Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, <http://eitransparency.org/taxonomy/term/105>.



### **State of the media**

With a population of 148 million and over 250 different ethnic groups, Nigeria is the most densely populated country in Africa and the most diverse of those in the study.<sup>9</sup> The size and diversity of the Nigerian press reflects that diversity. English is country's official language and is the language in which most major papers print. Nigeria has a number of press freedoms expressed in its constitution, but that freedom has varied historically based on the position of the government in power. Often even private papers – of which there are many in Nigeria – have been silenced or influenced when their views conflicted with those of the ruling administration. “In 1977 *Newbreed* was closed down. In 1984 the government closed down the *Tribune* and four years later in 1988 *Newswatch* was a victim of government censorship.”<sup>10</sup> Since 1999, a Freedom of Information Bill has routinely been introduced in the assembly. As of November 3, 2009, that bill has still not been passed (the assembly has passed the bill before, but it was not adopted by the president at the time).<sup>11</sup>

### **Selected papers**

The Nigerian news media is dominated by four main outlets: *Daily Champion*, *Guardian*, *This Day* and *Vanguard*. The *Guardian* returned zero results following several searches on AllAfrica.com and was therefore eliminated from the content analysis. The final research sample contained articles from the following six publications:

*Daily Champion* is privately owned by Champion Newspapers Limited and is based in Lagos. It covers a wide variety of news, sports, business and community events.

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> “Nigeria,” Press Reference, <http://www.pressreference.com/Ma-No/Nigeria.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Onwuka Nzeshi, “FOI Bill May Not Be Passed Soon,” *This Day*, November 3, 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200911030489.html>.



*Daily Independent* is a private, Lagos-based paper founded in 2001.<sup>12</sup> It claims to be a public interest newspaper that publishes stories without bias or prejudice.

*This Day*, an independent newspaper published by Leaders & Company Ltd., was established in 1995. It is based in Lagos. *This Day* has a daily circulation of 100,000 and daily readership of 4 million people, presumably from reader pass-through.<sup>13</sup>

*Vanguard* is a privately-run newspaper established in 1984. It has a daily circulation of 120,000 and boasts a large pass through readership rate. According to its editor, for every copy of *Vanguard* purchased, at least ten people queue to read the same copy.<sup>14</sup>

*Daily Trust* and *Leadership*, both daily papers published in Abuja with national audiences, were also included in the research sample for the content analysis. Due to their location, however, we were unable to interview them for the report. Included in the qualitative interviews but not in the content analysis were the Nigerian newspapers *The Guardian*, *Business Day*, *The Nation*, and *The Punch*.

## Ghana

### A brief history

In the 1990s, a wave of democratization swept across much of the African continent. One of the most notable transformations was that of Ghana, which by the end of last century had moved away from being a virtual dictatorship to a becoming one of

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<sup>12</sup> “About Us,” *Daily Independent*, <http://www.independentngonline.com/DailyIndependent/AboutUs.aspx>.

<sup>13</sup> “Who We Are,” *This Day*, [http://www.thisdayonline.com/who\\_we\\_are.php](http://www.thisdayonline.com/who_we_are.php).

<sup>14</sup> “About,” *Vanguard*, <http://www.vanguardngr.com/about/>.



West Africa's most promising democracies.<sup>15</sup> Long before its transition to democracy began, however, Ghana was a British colony called the Gold Coast, a name referring to massive gold reserves found in the country's interior. Ghana was led to independence from Britain in 1957 by a man as polemic as he was revered. Kwame Nkrumah became Ghana's first president in 1960, and was beloved by many Africans while viewed with reservation and suspicion by his former colonial master and the West. His focus on indigenous industrialization and development on the African continent made him a champion in the eyes of many pan-Africanists. But the methods he used to achieve those ends led to his eventual fall from power.

Nkrumah's vision of Africa was one of sacrifice by the African worker. He enforced that vision by repressing the very freedoms he had used to gain power under colonial rule, outlawing labor strikes and arresting political dissenters. Facing increasing opposition to these new reforms, Nkrumah struggled to retain the favor of the public and remain in power. His presidency had turned into a de facto dictatorship, and he was eventually deposed in a CIA-backed military coup in 1966.<sup>16</sup>

More than a decade of successive coups followed Nkrumah's ouster, leaving the country in a perpetual state of political unrest. It was not until the Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings assumed power in 1981 that Ghana regained some stability, and it was once again at the high price of civil freedom. Things changed in 1992 when Ghana drafted a new constitution limiting presidential term limits and scrapping the ban on a multi-party system. Rawlings was properly elected for the first time, and he

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<sup>15</sup> Craig Timberg, "Democracy Ascendant In States of West Africa: Coups, Civil Wars End, Multiparty Politics Rise," *The Washington Post*, March 13, 2008, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/03/12/AR2008031204053.html>.

<sup>16</sup> BBC World Service, "Kwame Nkrumah's Vision of Africa," *BBC*, September 14, 2000, [http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/highlights/000914\\_nkrumah.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/people/highlights/000914_nkrumah.shtml).



implemented crucial reforms that eventually began to lead Ghana out of economic turmoil.<sup>17</sup>

Today, Ghana is the African sweetheart of the West. United States President Barack Obama made his first trip as president to Africa in July, and delivered an address to the Ghanaian parliament lauding the nation's successful reforms and recent democratic elections.

### **Extractive industry**

Oil was first discovered off the coast of Ghana in 2007 during exploration by the UK-based firm Tullow Oil. The find has caused mixed reactions among those who see the discovery as a surefire boost to the national economy and others who worry about the potential for a replication of the regional conflict and violence that has resulted from similar discoveries in neighboring Nigeria.<sup>18</sup> Drilling is expected to begin as early as June 2010.<sup>19</sup>

Traditionally, the leading extractive sectors in Ghana have been the bauxite, manganese, diamond, and gold mines spread throughout its interior. Operating the largest mines are foreign-owned firms like AngloGold Ashanti, Gold Fields Ltd and Newmont.<sup>20</sup> New mines are still being established by these companies in new locations as older mines are shutting down. The lingering environmental effects of mining on local communities have been a source of contention between residents

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<sup>17</sup> "Rawlings: The Legacy" *BBC*, December 1, 2000, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1050310.stm>.

<sup>18</sup> "Ghana 'will be an African tiger,'" *BBC*, June 17, 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/6766527.stm>.

<sup>19</sup> "Tullow Oil to meet June 2010 date for drilling Ghana's oil," *Ghana Business News*, June 8, 2009, <http://ghanabusinessnews.com/2009/06/08/tullow-oil-to-meet-june-2010-date-for-drilling-ghana's-oil/>.

<sup>20</sup> "Ghana," Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, <http://eitransparency.org/ghana>.





and extractive industries, triggering the establishment of a number of “compensation funds.” Funds have been donated by a number of firms that aim to offset the environmental effects had on communities within proximity of the mines. It remains a topic of much debate inside Ghana, as to whether or not the compensation is ample or effective.

Speculation about the impending oil boom, or bust, and the continuation of corporate compensation programs tended to dominate much of the local media coverage of the Ghanaian extractive industries included in this study.

### **State of the media**

While the West hails Ghana’s economic transformation as a success, media watchdogs like Freedom House have described the low pay and lack of professionalism that still plagues the Ghanaian press environment.

The relative liberalization of the Ghanaian press is a recent phenomenon. Under Nkrumah, media were strictly controlled and centralized. The press was seen more as a means to promote national unity than to convey news and analysis. The same was initially true under Rawlings, but eventually changed with the adoption of the 1992 constitution. Further reforms, including the repeal of the nation’s libel law, were enacted after the 2000 election handed power to the opposition.<sup>21</sup>

In the 2009 elections, however, John Atta-Mills, who served as vice president under Rawlings took the presidency. Though the elections were widely praised by the West, including by President Obama in July, they left many in media circles with reservations about the future relationship between the government of Ghana and its burgeoning private media sector.

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<sup>21</sup> *2009 Ghana Country Report*, Freedom House, <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2009&country=7614>.



While the days of violent confrontations between those in power and the media that watch them are largely a thing of the past, long delays for licensing, government bribes and other tactics to influence or even coerce the media are still being used today.<sup>22</sup>

### **Selected papers**

Included in our content analysis was the state-owned *Daily Graphic*, the only paper that has a penetrating national distribution in Ghana. Its most formidable competitor, *Daily Guide*, was unfortunately excluded from the content analysis due to insufficient archives on allAfrica.com. The researchers were, however, able to include *Daily Guide* in the qualitative interview portion of the study while on location in Accra.

*Public Agenda*, a weekly paper wholly funded by the Ghanaian-based nongovernmental organization ISODEC (Integrated Social Development Care) was also included. *Public Agenda* covers a wide range of topics treated with a particular focus on development and community-based issues.

*The Chronicle* is a privately owned daily newspaper, and was included in both the content analysis and interview portion of the study. Today, it is the product of two previously distinct Ghanaian newspapers, *The Ghanaian Chronicle* and *The Chronicle*, both of which belonged General Portfolio Ltd. In 2003, the *Ghanaian Chronicle* was absorbed by *The Chronicle*. It is the fourth most widely-read newspaper in Ghana.

*The Mail*, formerly *Accra Daily Mail*, is a bi-weekly newspaper covering general news. It is the nation's fifth most widely-read newspaper, and is published from

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<sup>22</sup> Jo Ellen Fair, "Ghana: Soft Control of the Press," *Dissent Magazine*, Spring 2008, <http://www.dissentmagazine.org/article/?article=1159>.



Accra with assistance from the from the privately-owned publishing house of another Ghanaian newspaper, *The Daily Guide*.<sup>23</sup>

Excluded from the content analysis, but included in the interview portion were the Ghanaian papers *New Crusading Guide*, *Ghanaian Times*, *Ghanaian Observer*, and *Daily Dispatch*.

## Uganda

### A brief history

Uganda gained its independence from Britain in 1962 in a peaceful transfer of power. As a country with little history of conflict, abundant natural resources and a significant educated, middle-class population, Uganda seemed poised to develop quickly and easily. However, Idi Amin's rise to power in 1971—the result of a military coup—rapidly altered the country's trajectory. Amin's presidency was marked by military rule, political executions, ethnic persecution and the mass expulsion of the country's Asian population in 1972, which destroyed the Ugandan economy. After Amin was deposed in 1979, a flurry of short-lived administrations ran the country with varying levels of success.

In 1986, Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Movement took control, restoring stability to the country. Under Museveni, Uganda has seen democratic reform and sustained economic growth. The country has led sub-Saharan Africa in lowering HIV rates, previously among the highest on the continent.<sup>24</sup> However, in recent years, Museveni's administration has become increasingly authoritarian, placing

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<sup>23</sup> Samuel Kafewo, *Ghana: Research findings and conclusions*, African Media Development Initiative 2006, BBC World Service Trust.

<sup>24</sup> World Health Organization, "Uganda reverses the tide of HIV/AIDS," *Health: A Key to Prosperity: Success Stories in Developing Countries*, <http://www.who.int/inf-new/aids2.htm>.



greater restrictions on freedom of the press and amending the constitution to allow Museveni to serve a third term in office.

### **Extractive industry**

The Ugandan extractive industry is still in its fledgling stages. Oil was discovered in western Uganda in June 2006 after nearly 20 years of exploration. In January 2009, Canada-based Heritage Oil estimated that the oil fields it has explored in the country could contain several billions of barrels of oil, making the discovery the largest in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>25</sup> Production is expected to begin in 2011.

President Museveni has promised to use income from oil, which could potentially double the government's revenues, for development purposes, including projects in health, education and infrastructure, but there are concerns that the discovery may encourage the president, who is currently serving his third five-year term, to remain in power.<sup>26</sup>

As Uganda's oil industry is still in the pre-production phase, most related news focuses on new discoveries, oil-related business contracts and the government's management of future oil revenues, including a national oil and gas policy announced in April 2008. The fuel shortage and resulting high fuel prices caused by the Kenyan post-election crisis in December 2007 and January 2008 also received considerable coverage in the Ugandan press, including much public discussion of how best to stock Uganda's dwindling oil reserves.

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<sup>25</sup> Pagnamenta, "Fresh Uganda oil find 'Africa's biggest,'" *TimesOnline*, January 14, 2009, [http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry\\_sectors/natural\\_resources/article512531.ece](http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/industry_sectors/natural_resources/article512531.ece).

<sup>26</sup> Xan Rice, "Oil find sparks new hope for Uganda's people," *Guardian*, August 25, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/aug/25/uganda-oil-find-energy-companies>.



### **State of the media**

Uganda's print media are dominated by two major newspapers, the state-owned *New Vision* and the independent *Daily Monitor*. The *New Vision* and its local language publications, *Bukedde* (published in Luganda), *Etop* (Ateso), *Orumuri* (Runyakitara) and *Rupiny* (Luo) have the largest market share, with a combined daily circulation of over 60,000. *Daily Monitor*, owned by the Kenya-based Nation Media Group, has a daily circulation of 15,000. Other notable publications include the weekly *East African Business Week*, *Red Pepper*, *Observer* and *Sunrise*.

Though newspapers cover the widest range of topics and provide the most extensive political and business coverage of all media in Uganda, less than 1 percent of households report print media as their primary source of information, according to the BBC World Service Trust.<sup>27</sup>

Ugandan media began reporting on the oil industry in 2006, when the discovery of oil was first announced to the public. During an interview conducted in January 2009, one reporter who covers the industry for a major daily paper said there is “all sorts of lively commentary ... all the time” on oil in the media, and he believes the public has “sufficient information” about developments in the industry.<sup>28</sup> Another journalist at a daily paper, also interviewed in January 2009, believes extractives reporters have sufficient freedom and ability to “avoid or mitigate” the “negative impacts” of oil by educating the public.<sup>29</sup>

A major challenge to extractives journalism in Uganda is the lack of access to information about oil industry developments. The Access to Information Act of

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<sup>27</sup> John Wostuna Khamalwa. “Uganda: Research findings and conclusions,” African Media Development Initiative, 2006.

<sup>28</sup> Interview by Rebekah Heacock. Kampala, Uganda, January 8, 2009.

<sup>29</sup> Interview by Rebekah Heacock. Kampala, Uganda, January 12, 2009.



