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A COMPARISON OF UNITED STATES NETWORK TELEVISION  
NEWS COVERAGE OF SUB-SAHARA AFRICA BEFORE  
AND AFTER THE 1975-76 ANGOLA CONFLICT

THESIS

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The proposition that American network television news coverage of sub-Sahara Africa increased substantially after the 1975-76 Angola conflict is examined in this study of the responsiveness of television to changing news values at the international level.

News coverage for two thirty-month periods before and after the Angola conflict is compared using data derived from the Television News Index and Abstracts.

The study finds that network news coverage of sub-Sahara Africa increased from 0.36 per cent of total news time before the Angola conflict to 4.46 per cent after, indicating that network news coverage is a reflection of the intensity of United States government activity at the international level.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The flow of international news has traditionally revolved "around the Northern Hemisphere on an East-West axis between the great news centers of New York, London, Paris, Moscow, and Tokyo," William Hachten, University of Wisconsin journalism professor, wrote in 1971 (3, p. 51). But the changing structure of international relations in the era following the Arab oil embargo of 1973 underscores the question of embracing within this news gathering system the emergence of world regions once regarded as remote and lacking news value.

Political schisms in post-independent sub-Saharan Africa were, for nearly two decades, generally regarded as lacking international significance. As far as global affairs were concerned, Africa was considered a powerless continent. Though certain sporadic outbursts such as the Congo crises of the early 1960's tended to raise international questions, for the most part, Africa was far removed from the global political arena.

It was not until 1975 that Africa was to throw its full weight into global politics, occasioned by the civil war in

the former Portuguese colony of Angola. Since then, the continent has maintained a center-stage position in international affairs.

Of particular significance was the Angolan debacle, which "with its undertones of an East-West confrontation, suddenly launched Africa in general into the American consciousness," (15, p. 97) transforming United States foreign policy in Africa by 1976 from one of low priority to one of principal concern (2, p. 142). United States Senator Dick Clark of Iowa wrote: "Once a continent with little international prominence, Africa now occupies a central focus among key foreign policy concerns" (1, p. vii).

Conflict in the region of southern Africa, where decolonization was a thorny issue, became the eventual highlight of African affairs. Portugal's continued colonization of African territories, and the sustenance of white minority-rule governments in Rhodesia and South Africa created an escalating guerrilla war which was to have worldwide implications.

It was the continuing southern Africa situation that finally propelled Africa into the global picture, after Portugal's departure from Angola--its last African foothold--brought on a power struggle in the African nation. The ensuing civil war introduced a new element in the region: the military intervention of an estimated 13,000-member Soviet-equipped Cuban force, a development that signaled a new worldwide strategic balance (8, p. 189). For the United States,

the aftermath of Angola, the victory of the Cuban-backed faction and the threat of increasing Soviet activity in the region meant the collapse of its African policy.

Jennifer Seymour Whitaker, associate editor of Foreign Affairs and a specialist on Africa at the Council on Foreign Relations, wrote of the disruption of the regional status quo:

Belatedly, the United States tried to influence the power struggle in Angola by covertly backing a guerrilla movement opposing one aided by the Soviets. Congressional rejection of that stratagem and wholesale African endorsement of the Soviet- and Cuban-backed group after South Africa's intervention on behalf of the U.S.-backed faction led to a broad review of African policy within the administration (17, pp. 2-3).

Thus, as of April 1976, United States Secretary of State Henry Kissinger officially initiated an Africa policy that represented a tilt away from the minority regimes in Rhodesia and South Africa, and an effort to maximize American influence on the continent (17, p. 3). So ended an era of indifference to events in Africa as the Carter administration speedily elevated Africa to an unprecedented policy priority (6, p. 32).

In light of these developments, Africa had suddenly become important news to the Western news media (7, p. 84). This was not without problems, as was articulated in Africa magazine:

Up until the civil war in Angola, the African continent was a backwater in as far as the American media was [sic] concerned. Very few American newspapers and news agencies had permanent presence in Africa: coverage of African news was for the most

part, limited to either resourceful freelance journalists who had special interest in African affairs or the occasional reporter who was dispatched to cover some specific event. Even then, in terms of journalism, Africa was the source of "colour" and stories tailored to confirm the average American's view of the continent as a land sandwiched somewhere between the recesses of history and Coca-Cola. The rhythm of African politics and its bearing on world affairs was something that was far from American consciousness.