2005 and Article 41 of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda both guarantee citizens the “right of access to information and records in the possession of the state or any public body, except where the release of the information is likely to prejudice the security or sovereignty of the state or interfere with the right to the privacy of any other person,” but journalists report delays of up to a year when requesting access to government records supposedly covered by the law.<sup>30</sup> A recent example has been with regard to the profit sharing agreements between the government and the oil companies working in southwestern Uganda. These contracts are technically public information, but journalists interviewed in January 2009 said they had been trying to get copies of the agreements for four months without success. Details of these contracts have not yet been published in the Ugandan press, indicating that the battle for access to information is still ongoing.

### **Selected papers**

Of Uganda’s national print media, only the *New Vision*, *Daily Monitor* and the *Observer* feed content to AllAfrica.com. However, random sampling resulted in a selection of dates on which no *Observer* articles were published on the site, thereby excluding the paper from our study. No interviews were conducted with editors or journalists located in Uganda, however, due to time constraints surrounding field research conducted during the semester.

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<sup>30</sup> Ugandan Access to Information Act, 2005, Section 5.1, July 19, 2005.



## METHODOLOGY

A team of three students at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and one student from the Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences program at Columbia University, working under the guidance of Professor Anya Schiffrin, conducted a content analysis of African media coverage of the extractive industries beginning in the fall semester of 2009.

The study focused on print media in three Anglophone African countries—Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda—in the hopes that coverage of Nigeria's well-established extractive sector and Ghana's mining operations will serve as a point of comparison for coverage of Ghana and Uganda's nascent oil industries. The team constricted its initial research sample to publications available on AllAfrica.com to enable a consistently applicable method of random sampling across publications. As print publication dates do not necessarily correspond to article publication dates on AllAfrica.com, the team conducted a random sampling of twenty-four *weeklong* ranges between October 2007 and October 2009 from which to draw the sample of articles. In addition, on-site sampling for the same weeks was completed for the *Daily Graphic* (unavailable via AllAfrica.com) at their operations in Accra and at Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill.

The media sample consisted of 10 daily newspapers, one weekly newspaper and one biweekly newspaper. Of these, four publications were based in Ghana, six in Nigeria and two in Uganda. Excluding the *Daily Graphic*, these papers represent all Ghanaian, Nigerian and Ugandan newspapers available on AllAfrica.com that published news content during our sample dates. The publications were split evenly between the researchers, who then collected all articles published in the 24 selected weeks across 12 papers to find a current total of 637 relevant articles on which to conduct the analysis.



Table 1-1

Nigeria (n=457)	Ghana (n=119)	Uganda(n=61)
Daily Champion (n=15)	Accra Mail (n=6)	Daily Monitor (n=20)
Daily Independent (n=39)	Ghanaian Chronicle (n=31)	New Vision (n=41)
Daily Trust (n=56)	Public Agenda (n=13)	
Leadership (n=98)	Daily Graphic (n=41)	
This Day (n=130)		
Vanguard (n=119)		

Articles were selected for having oil, mining or natural gas industries and/or related events as their primary focus. Both opinion pieces and journalistic reporting were included.

After the articles were collected, they were coded according to the attached rubric (see Appendix I). The coding questionnaire was the product of lengthy discussions between the researchers as to what qualities comprise quality news coverage. The result was an 84-field questionnaire that included questions on basic elements like article title and length to more qualitative measures on sources, context, and possible article slant. Researchers scored the content of selected articles on scales indicating:

- Perceived biases on the part of the author
- The number, diversity and quality of information sources used in each article
- The quality of the context given about extractive industry-related topics and terminology

Following each score, coders were also asked to measure their confidence in their selection on a 4-level scale (1-Very Strongly, 2-Strongly, 3-Somewhat Strongly, 4-Not Strongly). By doing so, the final analysis was weighted by these responses.





Before coding, a selection of articles was distributed to each coder to ensure consistent modes of coding across all articles.

The purpose of the project is not to conduct a statistically rigid analysis, but rather to lay the groundwork for future studies of African print media coverage of the extractive sectors. Our hope is that the following results can serve as a guide for further research on issues affecting the quality of African media coverage of important economic topics.



## LIMITATIONS

Our research followed extremely rigorous controls to maintain the statistical significance and validity of the content analysis. Still, there are number of caveats that accompany the results that follow.

### Coder bias

At the initial stage of the research, division of sampling for each country *and* coding of those articles was done by the same team member. The danger of this process, we concluded, was that the difference in results between Uganda and Nigeria may have had more to do with the different coding patterns of each person than it did the actual differences in coverage. As a result, all future coding was evenly distributed between the coders to ensure that each country and paper was evaluated by each person.

### Notable papers not included

Although AllAfrica.com was a useful resource, it was not exhaustive. For several reasons, a number of notable papers in each country were not readily available via AllAfrica.com. Among them were *The Punch*, *Business Day* and *The Guardian* in Nigeria and *The Observer* in Uganda. As a result, our findings reflect only the papers for which we could obtain a consistent sample of articles that followed our methodology. Part of our analysis, we hoped, would include interesting cross-paper analyses of private vs. public vs. NGO papers. This was possible to some extent, but constrained by the availability of some publications.

### Missing weeks from sampling

Our team was able to gain access to the archives of the *Daily Graphic* in Accra and Northwestern University in Evanston. However, not all weeks were ultimately available. Missing from our sample for the *Daily Graphic* are the weeks beginning with the Tuesdays of 7/14/09 and 7/21/09, and the specific dates 4/29/08 and 4/30/08.



### **Rigidity of the rubric**

Once the questionnaire was created and the team began the process of coding, the questionnaire could not be altered in any substantial way. And, since the questionnaire was created from scratch, we could not anticipate any possible flaws or limitations from the outset. Although the process of coding numerous articles shed light on certain parts of the questionnaire that could have been altered to more accurately measure certain qualities, we were ultimately hamstrung by the need to maintain the consistency of our coding.



## ANECDOTAL FINDINGS

### Ghana does not want to be Nigeria

Ghana has widely been considered an African success story by development standards and its capital, Accra, was recently named by Columbia University economist Jeffrey Sachs as a millennium city. As such, the looming growth in oil production brings with it great hope and great trepidation for both policymakers and the public. A number of the articles measured in our study dealt with the struggles of Ghana's West African neighbor—Nigeria—to appropriately manage the oil industry in a way that benefits the people rather than influential members of government or the oil companies themselves. In this regard, the Ghanaian media has shown itself to be highly aware of its duty to serve as society's watchdog. An article that appeared in *Public Agenda*, "Revenue Transparency Shunned By Oil Companies," began this way: "The Ghana Government might want to hold back its celebration of the oil find and think about the introduction of legislation that would mandate revenue transparency by oil companies which would be operating here in the future." Another article in the *Ghanaian Times* argued for the need to properly invest the proceeds from the forthcoming sale of oil and gas; the article also made the Nigeria comparison directly. "With some of them citing Nigeria as a case study for neglecting the agricultural sector, some participants said agriculture was paramount, and must not be compromised for anything, when revenues from oil and gas were realized."<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Bolgatanga, William N. Jalulah, "Use Oil Revenue to Develop Agriculture," *The Ghanaian Chronicle*. 4/29/2008.



### Use of “big language” and jargon

Nigerian papers in particular tended to use “big” language more than the other two. While flowery, verbose language is an institution in much of West African journalism, the effect for the reader was still to make reading tedious, often clouding the actual subject matter. In other instances, the expressions were simply unnecessary. An article in the *Daily Graphic* titled “Minority raises concerns about hike in fuel prices” called on the readers to “gird their loins.” In another case, the writer uses awkward, clumsy phrasing to express a simple idea: “Union leaders are yet to respond to the unfolding event as they were alleged to have advised management to be properly guided in executing their mandate without any element of bias and oppressive tendencies.”<sup>32</sup> Here, another article from *This Day* talks about the real problem of a budget deficit, but the writing itself is truly problematic:

The deficit is to be financed by outstanding signature bonuses, proceeds of ongoing privatisation, the recall of \$200 million from the Nigerian Trust Fund of the African Development Bank, any unspent balances from the 2008 Budget, domestic borrowing and a naira-denominated international bond issue of \$500 million.

But given the fact the Nigeria's earnings from oil are in dollars, at the 2 million bpd at \$45 per barrel and at the exchange rate N125: \$1, the N12 depreciation against the US dollar is expected to fetch Nigeria additional N1.45 billion daily - translating into a total of N530.7 billion for 2009.<sup>33</sup>

Still other articles are written in a way that almost seems to sensationalize rather than inform. “Realising the implication of such dastardly act on the economy of both the state in particular and the nation at large, he emphasised that the government would not relent in its effort at making the state a safe haven for all citizens. According to him, security agents would be deployed to trail the culprits, with a view to making them face the wrath of the law, hinting that the arrest of additional

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<sup>32</sup> Aliyu, Adekunle. “540 Shell Staff to Lose Jobs,” *Vanguard*. January 23, 2008.

<sup>33</sup> Aminu, Ayodele, “Naira Crash - Oil to Rake in Extra N530 Billion,” *This Day*. December 8, 2008.



four members of the kidnapping rings last Tuesday night, brings the total number of the kidnappers to 31 kidnappers now helping the police in their investigations.”<sup>34</sup>

Although it should be noted that as outside readers we do not represent the intended audience for these papers, the effect of such verbose writing is to distract the reader from the larger focus of the story. Or, in some cases, the writing seems to substitute for a dearth of real content or analysis.

### Central topic and organizational structure

A common problem among articles measured, in addition to verbose or “flowery” language was a lack of coherent subject matter. As part of the coding questionnaire, coders were asked to rate the relevance of the quotations to the central topic of the article. This was, at times, difficult to achieve. The genesis for many articles was a press conference or speech by an official and, as such, they cover a variety of topics. A headline (which may have been written by a copywriter or someone other than the author) was often only reflective of the first or second paragraph of an article. For example, an article that appeared in the *Daily Champion* titled, “Chevron Denies Illegal Contract With Ibori,” pays scant attention to the actual subject conveyed in the headline. The article goes on to talk about oil bunkering, Lagos power outages and the revitalization of one of the company’s plants. The article cites only Mr. Fred Nelson, the managing director of Chevron Nigeria Mid-Africa’s business unit and offers no other views and explanation. The article simply follows the points that the Mr. Nelson seems to have made at the press conference.

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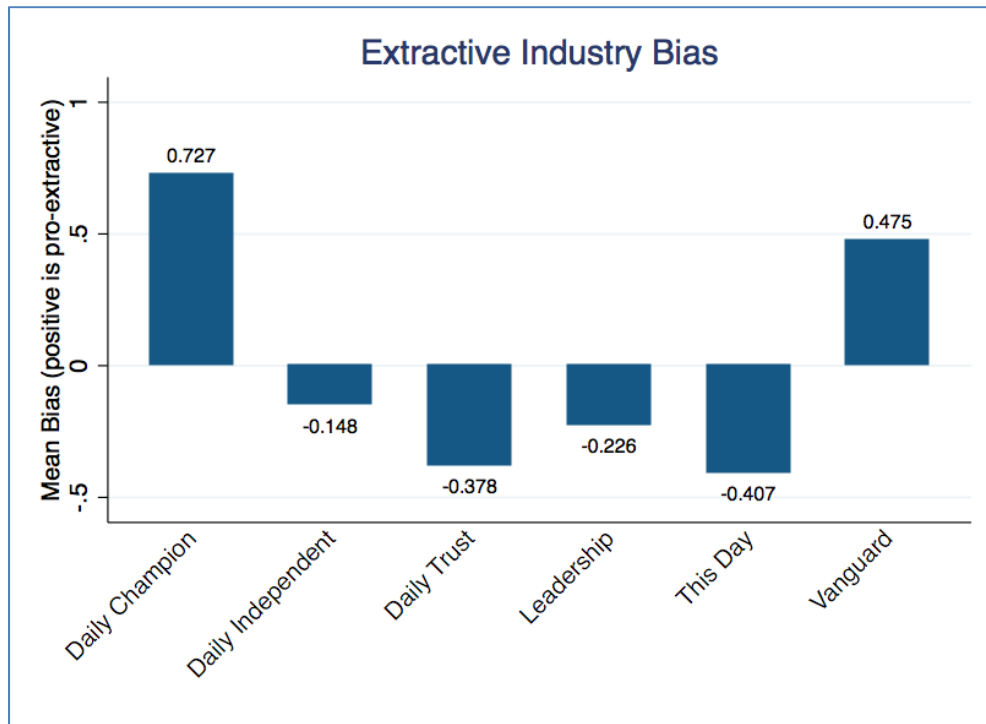
<sup>34</sup> Basse, Okon, “Security Operatives Foil Attempt to Kidnap Mobil Expatriate Workers,” *This Day*. December 8, 2008.



## RESULTS

### Nigeria

Table 2-1



### Bias

Objectivity is a fundamental characteristic of good reporting. By measuring the perceived bias of an article, we were able to observe trends among newspapers that demonstrated an overall objectivity, or lack thereof, in their coverage of the extractives industries. Beyond simply measuring bias, we examined the relationship between it and other characteristics of an article. In our research, we found three potential determinants of bias that are presented in the following pages. Of course, there are numerous factors that may affect a journalist's reporting or the perceived slant of a particular article. The potential determinants isolated were largely those endogenous to process of creating a story, and therefore, represent potential determinants of indirect bias, as opposed to direct bias, that are exhibited through a journalist's choice of inputs. Bias was initially measured for coverage

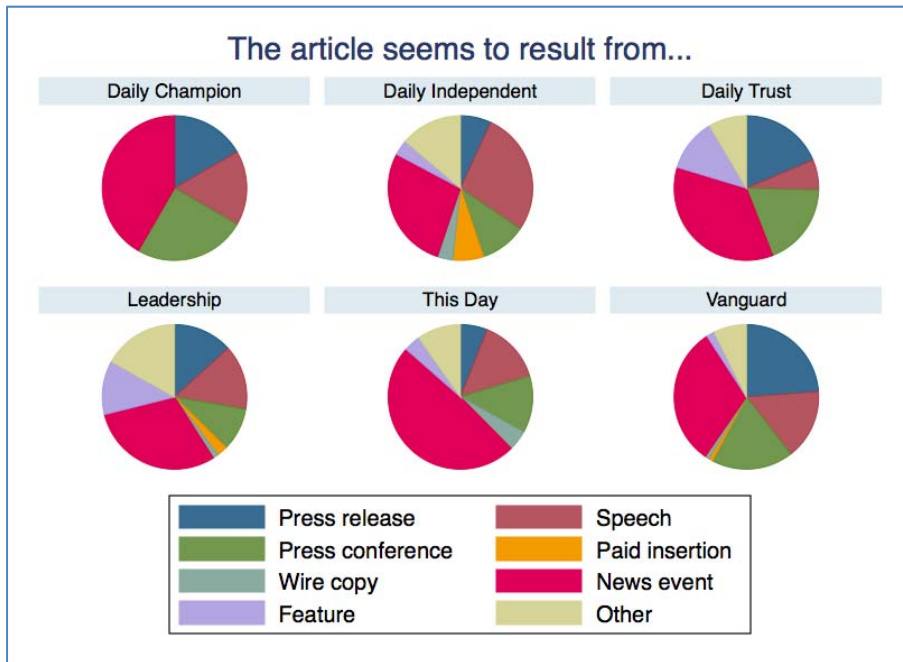


leaning toward or against both industry and government. However, early in the analysis it was determined that bias either toward or against the government was insignificant within the context of our model and methodology. The following sections, therefore, refer only to bias as it relates to the extractives industries (Table 2-1).

**News peg**

When a journalist or editor deems an event or item newsworthy it becomes the news “peg” or the reason for which the article is written. We identified seven (7) different potential news pegs from which articles were determined to have resulted. They include paid insertions, feature stories generated by the newspaper, press releases issued by the government or private industry, speeches made by government or industry officials, wire copies, or news events of interest. The type of peg used in article creation exhibited a relationship with the article’s bias measure at significant levels for several types of pegs.

Table 2-2







The most commonly used pegs were news events that reporters had been sent to cover. Following were press releases, conferences and speeches organized by officials that varied greatly in proportion across Nigerian papers (Table 2-2). Of the various pegs surveyed, paid insertions exhibited a statistically significant relationship with the perceived pro-industry bias of an article. While not particularly surprising, this finding served to reassure the researchers of the integrity of the statistical model used to examine perceived bias. More interestingly, there was a demonstrated relationship between news events and feature articles and anti-industry bias. By relying more or less on certain pegs for story creation, a journalist—or more broadly a paper—may exhibit a form of indirect bias in their reporting through selective pegging.

Table 2-3

News peg	Coefficient	Standard error	t-value	P-value	95% confidence interval min.	95% confidence interval max.
<b>Speech</b>	-.3067873	-.3771054	-0.81	0.418	-1.051302	.4377278
<b>Press conference</b>	-.0887184	.369391	-0.24	0.810	-.8161915	.6387546
<b>Paid insertion</b>	3.443182	.7649217	4.50*	0.000	1.936757	4.949607
<b>Wire copy</b>	-.7786663	.6982753	-1.12	0.266	-2.153839	.5965064
<b>News event</b>	-.7914075	.3169624	-2.50**	0.013	-1.415629	-.1671866
<b>Feature</b>	-.7914075	.4827146	-2.09**	0.038	-1.959946	-.0586439
<b>Other</b>	-.3771054	.3964176	-0.95	0.342	-1.959946	.4035935

\*positive values exceeding 1.96 indicate significant correlation with pro-industry bias at 95% confidence

\*\*negative values below -1.96 indicate significant correlation with anti-industry bias at 95% confidence

Consistently coverage of press releases, paid insertions, and press conferences are more pro-industry (Table 2-3).

Additional statistical models were developed in a step-wise manner, including only relevant variables in order to avoid over-fitting the models (Table 2-4). However,



more analysis is required to ensure the model is not “over-fitted”, applying too much weight to article’s peg with respect to the predictions of its bias either toward or against the industry. In the following models, a positive value represents a pro-extractive industry bias expectation and a negative value represents an anti-extractive industry expectation.

Table 2-4

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
<b>Press release</b>	1.22*** (0.33)	1.04** (0.32)	0.75* (0.32)
<b>Speech</b>	0.41 (0.34)	0.50 (0.33)	0.38 (0.32)
<b>Press conference</b>	1.06** (0.33)	0.98** (0.31)	0.54 (0.32)
<b>Paid insertion</b>	4.67*** (0.78)	4.30*** (0.76)	3.65*** (0.74)
<b>Wire copy</b>	0.33 (0.72)	0.13 (0.69)	-0.22 (0.66)
<b>News event (base)</b>	.	.	.
<b>Feature</b>	-0.30 (0.46)	-0.25 (0.45)	-0.20 (0.43)
<b>Other</b>	0.37 (0.35)	0.32 (0.34)	0.35 (0.33)

\* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

With statistical significance at the 99.9% confidence level, articles pegged on paid insertions generate decidedly pro-industry coverage, while press releases generate pro-industry coverage at the 95% confident level using the third-stage model.

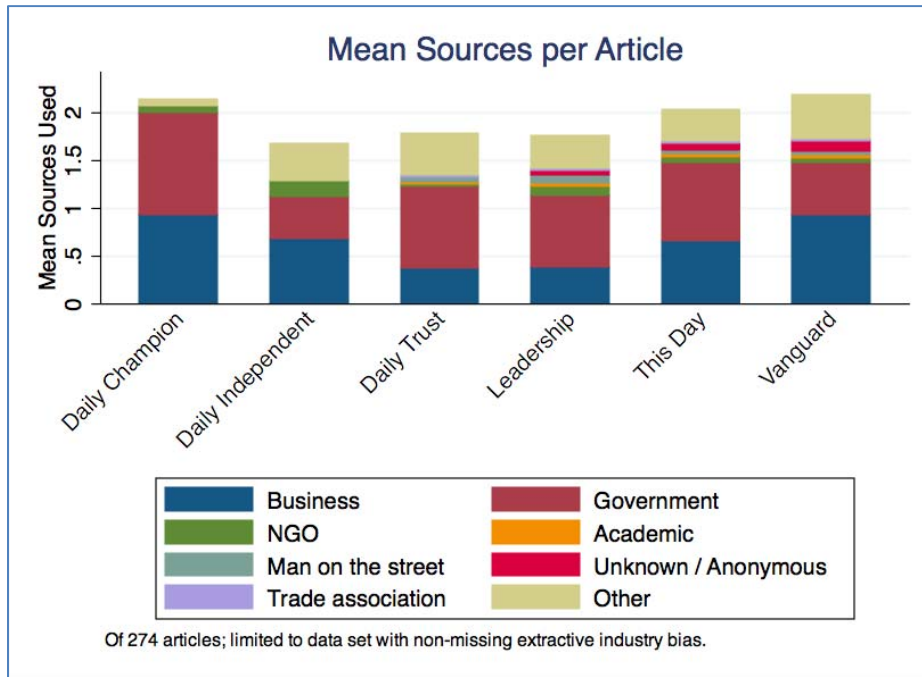
### Source composition

Another potential determinant of bias examined was source composition. By far the most prevalent types of sources were those coming from government or business outlets. This characteristic was true for reporting across all of papers surveyed in



Nigeria with the proportion of government and business, as well as other types of sources, varying only slightly across papers (Table 2-4). Other types of sources recorded included sources from nongovernmental organizations, sources from academia, man-on-the-street sources, anonymous sources and sources from trade associations.

Table 2-5

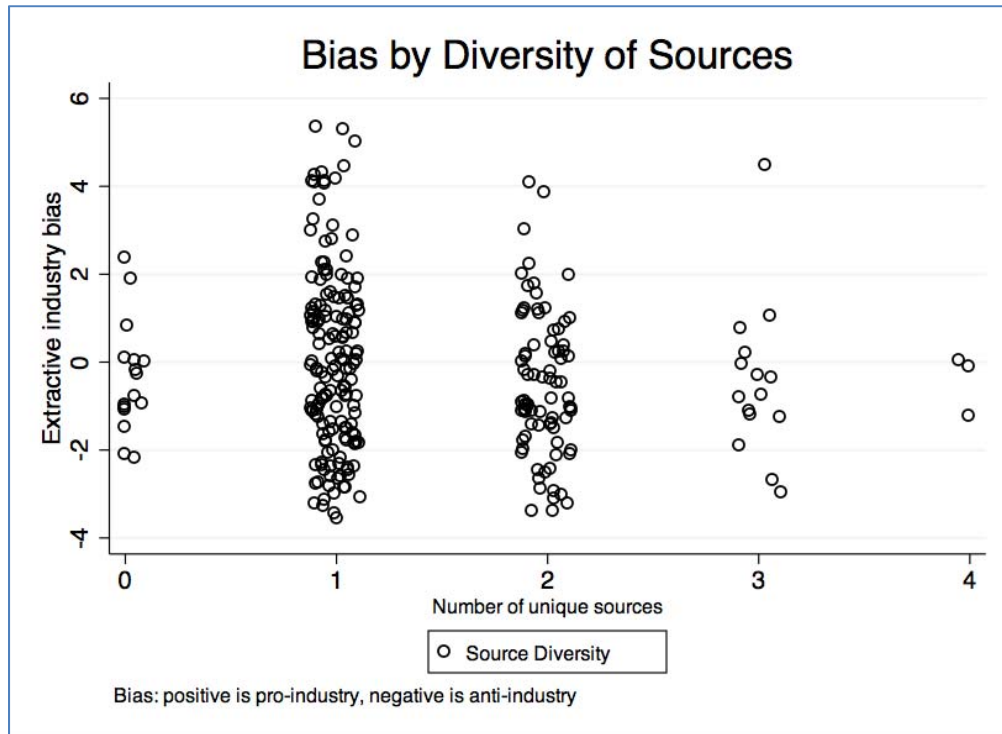


The mean number of sources used in an article was largely consistent across papers in Nigeria with *Daily Champion* and *Vanguard* maintaining the most significant leads over papers like *Daily Independent* and *Leadership*. As for the various types of sources, a “source diversity” score was used to measure the number of unique source types used to support an article. So for example, if an article had one (1) business source and five (5) NGO sources, it received a “source diversity” score of two (2). Surprisingly, the “source diversity” of an article had little to do with its estimated bias (Table 2-6).



Articles with low “source diversity” scores tended to fall more or less evenly on either side of the neutrality line, where extractive industry bias equals zero (0), exhibiting pro or anti-industry bias irrespective of the number of unique source types used to support it. The same was true for articles with medium to high “source diversity” scores. It was, therefore, determined that the number of unique source types used was not a determinant of an article’s perceived bias. Instead, a focus on the balance specifically between the two principal source types used—sources from business and government outlets—presented the researchers with a correlation that appeared to significantly impact perceived industry bias.

Table 2-6



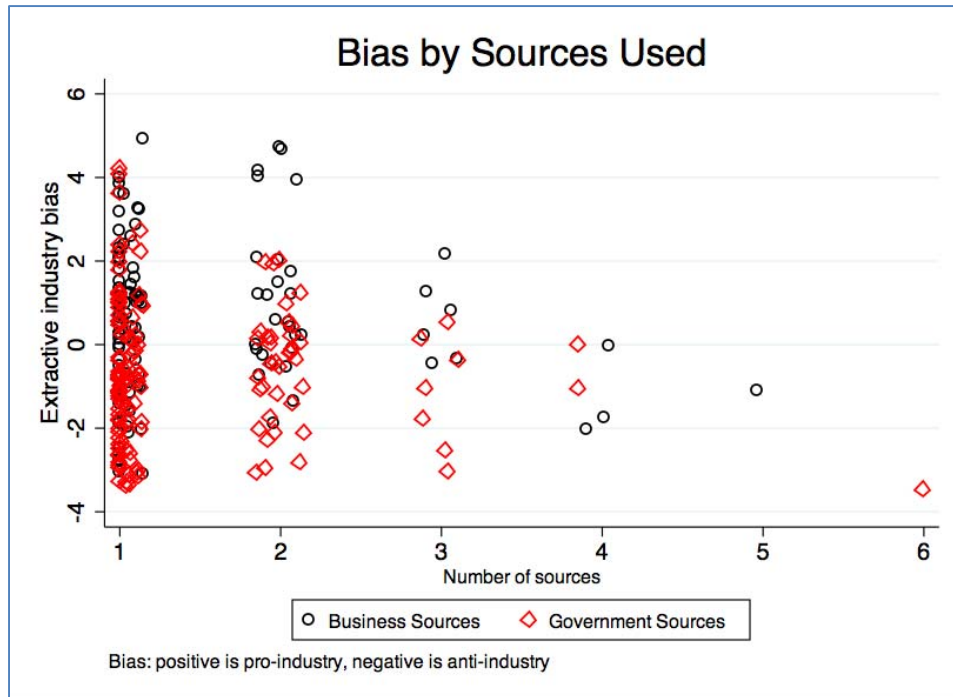
When a given article type was chosen and measured for bias specifically as a function of the number of business and government sources used, there was a significant relationship between the explanatory variable and an article’s perceived bias. Table 2-7 shows how the effect of either a dominant number of sources from government or business outlets was correlated with bias. This is of particular



interest given the considerable reliance of newspapers upon these two source types demonstrated both in the source composition patterns obtained through the content analysis and in the testimony of many editors and journalists obtained through interviews conducted by the researchers inside Nigeria. Many spoke about the difficulties of obtaining information from official sources inside government and the industry. However, there was repeated frustration expressed about obtaining information from many of the extractives companies operating inside Nigeria. Ejiolor Alike, Energy Correspondent at *This Day*, told the researchers:

The information you are looking for determines how cooperative the oil companies will be if you want them to corroborate something from the government. If it has the potential to affect their operations, they will be cooperative. But if you are digging too deep, they may become resistant.

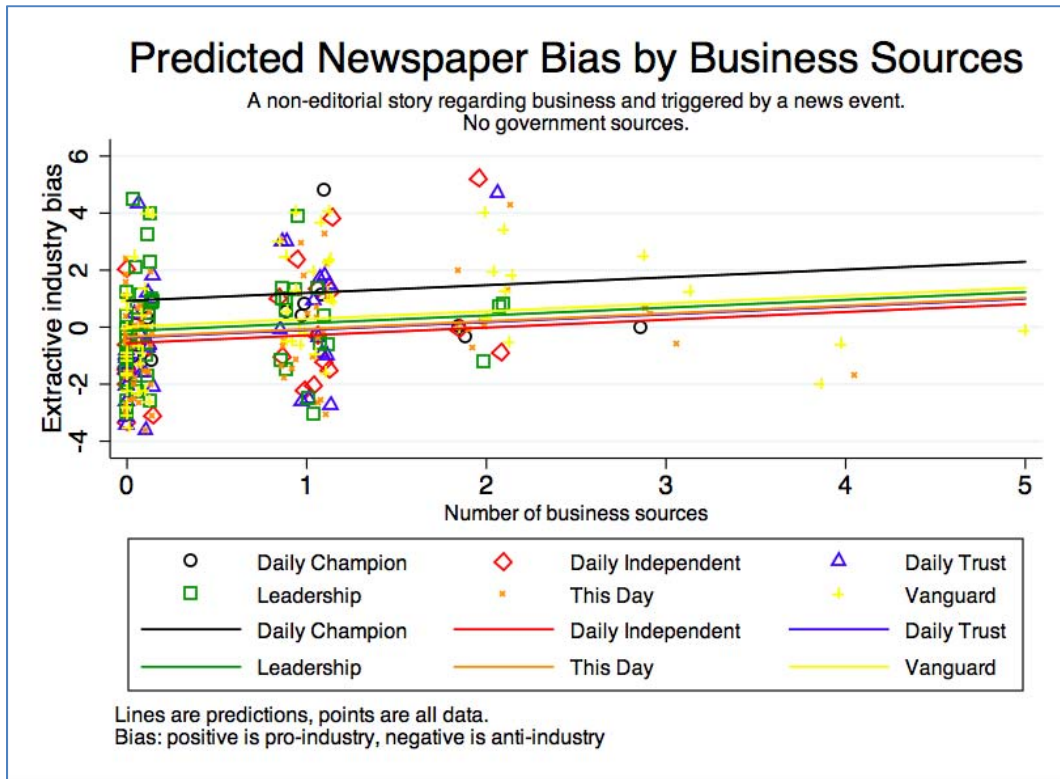
Table 2-7





The lack of access to the official industry sources requires many journalists to rely on information from foreign news outlets divulged by companies based in locations where they are often compelled to respond to requests from the media for comment, a phenomenon that does not hold true for industry representatives inside Nigeria. The issue of access may also play a role in determining source composition. If a particular source type is unavailable or unwilling to participate during story creation, a journalist may replace that source type with another, effectively exogenizing a core process that had previously been considered as an endogenous variable to story creation.

Table 2-8



As Table 2-8 illustrates, a given article, in this instance pegged on a news event, is predicted to exhibit an increasingly pro-industry bias as more business sources are used. This was suggested previously, but is shown here in a cross-paper comparison. Conversely, the model also predicts articles or papers to exhibit more



anti-extractive bias as more government sources are cited. Of greater interest, however, are the relative differences between newspapers. We can observe differences in mean bias levels across papers for all levels of business sourcing. In particular, it is clear from the graph that *Daily Champion* is more pro-extractive than the other papers when covering similar stories and while employing similar numbers of business sources. Even though *Daily Champion* has a similar mean pro-extractive bias to *Vanguard* (Table 2-1), given the same news event they are predicted to cover it in a more pro-extractive light. Herein lies the distinction between indirect bias exhibited through selective pegging or selective sourcing and a “direct” bias exhibited while holding these factors constant. While biases attributed to variables both endogenous and exogenous to the process of story creation are taken into account in Table 2-1, endogenous variables are held constant in Table 2-8. The fact that mean biases between *Daily Champion* and *Vanguard* are similar in Table 2-1 but markedly different in Table 2-8 makes clear that *Vanguard* tends to choose stories that are more pro-extractive in topic than some of the other papers, suggesting that the phenomena of selective sourcing or pegging may play a substantial role in the process of story creation.

Table 2-9

<b>Extractive covered</b>	<b>Number of articles</b>
<b>Oil</b>	299
<b>Gas</b>	58
<b>Metals</b>	5
<b>Coal</b>	4
<b>Gems</b>	0
<b>General</b>	3
<b>Other</b>	10



**Type of extractive**

Another potential determinant of industry bias identified was the type of extractive covered in a given article. The large majority of articles surveyed from Nigerian papers were related to oil and natural gas, followed by precious metals and coal. The relationship between the extractive industry covered and industry bias was significant for coal and oil, in particular.

Table 2-10

Extractive covered	Coefficient	Standard error	t-value	P-value	95% confidence interval min.	95% confidence interval max.
<b>Oil</b>	-.6093515	.2919741	<b>-2.09**</b>	0.038	-1.184361	-.0343422
<b>Coal</b>	1.699722	.8353072	<b>2.03*</b>	0.043	.0546802	.0546802

\*positive values exceeding 1.96 indicate significant correlation with pro-industry bias at 95% confidence

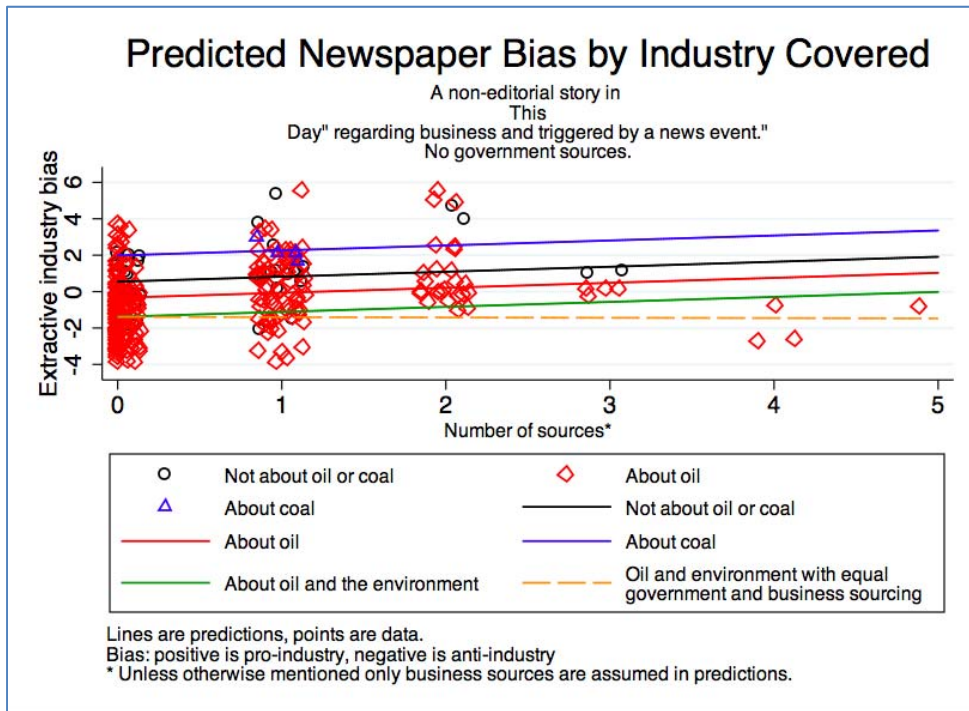
\*\*negative values below -1.96 indicate significant correlation with anti-industry bias at 95% confidence

When holding the news peg constant and examining industry bias across all levels of business sourcing, we see that not all industries are the same with respect to the bias predicted either toward or against those industries (Table 2-11). As suggested previously, we see that articles covering oil are predicted to have the most anti-industry bias while articles about coal are estimated to have the most pro-industry bias. Whether the type of bias could be attributed to selective coverage of certain industries is unclear. What we do know is that the extractives industry in Nigeria is based principally on the extraction of petroleum, and it therefore makes sense that the large majority of articles surveyed from Nigeria in the analysis are articles about oil and gas. As we begin to look at coverage in both Ghana and Uganda, each with an extractives mix different from that of Nigeria, we will be able to dig deeper into the question of the endogeneity of extractive covered within the process of story creation. In the meantime, however, it is clear that coverage of the oil industry in particular is significantly different in Nigeria than the coverage of the coal industry with respect to predicted industry bias.





Table 2-11



### Coverage quality

For the purposes of this study, coverage quality or topic quality contains three measures: how clearly terms used in the article were defined, contextualization of the topic covered, and use of jargon. All of these metrics seek to answer the same questions: How well do journalists understand the topics that they cover, and how well do they synthesize the information they receive into a form that is intelligible to their audience? As with the financial industry, accurate coverage of the extractive industries requires a firm grasp of the major actors (gas and oil companies, extractive cooperatives, oil producing communities, etc.), the technology and



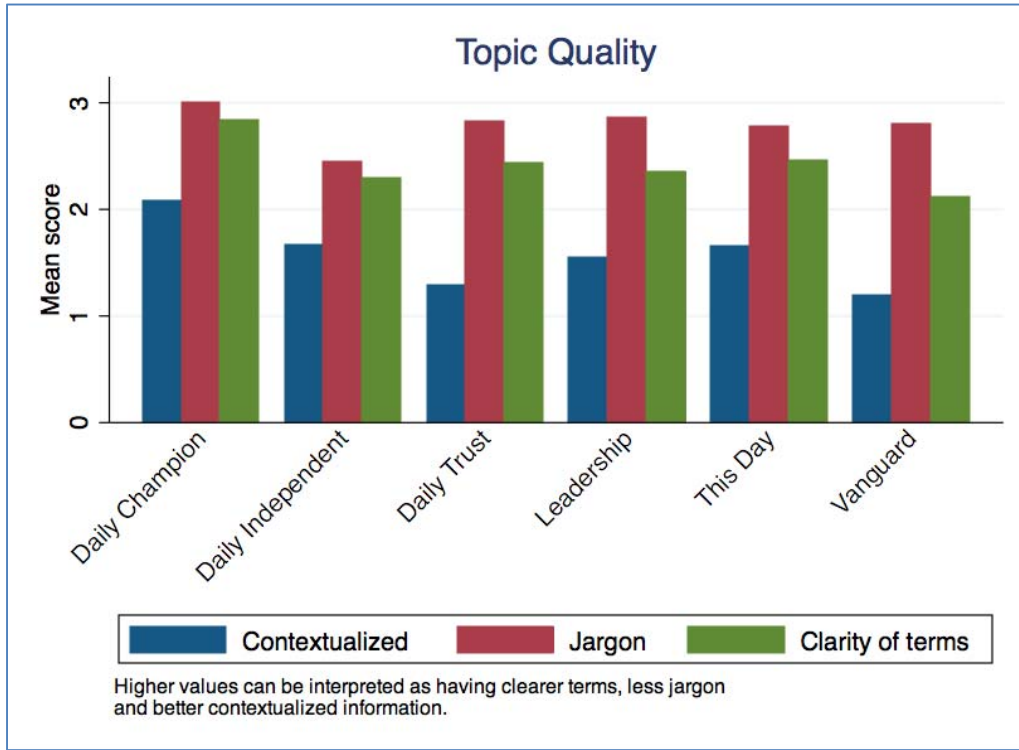
methods of extraction used and the effects of the industries on the people and communities that they serve.

One potentially illuminating result that was not specifically coded at the outset was the distribution of authorship. It is commonplace in the United States and in most of the Western media to have the same journalists cover a particular beat with regularity. The principle reason for this is simple: one or two people cover specialized areas because they are, or have become, well versed in that industry or topic. Though some bylines repeatedly appeared, authors of the articles we surveyed varied widely. As was supported by field research conducted in January, one person with intimate knowledge of the subject does not generally cover the extractive sector in a dedicated manner. Journalists are simply spread too thinly and often cover a broad range of topics at the newspapers where they work.

Table 3-1 examines the various coverage quality metrics across papers in Nigeria. There was little variance across papers for any given measure, however differences in performance by papers across the three measures varied considerably.



Table 3-1



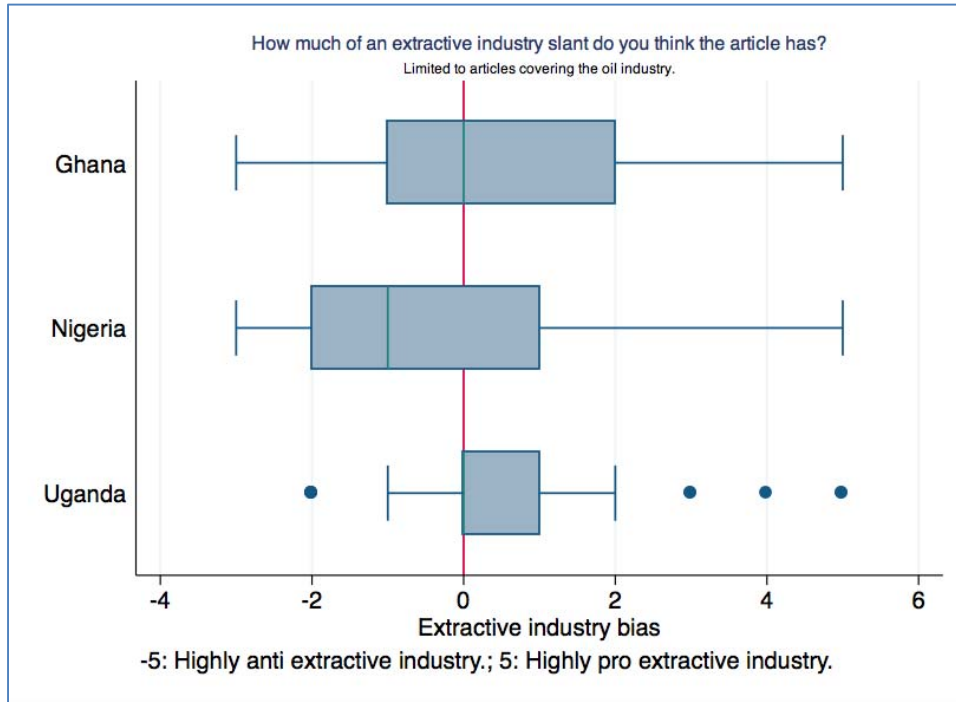
The measure of contextualization sought to gauge whether or not an article had adequate situational explanations or sufficient background to properly contextualize an event that was being reported on in an article. This contextualization metric yielded the worst scores across all Nigerian papers than did any other measure of coverage quality.

Meanwhile, jargon did not yield significant differences across papers in Nigeria and was consistently “unused”. Similarly, clarity scores were largely the same across the Nigerian papers surveyed, although average clarity scores were lower than scores for jargon usage.



## Cross-country analysis

Table 4-1



### Bias

The cross-country analysis yielded significant differences between countries with respect to industry biases. Similarly to the in-country cross-paper analyses, however, bias either toward or against government was determined not to be statistically significant within the early stages of the analysis. The following sections, therefore, refer only to bias as it relates to the extractives industries.

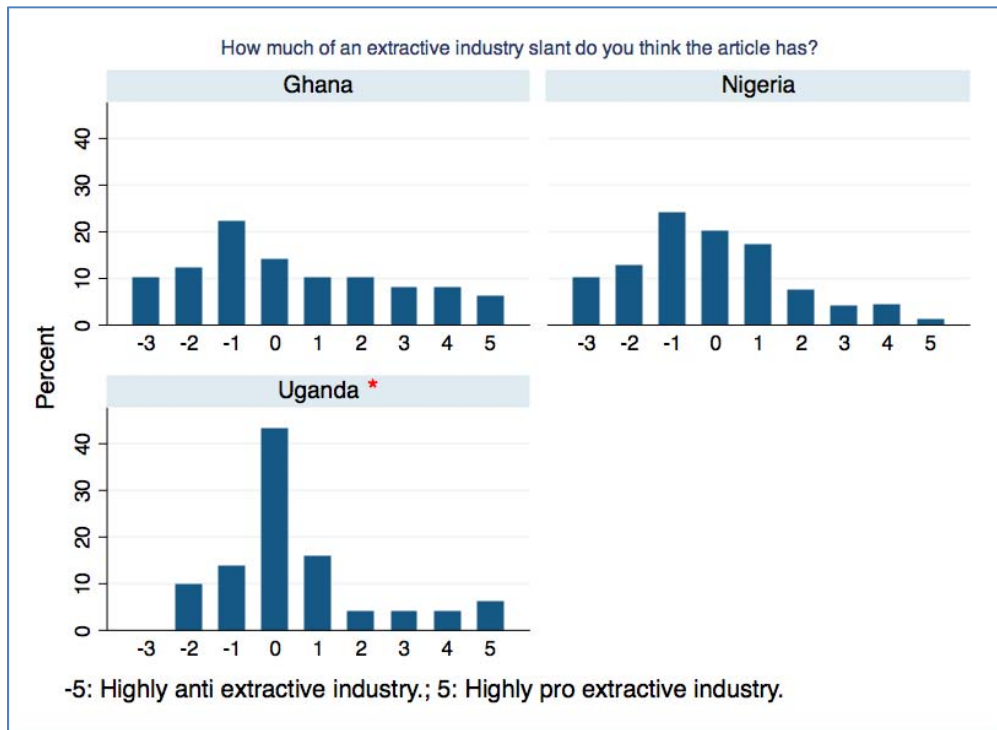
Negative scores represent degrees of anti-industry bias while higher scores represent degrees of pro- extractive industry bias. Furthermore, some articles were scored as containing “purely factual information” and were accordingly assigned an overall bias level of 0 in the index. Some articles did not register a bias score, neutral or otherwise. In the coding instrument, these instances were scored as “Do



not have enough context to gauge possible bias,” and were excluded from the sample used to analyze bias.

Illustrated in Table 4-1, the mean bias score of Nigeria, represented by a vertical green line, is lower than that of either Uganda or Ghana. At first glance, it appears that overall coverage in Nigeria tended to be more anti-industry in tone or nature than in the other two countries. At the same time, Uganda and Ghana appear to have similar mean bias scores. However, when we examine the distribution of the bias scores in Table 4-2, it is clear that Uganda is significantly more pro-industry in its coverage than either Nigeria or Ghana. Also, Nigeria’s apparent anti-extractive bias becomes more nuanced with respect to Ghana.

Table 4-2





The median and mode bias scores for Ghana and Nigeria are both negative, while Ugandan scores are distributed much more tightly around its median and mode bias score of zero (0). Table 4-2 also suggests that Ghana's papers represent a larger diversity of opinion than the other two countries as bias scores are more evenly distributed across the bias spectrum. We see here that Nigeria is significantly more anti-extractive in its coverage than is Uganda. At first glance it appears as though Nigerian coverage is more anti-industry than both Ghana and Uganda. However, a more detailed look reveals what is really happening. Ghana appears to have a much larger spread of bias represented in its media. On the whole, findings for Ghana do indicate a lesser bias than Nigeria, however not at a statistically significant level. However, Uganda has both a more pro-extractive stance and a more limited array of biases displayed in the articles surveyed. This may indicate that Uganda allows for less diversity of opinion.

With respect to the issue of selective sourcing, coverage in all three countries tended to include articles that did not contain quotes from sources on both sides of an issue. In Ghana, *The Mail* reported that the Glory Oil Company, Ltd. planned to "offer more job opportunities for Ghanaians and take up a leadership role in the nation's oil industry."<sup>35</sup> The paper reported that the company's manager was appealing to traditional rulers to give Glory Oil access to land, but the article did not include any quotes from these traditional rulers.

In a *New Vision* article on crude oil waste in Uganda, the only quotes came from the country's principle geologist and energy minister, who assured the public that "there is no need for a waste disposal system."<sup>36</sup> The article failed to include quotes from environmental experts or NGOs who may have felt differently.

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<sup>35</sup> "Glory Oil Company Opens New Branch at Madina," *The Mail*, September 17, 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200909180449.html>.

<sup>36</sup> Ibrahim Kasita, "Crude Oil Waste to Fire Hoima Thermal Plant," *New Vision*, June 2, 2008, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806030080.html>.



An excerpt from one article exemplifying the tightly distributed bias scores found in the Ugandan papers is below comes from *New Vision* covering the government's decision to release details on joint ventures involving petroleum production:

The Government has finally agreed to disclose the confidential oil production-sharing agreements it signed with four companies exploring for oil and gas ... However, the Government had been reluctant to disclose the agreements, claiming "it was a matter of national interest."<sup>37</sup>

Another article entitled "Mining is Killing Agricultural Sector Says Wacam" was found to have anti-extractive bias It comes from Ghana's *Public Agenda*, and contains purely the perspective of the representative from Wacam (an NGO) while not presented as an editorial or op-ed piece:

According to WACAM many of the affected communities have lost their economic livelihood through displacement and areas that used to be important food production areas have become areas of net food deficit ... WACAM further condemned the theme for the 80th Anniversary of the Ghana Chamber of Mines "Life without mining is impossible." According to them the theme does not reflect the realities of the destruction of the basic human needs for survival such as the need for clean air, clean water and good agricultural lands which mining destroys. "Mining affects the health status of affected communities which reduces the productivity of farmers. For example, abandoned pits become breeding grounds for mosquitoes thus increasing the incidence of Malaria in mining communities."<sup>38</sup>

Another example of anti-extractive bias comes from Nigeria's *Daily Independent* and included several parliamentarians' condemnations of fraud allegations against

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<sup>37</sup> Ibrahim Kasita, "Oil Pacts to Be Disclosed," *New Vision*, May 27, 2008, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200805280114.html>.

<sup>38</sup> Selorm Amevor, "Mining is Killing Agriculture Sector Says Wecam," *Public Agenda*, June 6, 2008, <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200806060743.html>.



NNPC (Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation) with no response from industry leaders.

Members of the Committee condemned the decision of the NNPC to spend the money without the approval of the National Assembly (NASS). [Gas Committee Chairman Igho Aguma] cited Sections of the Constitution which stipulate that all monies generated by government agencies must be paid into the Federation Account. He said NNPC officials violated the provisions by not remitting the amount realised as dividends and interest from LNG project.<sup>39</sup>

Two examples of pro-extractive biases from Ghanaian and Nigerian papers follow. The first comes from Ghana's *The Chronicle* detailing the expanded corporate social responsibility initiatives of Ghanaian mining industry leader AngloGold Ashanti, which is the extent of the article:

[Mr. Christian Rampa Luhembwe, Vice President of AngloGold Ashanti, West Africa Division] again disclosed that the company was putting up US\$2 million, from 2007 to 2010, for the construction of multi-purpose sports centres in each region of the country, and hinted that the first two would be constructed at Iduapriem in the Tarkwa Nsuaem municipality and Obuasi. "AngloGold Ashanti has undertaken to support the establishment of the Kwame Nkrumah Chair within the Institute of Africa Studies at University of Ghana, as the company's contribution towards the Ghana@50 programmes. We are funding the programme with \$400,000." Mr. Luhembwe said the company had also donated US\$100,000, for the construction of a Neuroscience Clinic at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, which amongst others, would be used to support the training of experts, who would manage the proposed clinic.<sup>40</sup>

Next is a similar article about NNPC's initiatives inside Nigeria, reported in Nigeria's *Daily Independent*:

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<sup>39</sup> Sule Lazarus, "NNPC Spends N710 Billion LNG Proceeds Without Approval," *Daily Independent*, June 12, 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200906120431.html>.

<sup>40</sup> Albert Nana Asante, "Anglogold Ashanti to Spend U.S.\$174.5 Million in Obuasi Operation," *The Chronicle*, June 9, 2008, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200806091435.html>.





[NNPC] has donated medical equipment worth N500, 000.00 to the Federal Roads Safety Commission (FRSC) owned Federal Roads Safety Emergency clinic, along Kaduna-Zaria expressway ... David Adeyeye, said the items donated were aimed at supplementing government efforts in the provision of health facilities to the people. “Our mission here is to support and enable the clinic continue to assist the accident victims on this road,” class 056 President explained.<sup>41</sup>

While both cross-paper government bias scores in Nigeria, as well as cross-country bias scores across the Ghana, Uganda and Nigeria, were deemed indeterminate, examples of articles exhibiting some form of government bias are included in the following pages for illustrative purposes.

One article from the Nigerian *Daily Independent* that was scored as having an anti-government bias was entitled “Govt 'Wastes' N10 Billion Yearly On South-North Fuel Bridging - Ex-PHRC CEO.” Only the former CEO was quoted in the article:

Nigeria “wastes” over N10 billion yearly to transport petroleum products from the South to the Northern part of the country, former Chief Executive Officer of the Port Harcourt Refining Company (PHRC), Alexander Ogedegbe, has declared.... Part of the problems facing Nigerian refineries, the petroleum pundit continued, “is excessive political interference by the government.”<sup>42</sup>

Another article that scored a pro-government bias came from Ghana’s *The Mail* and touted cooperation between Ghana and China in developing national capacities to make use of the newly discovered petroleum resources in the country:

Ghana and China are to collaborate for massive exploration of oil that could make Ghana a leading world explorer and hub of the industry in

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<sup>41</sup> Baba Negedu, “NNPC Donates N.5 Million Worth of Drugs to FRSC,” *Daily Independent*, June 10, 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200906100514.html>.

<sup>42</sup> Adeola Yusuf, “Govt 'Wastes' N10 Billion Yearly On South-North Fuel Bridging - Ex-PHRC CEO,” *Daily Independent*, June 29, 2009, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200906291717.html>.



the West African sub-region ... President Mills acknowledged the good ties between China and Ghana and said the two nations needed to learn from each other for the benefit of their people. He said the project was part of the overall plan of Government to provide jobs for the people.<sup>43</sup>

### Coverage quality

Coverage quality was measured using three principal metrics: contextualization, clarity and jargon use. Across countries, coverage quality varied significantly with respect to two (2) of the metrics: contextualization and clarity.

### Contextualization

The first, contextualization, is shown in Table 5-1 with statistical significance at the 95% confidence level. Uganda had significantly more 2-category (“well contextualized”) articles than both Ghana and Uganda. Meanwhile, Nigeria had significantly more 1-category (“not contextualized very well”) articles than both Ghana and Uganda.

One of the best examples of contextualization was found in *New Vision*. In “Cabinet Approves Oil Policy,” published on April 3, 2008, the writer gave a clear synthesis of the problem, incorporating key information that helps the reader to better appreciate the story:

The Government last year halted the awarding of oil exploration licences until a policy was developed to ensure efficiency in licensing and production. It emphasises national participation in oil and gas activities in order to expand employment opportunities and acquire diversified skills. The new policy is an improvement on the Petroleum Exploration and Production Act 2000, which grants exclusive rights for exploration, development and production of petroleum in any licensed area.<sup>44</sup>

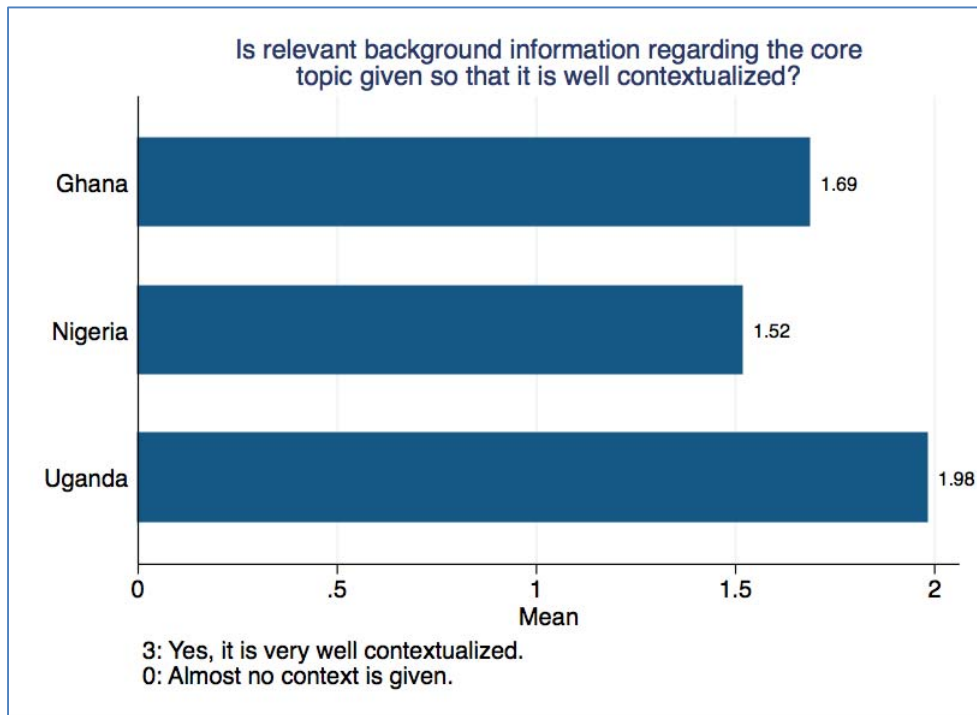
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<sup>43</sup> “Govt, China Collaborate to Explore Oil,” *The Mail*, June 20, 2008, <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200806200808.html>.

<sup>44</sup> Barbara Among, “Cabinet Approves Oil Policy,” *New Vision*, April 3, 2008, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200804040025.html>.



Table 5-1



The article details why the licenses have been halted and explains how this policy differs from those of the past. Other articles simply state an event without providing other useful information. An article that appeared in Ghana's *Daily Mail* on September 21, 2009 discussed that illegal miners have moved into mining exploration from concessions. This may, indeed be a real problem; however the author does not provide a reason for why these illegal miners have shifted their focus. In addition, little if any information is given about the scope of the problem, and the article fails to indicate who these people are or where they are conducting their operations. Lastly, many readers may wonder how such activities might affect them. Does this raise the price of ore? Is it dangerous? These are details that could

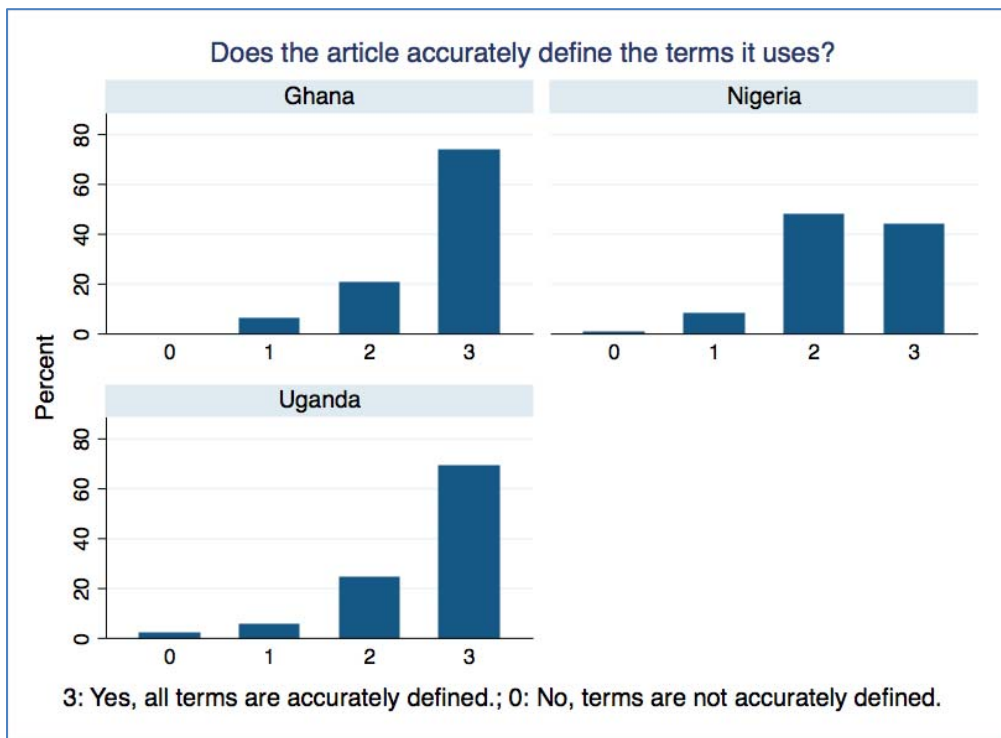


have been covered but were not, an example of what would result in a low contextualization score.

**Clarity**

With respect to clarity, scores were significantly higher in Nigerian coverage than coverage found in either Ghana or Uganda, as Table 5-2 indicates.

Table 5-2



Clarity, or the tendency of an article to define the use of complicated terms related to the industry, yielded significantly lower scores for Nigerian coverage than for coverage of either Ghana or Uganda. The clarity metric was included to assess the effects of technical challenges unique to the reporting of events related to the extractives industries. The guiding hypothesis at the beginning of this study was that coverage of the extractive sector inherently entails the use of industry specific terminology with which most readers would not be familiar. It was surprising, then,



that Nigerian coverage exhibited the lowest scores, given that extractives have been an integral mainstay of the Nigerian economic and political landscape for decades.

Many stories reviewed across all papers and countries referred to industry terms that, from an outsider perspective, were unknown. While these terms were often well explained, journalists occasionally failed to define words unlikely to be known by their audiences. One article from Ghana's *Public Agenda*, "Agenda for New Energy Minister," covers Pacific Environment's review of environmental documentation associated with the development of the Jubilee field offshore project. The journalist refers to classification of the project as Category A and B but offers no explanation as to what these categories mean.

The review also flawed IFC's classification of the Jubilee project as a Category B. In the view of Pacific Environment, "The Jubilee project is overwhelmingly a new off-shore oil drilling project, with 15 new wells, and only 2 previously drilled exploratory wells. Under the commonly understood international norm of project classification, the Jubilee project would be considered Category A."<sup>45</sup>

The reader is left to wonder if Category A is a good thing or bad thing or if it refers to something of an entirely different nature. Indeed, the quote insinuates that these categories are part of international norms of classification but nevertheless the author does not indicate what these categories mean. Similarly, one article originating in Nigeria's *Vanguard* gives a summary of oil stocks and is littered with economic reporting terms, many of which are not defined or placed in a context where a reader with a limited financial background could make sense of it. "The insurance sub-sector followed on the sectorial analysis, accounting for 13.11 per

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<sup>45</sup> "Agenda for New Energy Minister," *Public Agenda*, February 20, 2009  
<http://allafrica.com/stories/200902200572.html>.



cent of the market turnover.”<sup>46</sup> This one sentence contains numerous ambiguous-sounding terms for which there is little explanation.

Even *New Vision*, one of the foremost publications in Uganda, employed terms or references that were considered to be unclear. A March 31, 2008 article titled “How to Prevent the Oil Curse” included the undefined term *graben*: “Substantial amounts of oil have been discovered in the Albertine graben and there is potential for discovery of more oil deposits in other parts of the country.”<sup>47</sup> The U.S. Geological Survey defines a *graben* as “a down-dropped block of the earth's crust resulting from extension, or pulling, of the crust”—a trench, in other words, one that is far more likely to be understood by the general public than *graben*. The failure to explain this term suggests that the journalist may have been copying industry materials without attempting to make sense of the topic.

### **Jargon**

Prior to the completion of the study, it was believed that many articles would contain large amounts of industry jargon, defined as any language that either appeared convoluted to the point of being unintelligible or language that was so technical in nature that the reader could not credibly gauge the real meaning. We expected many journalists, lacking a strong foundation or educational background in the extractive sector, would rely heavily on the language presented to them whether via press releases, speeches or discussions with experts on the issue. For the most part (excluding the examples in the previous section), this aspect of our assertions was largely unfounded. In the articles we reviewed, we found the jargon was usually at a minimum.

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<sup>46</sup> Eboh, Michael and Raimot Salaudeen “Oil Stocks Lead Price Losers' Chart,” *Vanguard*, July 25, 2008, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200807250375.html>

<sup>47</sup> Francis Tumusiime, “How to Prevent the Oil Curse,” *New Vision*, March 31, 2008, <http://allafrica.com/stories/200804010041.html>.



Nigeria by far has the longest history in terms of the extractive sector. It was believed that, as a result, journalists would naturally have a greater understanding of the industry because of its protracted presence in the country. However, differences among jargon use across the three countries were found not to be significant. An example of jargon encountered in a Nigerian paper is illustrated below, although this usage was not part of an overarching trend. It has been included merely for illustrative purposes.

The following is an example of a piece that originated from an interview with an official, Chief Executive Officer of Eterna Oil. The result, however, was the same:

This is followed by the investment in mid/upstream operations, Amakpe Refinery, Akwa Ibom State, which would gulp N750 million or 9.15 per cent and be completed in 12 months; while retail network acquisition expansion comprising three additional outlets in Lagos, one each in Abuja, Ibadan (Oyo State), Ijebu Ode (Ogun State), Port Harcourt (Rivers State), and Enugu (Enugu State), would be set up at the cost of N704 million or 8.59 per cent within the next six to eight months.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> “Eterna Oil Expresses Interest in Refinery Takeover,” *Daily Independent*, June 29, 2009.



## **Interview findings**

As stated in the methodology section, the team used interviews to give context to the some of the trends that developed as a result of the content analysis. In some cases, we used the opportunity to speak with the editors and reporters to test some of our preliminary hypotheses—some of which held water, while others did not. What developed from the interview process was a more well-rounded understanding of the challenges and realities that these journalists continue to face. For example, we knew that access to resources and funding remained a constant burden, but we realized through our discussions the extent to which these struggles place journalists in comprising positions and affect their motivations in covering stories. Access to information also was a recurring theme. Again, we were aware of the technological limitations that some papers might face, but not the literal ones. Those with whom we spoke expressed frustration in terms of gleaning information from the official sources they needed—the result was a frequent reliance on unnamed or anonymous sources or international news outlets to get needed information. Lastly, there was at times a disconnect between the policies that were conveyed by the editors and the reality that numerous writers expressed. While it is clear that many news outlets are trying to weed out the inappropriate practices of the past, some of the same conflicts remain, particularly for the smaller and underfunded publications.

## **Limitations**

Due to time constraints we were unable to conduct interviews in Uganda. Additionally, some interviews contained in our analysis were done at news outlets that were not available on AllAfrica.com for the content analysis. An interview schedule can be found in Appendix IV.





### **Significant use of jargon at other papers**

From the outset, we believed jargon use would be indicative of two things: that journalists themselves do not fully understand the topics they cover and/or that these journalists do not consider it important enough to take the time to convey the meaning of these terms to the public. None of the journalists or editors that we interviewed admitted to using jargon or technical language in their coverage. To the contrary, they were unequivocal on this point, arguing that the average citizen would have no basis for understanding extractive industry terms without having those terms simplified and explained by the journalist.

Certain technical terms were found repeatedly with no definition or explanation given. Some examples include: ““downstream/upstream”, “motion for interlocutory injunction”, “rise in replacement cost net income, excluding one-offs such as field sales” and “benchmark brent crude oil.” In each instance the articles utilized these terms seemingly with the assumption that the reader would know what these terms mean.

Heavy reliance on press releases and official speeches explains at least part of this phenomenon. According to our analysis, over 30% of the coverage resulted from these sources. By and large, it appears that journalists repackage the information slightly and pass it off as an original piece of journalism. In reality, the materials that the Minister of Energy or the multinational oil and gas companies prepare are frequently not relatable to the average person, particularly the average Nigerian or Ugandan. If the goal of the African media is to bring the people into the dialogue and given them a deeper understanding of the problems and their possible solutions, they must first give the people the tools to understand the topics fully.

### **Private papers owned by former politicians**

Before arriving for our interviews, we knew that most papers in Nigeria, in particular, were privately owned. As such, we presumed that this would reflect an



independence of reporting. However, several interviewees indicated that a number of papers in Nigeria are owned by former politicians or have close ties to current ones. In addition, they implied that the ownership directly informed coverage decisions and editorial slants.

Mr. Steve Ayurinde, Editor-In-Chief of *The Punch* assured us that his publication was wholly independent as was *This Day*, *Guardian* and *The Tribune*. He spoke with dismay, however, about the growing pattern—cited by other interviewees—whereby former members of government have come back to become media owners. He noted that *The Nation*, one of the papers with whom we interviewed, was one clear example. According to Mr. Ayurinde, “You see the direction of the coverage is obvious.” He also told us that a governor from Abia State owns *The Sun* and that a former Delta State governor (Wari)—linked with known corruption—owns the *Daily Independent*.

Similarly, Mr. Osaebrown spoke of this continuing trend in ownership. He claimed that ex-politicians are “using it to further their political aims.” Perhaps most interestingly, according to Mr. Osaebrown, these associations are *not* readily known to the reading public. In reference to the *Daily Independent*, he also mentioned that the owner has been implicated on corruption charges but that anyone reading his paper would believe he had done nothing wrong.

How these patterns ultimately relate to coverage of the extractive industry is not entirely clear. Still, it would seem that independently owned outlets without an inherent slant remains the most fertile ground for objective, responsible reporting.

### **Private industry more tight lipped**

We frequently found during our interviews that private companies seemed to exert more pressure on the papers than the governments. It was also easier to get information—anonously or otherwise—from the government, as well. The



following is an excerpt from an interview with Ejiofor Alike, Energy Correspondent with *This Day*:

If you ask for precise information like the number of barrels they are producing a day, they will tell you it is against their policy to divulge. For Shell, for example, if you want to know the number of barrels produced per day, it's better to go through the foreign media. The foreign staff at Shell in The Hague will talk to European news outlets more freely. This news is less sensitive when it is divulged in Europe as compared to Nigeria.

Anthony Osaebrown echoed a similar refrain. He told us it is easier to report on stories against the government than it is to report against private businesses. Mr. Osaebrown partially attributed this to the fact that the “public has a greater appetite for government corruption” and that the public is more closely linked to private companies and may not want to hear about their failures. Advertising pressures also play a role here. The papers are also not getting any advertising from the government and therefore do not risk losing revenue as a result of their reporting. *The Punch's* Editor-in-Chief Steve Ayorinde told us of the relative control that the government still has. “No one is controlling them (the government) for now and you have to take everything with a pinch of salt.” Mr. Ayorinde cited the need for dependable sources but cautioned against becoming too reliant on anonymous sources: “We try as much as possible not to have long-standing contacts. When a source is too confident with the unofficial channel I'm not sure you can trust the information you're getting. The tendency of the source to believe that anything they say goes, they will use the paper as an easel.”

While several editors cited ad revenue as a mitigating factor in terms of when and how to break certain stories, Ghana's *Daily Graphic* stood out among the others. Unlike any of the other publications, the *Graphic* is by far the largest and most influential paper in Ghana and as such they enjoy a more balanced relationship with advertisers. Mr. Tettah, the paper's editor in chief spoke about the *Graphic's* duty as the standard bearer, which meant that their reporting was taken as “gospel.” According to Mr. Tettah, “[We] don't want to leave any doubt. It's about serving



society’s good and they all have a stake in this paper.” The *Graphic*, then, is largely free to report without fear of losing ad dollars, though they will give those advertisers an opportunity to respond. “We don’t need that relationship to keep the newspaper in business. If you want to continue advertising, we will make sure at least your side is represented.”

### Reward sources with fluff coverage

Positive or “fluff” coverage has and remains endemic within the African media landscape. The economic realities of the business mean that enterprising journalists have difficulty getting paid let alone funding an investigative piece or in-depth feature. The deepest pockets remain the large oil, telecom and banking institutions that they cover. Mr. Osaebrown is a former journalist and particularly forthcoming on this front. He told us that while trading trips and information for certain coverage is still common, he noticed a marked decrease at *Business Day* during his tenure there. Still, it is still common for reporters to be sponsored by a company to check out a facility or attend an event for a private firm. The expenses are covered and in return the company gets a story out of it. When asked about whether journalists at *This Day* accepted money in exchange for information or favorable coverage, Group Business Editor Ayodele Aminu claimed that it *may* occur but that it was difficult to monitor. Brought to light or not, Mr. Ayodele described the practice as “unethical” and unacceptable at *This Day*. We then spoke with a writer at the *New Crusading Guide* in Accra, Lucy Baagyei-Danso who spoke openly about compensation from companies and sources but insisted that this “shouldn’t matter” and should not affect editorial decisions. From a Western media perspective, it is hard to see how this *couldn’t* affect a journalist reporting on a story.

As a corollary, we found that in talking to both editors and writers there was a disconnect—perhaps not surprisingly—between the editors’ expectations and what reporters actually do. According to Mr. Osaebrown it was common for journalists to



promote a source's business and to quote that source when it is not a sensitive matter. In addition—and contrary to the strict policy presented at the interview with the editors at *Business Day*—journalists would reward their sources with free publicity and mentions in exchange for information that the journalist cannot quote the source on directly. This symbiotic relationship, in his experience, was *not explicit*. Furthermore, journalists at *Business Day* were also co-opted by the ad sales department and were given commissions for getting adverts from their contacts. It was clear that these companies understood that at Nigerian media outlets the journalists themselves often wield more leverage than the advertising employees and can get advertising agreements that the sales people cannot. This creates a clear conflict of interest for these reporters.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

The struggles of African media outlets have been well documented here and elsewhere. Western journalists, academics, NGOs and others have frequently lamented the poor quality and lack of independence of the African media. Myriad solutions have also been proffered to mitigate some of these problems. Training is perhaps the best single tool available to news organizations and NGOs who seek to improve reporting quality. In this study's predecessor, *The Will Be Ink*, extensive surveys were conducted with journalists working in Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda regarding the unique challenges faced by these practitioners and the role that training has played in ameliorating them. To be sure, training is and will continue to be a sturdy tool with which to carve out a solution. This study diverges from *There Will Be Ink* and takes an important first step in dissecting the articles to find the patterns and flaws endemic to African media coverage of the extractive sector. In-person interviews were used to color the outline created by the statistical analysis and shed light on the journalists' perceptions of their own work. Our recommendations flow from this convergence of content analysis and interviews and seek to provide guidance not only in the area of training but also in other areas where IPD may provide important assistance. These recommendations are, for the most part, meant to be pragmatic rather than sweeping; they are tools that may boost the capacity of IPD and its partners to promote viable, new economic development policy through the media (among other avenues). The media's ability to coherently and bravely report important stories to the public also affects the most relevant stakeholder of all—the people.

### More training

Our team heard the same refrain from nearly every interviewee: more training. There are two main levels on which training typically occurs—general journalism practice and in-depth instruction for certain beats or industries. Our analysis also



showed that both qualities are lacking across papers and across countries. That said, interviewees were most eager to learn more about the extractive industry and viewed it as being the best way to improve their own coverage. This was particularly true in Ghana, where the oil industry is still in its infancy. According to Daniel Nonor at the *Daily Chronicle*, “Presently, as we speak, I would stick my neck out to say there are very few journalists that have much knowledge of the oil industry that are reporters. We would have to ... get brains in that industry and train them as journalists.” Journalists reported receiving training from two main sources: NGOs and the extractive industries. The latter, in our view, is problematic as it may serve the needs of the company more than those of the journalist. As noted earlier, journalists in each of these countries are frequently offered trips, tours and trainings by oil companies and feel compelled to maintain the relationship with favorable coverage. IPD and the groups with whom they operate can offer objective, non-partisan education that will aid journalists in cutting through company PR or government stonewalling.

### **Industry-specific training**

The content analysis demonstrated that lack of context was the weakest measure of coverage quality across all papers and across all countries. Poor context and, in some cases, frequent use of technical jargon point to a general lack of understanding of the extractive industry and an inability to explain complicated topics clearly. Industry-based training with a focus on the practical skills necessary to cover oil, gas and mining—such as how to read market reports, synthesize company press releases and view government policy initiatives critically—appears to be what many journalists need at the moment.



### **Self-critical analysis**

There is a good deal of daylight between how journalists characterize their own work product and the results of the content analysis. For example, Rotimi Durojaiye, Group Business Editor for the *Daily Independent* in Lagos indicated the import of using balance in sourcing and in providing analysis for the reader. Still, article after article from the *Daily Independent* did not bear this out. An article titled, “Mark Tasks Lukman On Crisis in Oil, Gas Sector” from February 20, 2009 makes casual reference to the crisis “currently rocking the oil and gas sector” and indicates that the Petroleum Minister has been called upon to bring his experience to solve the crisis but does not elaborate in any way on either. Training for these journalists should be as much about understanding the fundamentals as it is about understanding their own difficulties. One training suggestion is to have each journalist bring their last 20 articles and to analyze their work along a rubric similar to the one created for this study. These journalists might understand their shortcomings better if they can see it for themselves.

### **Man-on-the-street interviews**

Although the opinion of the public and its reaction to events is a pivotal aspect of most western news reporting, it is virtually nonexistent in the coverage we measured. By incorporating the views of the “every man,” papers give a direct, often unfiltered voice to the people. IPD actively seeks to make the people an integral part of the policymaking process. The media, then, can help facilitate this engagement with the people as an integral stakeholder. Therefore, trainings should not only focus on the ways in which the media can explain the developments of the extractive industry to the public but also focus on how to incorporate the people into that coverage.





### **Dedicated beat reporters**

A frequent reader of most major American newspapers will find that a reporter consistently covers a specific beat. By doing so, a writer gains true competency in that area and provides more cogent analysis. After sampling hundreds of articles, we noted that the bylines changed nearly as frequently as the headlines. Our conversations with the editors confirmed this. Some of the larger papers do have dedicated business writers but none of the papers featured a specialized oil, gas and mining reporter. A few of the larger publications, like *This Day*, did have an energy correspondent however. But even in that case, the reporters located in the more remote regions of Nigeria, Ghana and Uganda were universally generalists. Correspondents for *The Punch*, for instance, who are situated in the Niger Delta cover everything from politics to entertainment to the economy. Better funding with wider national distribution will give many papers the resources they need to hire reporters who have specific competencies.

### **Create NGO papers**

From an anecdotal perspective, the one NGO paper in our study that did the best job of covering the news from an activist, independent perspective was Ghana's *Public Agenda*. The paper often took topics of concern to the public and contextualized them well. Coverage also shied away from retreads of government and industry press releases in favor of independent reporting. Though not very practical, an NGO that has a major stake in this area might find that the most effective way to secure good critical and complete coverage of extractives is fund a paper themselves.

### **Write press releases as articles**

Anthony Osaebrown, a former business writer for *Business Day* and PR specialist for a Lagos-based commercial bank, told us how he has adapted to the realities of the African journalism climate. Having been on both sides of the process, Mr. Osaebrown indicated in our discussion that the best way to get coverage of the bank



into the papers was to write his press releases in a ready-to-print style. By altering the format and writing style to more closely approach a news article, NGOs and businesses can better ensure that journalists will use the information. Admittedly, this does not represent a positive solution, but rather a practical one. Until the larger realities of running a news outlet in this region—including lack of access to resources and proper staffing—are ameliorated, this is one way to boost the coverage of the oil, gas and mining sectors.

### **Build international partnerships**

The analysis suggests that coverage quality across the board suffers centrally from a lack of contextualization and poor sourcing. The editors themselves maligned their inability to extract information and comment from both government and business sources. And, while nearly every journalist was able to secure contacts within the government to comment anonymously, business contacts were much harder to come by. Indeed, it is often the case that the only information these journalists can glean is from international news outlets that wield more power than Nigerian ones. Large multinational companies—like Shell and ExxonMobile—often divulge information more freely in their home countries than they do locally.

As a result, local news outlets like *The Punch* or the *Daily Champion* would benefit from partnerships with these international news outlets that may be able to feed information, background and even resources to the smaller, local papers. In exchange, the larger outlet, like the BBC would be able to use the local papers to gain local coverage, particularly when high-profile news breaks as it did in Nigeria in January.



## Merge media outlets

We know the challenge of reporting on the energy sector. There are only a few papers that pay good. You need to earn it, and when you are in you need to defend and protect that privilege. The newspaper cannot pay like other sectors. People just think that you need to use journalism as a stepping stone to greater heights, like telecoms or banks.”

- Mr. Steve Ayurinde Editor In Chief, Punch

As this interview excerpt illustrates, papers face an uphill battle to find and keep qualified journalists. The ability to pay a competitive salary contributes greatly to this industry exodus. The media landscape in each country is visibly saturated and dilutes the esteem of the profession and the ability of these papers to pay for quality work. In Ghana there are no fewer than 20 newspapers at any given newsstand to serve a population of just over 20 million people. And in a number of cases, what passed for a newsroom was little more than room with a few computers. In one instance, three Accra papers—*New Crusading Guide*, *Daily Dispatch* and *Ghanaian Observer*—were working side by side, though independently. With relatively low barriers to entry, besides start-up capital, there are a host of small and relatively inconsequential papers that compete alongside the *Daily Graphic*, a behemoth in the Ghanaian news market. That said, the other publications do have journalistic talent. By combining operations and resources, some of these smaller papers would undoubtedly be more effective. Reporters could specialize their coverage and financial resources could be pooled and talent concentrated to create a more competitive journalistic arena.



## APPENDIX I: CODING RUBRIC

### Coding Instructions

You may code ANY question with one of:

98: Don't know - code in cases where the information is unknown, but hypothetically answerable. Use your best guess in cases that request your judgment. Use this freely in cases where information may not be available. At times an "unknown" code will be supplied that is not 98. In those cases it is thought that the "unknown" or "don't know" category is likely to be theoretically important rather than a last result answer and should not be treated as missing data.

99: No answer - use this code to denote an answer that you may come back to in the future. This should not be used in final coding and would represent incomplete data with no reason given in respondent based coding.

0: Not applicable - use this code in cases where you need to skip a question or when it is explicitly noted that it can be used.

Open-ended questions should mostly be answered with short phrases that capture a concise answer to the question. These phrases will later be consolidated into logical groups.

### Overview Questions Regarding the Publication the Article Appeared In:

P.1) What is the name of the newspaper the article originally appeared in?

P.2) What is the newspaper's origin country?

P.3a) Is the newspaper primarily public, private, government, or non-profit? (*check all that apply*)

1. Publicly owned.
2. Privately owned.
3. Any ownership pattern with large government stake.
4. Any ownership pattern with large ownership by a current government officer.
5. Non-Profit
6. Ownership is unknown.

P.3b) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?

1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.



**Overview Questions Regarding the Article:**

M.1) What is the journalist's name? (*if not supplied code "98 - Don't know"*)

M.2) What is the article's title?

M.3) What is the article's URL?

M.4) What was the article's sample date?

M.5a) Does the article seem to result from...

1. A press release by a company, government, or NGO.
2. A speech by an official.
3. A press conference by a company, government, or NGO.
4. A paid insertion.
5. Wire copy from an overseas agency.
6. A news event reported by a journalist sent out to do so.
7. A feature generated by a newspaper.
8. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*If M5a is (8), else code as "0 - Not applicable":*

M.5b) Other (*short phrase*)

M.5c) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?

1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.

*If M5a was answered with (1), (2), (3), (4), or (5) answer the following, else code as "0 - Not applicable":*

M.5d) Please note the specific company, government, NGO, official, or overseas agency.

**Questions Regarding Sources**

S.1) How many unique sources were used in the article? (*0 to N*)

S.2) How many of the quotations were from anonymous sources?

S.3) What types of sources were used (*note number for all that apply*)

1. Business: \_\_\_\_
2. Government: \_\_\_\_
3. NGO: \_\_\_\_
4. University / Academic: \_\_\_\_
5. Man on the street: \_\_\_\_



6. Unknown / Anonymous: \_\_\_\_
7. Other (*note all that apply and number*)

S.4a) How relevant to the article's central topic are the quotations?

1. Very relevant.
2. Relevant.
3. Somewhat irrelevant.
4. Irrelevant.

S.4b) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?

1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.

S.5a) How well does the article clarify sources backgrounds and potential biases?

1. Very well.
2. Somewhat well.
3. Somewhat badly.
4. Very badly.

S.5b) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?

1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.

S.6a) Are sources used in a balanced way, with one quotation on each side of the issue?

1. Very balanced.
2. Somewhat balanced.
3. Somewhat unbalanced.
4. Very unbalanced.

S.6b) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?

1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.



### Questions Regarding the Article's Topic Coverage

C.1) Is this article primarily a summary of stock markets or short term commodity price changes not meant to provide larger context?

1. Yes
2. No

C.2) What is the core topic of the article? (*short phrases – code later*)

C.3a) Which of the below topic areas best describe the core topic? (*rank order, feel free to rank equally, rank zero if “Not applicable” to the article*)

1. \_\_\_ Protests
2. \_\_\_ War / Conflict
3. \_\_\_ Government
4. \_\_\_ Business
5. \_\_\_ NGO
6. \_\_\_ Environment
7. \_\_\_ Other

C.3b) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?

1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.

C.4a) What was the primary extractive industry covered in this article? (*rank order, feel free to rank equally, rank zero if “Not applicable” to the article*)

1. \_\_\_ Oil
2. \_\_\_ Natural Gas
3. \_\_\_ Coal
4. \_\_\_ Precious Metals (*specific*)
5. \_\_\_ Precious Gems (*specific*)
6. \_\_\_ All - about extractives in general
7. \_\_\_ Other (*specific*)

C.4b) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?

1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.

*If C4a is (4), (5), or (7), else code as “0 - Not applicable”:*

C.4c) Note the precious metal, gem, or other extractive industry covered.

C.5) How many words does the article contain? (*1 to N*)



C.6a) Is relevant background information regarding the core topic given so that it is well contextualized?

1. Yes, it is very well contextualized.
2. Yes, it is well contextualized.
3. No, it is not contextualized very well.
4. Almost no context is given.

C.6b) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?

1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.

C.7a) How long after the event in concern was the article published?

1. A month or less
2. 1 to 2 months
3. 2 to 3 months
4. 3 to 4 months
5. 4 to 5 months
6. 5 to 6 months
7. 6+ months

C.7b) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?

1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.

C.8a) How much jargon is used in the article?

1. No use of jargon.
2. A little use of jargon.
3. Significant use of jargon.
4. Jargon is spread all over the article.

C.8b) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?

1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.

C.9) Give examples of any jargon that was frequently used or central to understanding the article topic.

C.10a) Does the article accurately define the terms it uses?





1. Yes, all terms are accurately defined.
2. Yes, most terms are accurately defined.
3. No, some terms are not accurately defined.
4. No, terms are not accurately defined.

C.10b) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?

1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.

C.11) Are there factual mistakes in the text? (*open ended, a couple of sentences describing the mistake – to code later; note your confidence in each possible mistake. Mark as “98 - don’t know” if there are no mistakes that are apparent to you.*)

--- automate

C.12) How many times does an extractive industry keyword appear? (*defined as any of the terms from C.3 – we may want to change to marking this for the primary topic only – an automated check could be run on the word files if they’re done consistently*)

### Questions Regarding the Article’s Geography

G.1) Where was article posted from (*be as specific as possible, code any not known as “98 - Don’t know”*)?

- G.1a) Town/City:
- G.1b) State/Province:
- G.1c) Country:

G.2) Where did the central topic of this article take place (*be as specific as possible, code any not known as “98 - Don’t know” if the information isn’t supplied or “0 - Not applicable” if the type of story doesn’t take place at the given level of detail. For instance if it covers national oil politics without specific place references, code Town/City and State/Province as “0 - Not applicable”*)?

- G.2a) Town/City:
- G.2b) State/Province:
- G.2c) Country:

G.3a) Was the core topic of the article dealing with urban or rural issues?

1. Urban
2. Rural
3. Urban/Rural Interactions
4. No urban/rural focus.



G.3b) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?

1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.

G.4a) Which option best describes the location of the actor(s) (person/business/government/NGO) that the core topic addressed? (*rank order, where 1 represents the most central actor(s), ties are acceptable. Rank actor location as "0 - Not applicable" if the location does not appear in the article*)

1. Local actor.
2. National actor.
3. African actor.
4. Asian actor.
5. Australian actor.
6. European actor.
7. Oceania actor.
8. North American actor.
9. South American actor.
10. Other (*specify below*)

*If G4a is (10), else code as "0 - Not applicable":*

G.4b) Please specify the "other" actor location from G4a:

**Questions Regarding Article Bias**

B.1a) How much of an extractive industry slant do you think the article has? Rate this on a scale of 1 to 10, where:

1. Highly anti extractive industry.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
5. Slightly anti extractive industry.
6. Slightly pro extractive industry.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
10. Highly pro extractive industry.

- 
11. Purely factual information presented.
  12. Do not have enough context to gauge possible bias.

B.1b) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?



1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.

B.1c) What led you to believe the bias noted in B1a exists? (*short phrase*)

B.2a) How much of a pro-government slant do you think the article has? Rate this on a scale of 1 to 10, where:

1. Highly anti government.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
5. Slightly anti government.
6. Slightly pro government.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
10. Highly pro government.

- 
11. Purely factual information presented.
  12. Do not have enough context to gauge possible bias.

B.2b) How strongly do you feel that your selection above correctly conveys the information asked in the question?

1. Very strongly.
2. Strongly.
3. Somewhat strongly.
4. Not strongly.

B.2c) What led you to believe the bias noted in B2a exists? (*short phrase*)

B.3) Were there other strong biases that were not towards the government or extractive industries? List other biases in one or two phrases and denote how confident you are that the bias exists.

B.4) Is this article an Editorial/Op-Ed?

1. Yes
2. No



## APPENDIX II: SCALE CONSTRUCTION

### Source Diversity (scale 0-7, 1 point for each unique type of source)

S.3) What types of sources were used (*note number for all that apply*)

8. Business: \_\_\_\_
9. Government: \_\_\_\_
10. NGO: \_\_\_\_
11. University / Academic: \_\_\_\_
12. Man on the street: \_\_\_\_
13. Unknown / Anonymous: \_\_\_\_
14. Other (*note all that apply and number*)

### Source Quality (scale 0-9, 1 point for each higher quality rating in 3 questions below)

S.4a) How relevant to the article's central topic are the quotations?

5. Very relevant.
6. Relevant.
7. Somewhat irrelevant.
8. Irrelevant.

S.5a) How well does the article clarify sources backgrounds and potential biases?

5. Very well.
6. Somewhat well.
7. Somewhat badly.
8. Very badly.

S.6a) Are sources used in a balanced way, with one quotation on each side of the issue?

5. Very balanced.
6. Somewhat balanced.
7. Somewhat unbalanced.
8. Very unbalanced.

### Topic Coverage Quality (scale 0-9, 1 point for each higher quality rating in 3 questions below)

C.6a) Is relevant background information regarding the core topic given so that it is well contextualized?

5. Yes, it is very well contextualized.
6. Yes, it is well contextualized.
7. No, it is not contextualized very well.
8. Almost no context is given.

C.8a) How much jargon is used in the article?

5. No use of jargon.
6. A little use of jargon.
7. Significant use of jargon.
8. Jargon is spread all over the article.

C.10a) Does the article accurately define the terms it uses?



- 5. Yes, all terms are accurately defined.
- 6. Yes, most terms are accurately defined.
- 7. No, some terms are not accurately defined.
- 8. No, terms are not accurately defined.

**Article Bias (0-10 scale, 1 point for each move away from factual content in 2 questions below, individual pro/anti government and extractive scales also analyzed)**

B.1a) How much of an extractive industry slant do you think the article has? Rate this on a scale of 1 to 10, where:

- 4. Highly anti extractive industry.
- 5.
- 6.
- 10.
- 11. Slightly anti extractive industry.
- 12. Slightly pro extractive industry.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 13. Highly pro extractive industry.

- 
- 14. Purely factual information presented.
  - 15. Do not have enough context to gauge possible bias.

B.2a) How much of a pro-government slant do you think the article has? Rate this on a scale of 1 to 10, where:

- 4. Highly anti government.
- 5.
- 6.
- 5.
- 10. Slightly anti government.
- 11. Slightly pro government.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 13. Highly pro government.

- 
- 14. Purely factual information presented.
  - 15. Do not have enough context to gauge possible bias.



## APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW GUIDE

The purpose of our study is to examine the different factors that impact reporting on extractive industries in Ghana, Nigeria and Uganda. We are looking at a few principle factors including sourcing, balance, readership characteristics and the resources necessary for quality journalism. The following questions are designed to examine the degree to which you experience the impact of these factors in your work.

Please feel free to add your own thoughts on any of the questions. Any additional input you can provide us with is much appreciated. Also, feel free to stop me and ask any questions should you feel the need.

Opening questions:

Following a lead:

1. What types of events inspire a story? (News events covered by competitors, official press releases or speeches, local events, editor requests, etc.)
2. From what sources do you typically get a lead? Are they press releases or speeches from the government, private industry, NGOs, etc? Are sources for these leads typically local or foreign? Do you get more leads from one type of source versus another? Is the lead being picked up through official (conference or press release) or unofficial (friendly phone call) communication?
3. Does the newspaper create features, not based on a specific news event, but that have to do with an important issue? Which elements make a particular item newsworthy?
4. Could you walk me through the process? Let's say that your editor provides you with a particular news event or topic to cover. What do you first do with that information? And after that?

Assigning a journalist:

1. How are reporters assigned to cover news events related to the extractive industries?
2. Do journalists tend to specialize or do they cover multiple beats? Is certain business or technical training desired from those journalists who will cover business or energy stories?

Sourcing a story:

1. How do you go about selecting sources to develop your story?



2. Which do you think make the most credible sources? (Government officials, industry experts, academics, average citizens, etc.) Do you remember an instance in which finding proper sources was difficult? What did you do?
3. Do you ever use sources who wish to remain anonymous?
4. How do you go about contacting sources to develop your story? How many sources do you use for an article on average?
5. Do have regular sources that you rely on? If so, in what communities are they? (business, academic, NGOs or local officials in regions affected by the extractives)
6. Do sources ever object to your reporting? Have they ever expressed disapproval of something you have written either explicitly or implicitly? How?
7. Are journalists ever taken out to dinner, or offered gifts by their sources?
8. Are advertisers ever the source for a news event or article? Do you feel pressure to respond to advertiser sources differently than others?
9. Do oil or mining companies advertise in the paper?
10. Have the companies, whether advertisers or not, ever expressed disapproval of something published in the paper, either explicitly or implicitly? How?

#### Writing a story:

1. How do you begin to tell a story? (Explaining the potential impact of an event on readers, beginning with accounts from the actors, giving background information, etc.)
2. How important is it for you to provide balance when covering the stories relating to the extractive industry? Can you remember a time when achieving balance in an article was difficult? What were the circumstances that made it difficult?

#### Importance of extractives reporting

1. How important do you believe it is for your paper to cover events related to extractives compared to other events happening in the country as well as internationally?
2. Is there anything that makes stories about extractives particularly difficult to cover? (Lack of qualified sources, access, transparency, etc.)
3. How might some of these obstacles be overcome in your opinion?

#### Questions related to content analysis findings:

##### Use of technical terms in articles related to extractive industries

1. How well versed would you say the “average reader” of your paper is in business terminology? (Items related to stock and commodities trading, pricing, etc.)
2. Some business terminology found in articles we surveyed included: *white products, international norms of project classification categories A and B,*



- upstream versus downstream firms and warehoused or unsubscribed shares.* In your opinion, would “average readers” require additional explanation of these terms?
3. Are “average readers” the intended audience for articles related to the extractive industries? Or would the audience for these articles be a particular group of readers different from “average readers”?

#### Paper organization and management styles

1. How is the paper structured in terms of departments? How many journalists work at a particular desk or cover a certain beat at the paper?
2. Walk me through the process of submitting a story for publication? Who would review your work before its publication?
3. How would you describe your management style or the style of your direct superior or editor? Would a different management style appeal more to you?
4. How might the organizational structure of the paper be improved to facilitate your work?

#### Other quantitative/qualitative data collection:

1. How many journalists work at your paper?
2. How many editors? Other staff?
3. How many are assigned to cover extractives-related events?
4. Do you feel journalists have sufficient resources to report on events related to the extractive industries?
5. Do you feel there are sufficient opportunities for journalists to report on events related to the extractive industries?

Thank you very much for taking the time to participate in the interview. Please feel free to make any additional comments about your work and how you see the role journalism in your country’s development.





## APPENDIX IV: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	NAME	POSITION	PUBLICATION
1/5/09	3PM	John Osadolor	New Editor	Business Day
1/5/09	3PM	Blessing Anaro	Business Editor	Business Day
1/5/09	3PM	Austin Imhonlele	Assistant Editor (Real Sector -- Energy)	Business Day
1/5/09	3PM	Dr.Abimbola Agboluaje	Director of Strategy	Business Day
1/5/09	3PM	Funke Adetutu	Arts and Style Editor	Business Day
1/7/09	11AM	Ibrahim Yusuf	Sunday Business Editor	The Nation
1/7/09	3PM	Steve Ayurinde	Editor	Punch
1/7/09	8pm	Anthony Osaebrown	Formerly Business/Banking reporter at Business Day,	Business Day
1/8/09	10AM	Adeola Yusuf	Energy Editor	Daily Independent
1/8/09	10AM	Rotimi Durojaiye	Group Business Editor	Daily Independent
1/8/09	4PM	Ejiofor Alike	Energy Correspondant	This Day
1/8/09	4pm	Ayodele Aminu	Group Business Editor	This Day
1/8/09	6PM	Akinlolu Oluwamuyiwa	Online Editor	The Guardian
1/10/09	4PM	Thomas Imonikhe	News Editor	Daily Champion
1/10/09	4PM	Sophrncai Onwura	Energy Editor	Daily Champion
1/12/10	10AM	Frederick Asiamah	Business Writer	Public Agenda
1/12/10	2PM	Daniel Nonor Owona	Business/Energy Writer	Daily Chronicle
1/13/10	11AM	Charles Nixon Yeboah	Asst. Business Editor	Daily Guide Business Guide
1/14/10	10AM	Albert Sam	Public Affairs	Daily Graphic



			<b>Manager</b>	
1/14/10	11:30AM	Jonathon Adams	Acting Editor	The Ghanaian Observer
1/14/10	2PM	Lucy Baagyei-danso	General Reporter	The New Crusading Guide
1/14/10	3:30PM	Ben Ephson	Editor	The Daily Dispatch
1/15/10	9AM	Alhaji-Abdul-Rahman Harruna Attah	Managing Editor/Owner	Daily Mail
1/15/10	2PM	Edward Mingle	Business Writer	Ghanaian Times
1/16/10	1PM	Daniel Tettah	Editor in Chief	Daily Graphic