In terms of radio and television, there was simply no American presence in Africa, save the statutory Voice of America radio correspondents.

Many American TV producers and executives have been reluctant or reticent to send out journalists to Africa, let alone establish a presence (15, p. 96).

Though foreign news is generally regarded as secondary to domestic news in the American news media, growing global interdependence tends to cast new dimensions on news selection criteria. "As the world has been drawn closer together in the physical realm," an International Press Institute study stated, "political schisms at any point have taken on importance all around the globe. Foreign news is less 'foreign' in its influence on people's lives" (5, p. 7).

Hachten, a scholar of the African mass media, wrote:

The foreign correspondent's role in Africa's modern history and its relations with the outside world is pivotal because, more so than in other places, the report of the event can be as important as the event itself. The attitudes and understanding of Westerners about Africa have been shaped to a great extent by what the press has told them about Africa (3, p. 75).

Mort Rosenblum of The Associated Press said Western coverage of Africa and the Third World as a whole is heavily laden with problems that should be considered



with circumspection, within the framework of a severely limited international news gathering system. He wrote:

What is commonly referred to as the world flow of information is more of a series of trickles and spurts. News is moved across borders by surprisingly thin networks of correspondents for various types of news organizations with widely disparate purposes. Some correspondents, such as those working for television and most newspapers, report back to media in their own countries, and they approach the news from the viewpoint of specific readers and viewers. Others report to agencies which distribute their dispatches regionally or globally, or to internationally circulated magazines, and they attempt to achieve a more universal outlook, including details of interest to readers from many countries (12, p. 187).

A 1969 survey by Ralph E. Kliesch showed that of 1,462 newsmen representing American news media abroad, 793 were in Europe, and they were most likely to be found in London, Paris, Rome, Berlin, and Frankfurt; 332 were in Asia and Australia; 169 in Latin America and Canada; 92 in Africa; and 76 in the Middle East (3, p. 53). Of the total, 563 were full-time correspondents, others being part-time reporters or "stringers" (12, pp. 819-820). Of the 92 newsmen assigned to all of Africa, 24 were staff or full-time correspondents (3, p. 53).

The Overseas Press Club (of New York) directory of correspondents listed 429 full-time American correspondents abroad in 1975, of which 231 were based in 19 European countries (12, pp. 819-820). That year eight American correspondents were based in Africa operating from four of the continent's more than fifty countries (13, p. 24).

Much of what Americans know about the world in which they live is provided through television news programs (10, p. 112). It is through the eyes of the journalist and the television camera that the average American perceives events in far away places. Studies have shown television to be the most credible medium of information in the United States. In this regard, the three major American television networks--American Broadcasting Company (ABC), Columbia Broadcasting System (CBS), and National Broadcasting Company (NBC)--play a part in the formation of public opinion.

In line with the old notion that Africa was of no consequence to the American public, to whom the networks are answerable for audience ratings and advertising revenue, ABC, CBS, and NBC had little or no presence in Africa prior to Angola. Their news coverage of Africa was limited to exotic and superficial crises (16, p. 75).

Therefore, Africa's sudden emergence in the center of international affairs posed baffling problems for television news, and all three networks agree that there is a need to establish permanent news bureaus on the continent (14, p. 8).

NBC News Vice President Dick Fischer said, "The extent of our African coverage has quadrupled. Until recently, we had sort of ignored Africa; not intentionally, but because of the difficulty of doing what we do" (14, pp. 5-8).

CBS News became the first network to implement the new strategy in January, 1977, when it opened a permanent bureau in Nairobi, Kenya.

Despite problems of access, travel and communication across a continent four times the size of the United States, the three networks made efforts to improve news coverage of Africa in the aftermath of the 1975-76 Angola conflict.

#### Statement of the Problem

Did news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa by the three American television networks increase in the aftermath of the 1975-76 Angola conflict?

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was

1. To determine the percentage of news time devoted to sub-Saharan Africa by ABC, CBS, and NBC before and after the Angola conflict.
2. To determine the percentage of sub-Saharan Africa news time devoted to each of the four geographical regions of sub-Saharan Africa by ABC, CBS, and NBC before and after the Angola conflict.
3. To determine the categories of news stories on sub-Saharan Africa reported by ABC, CBS, and NBC before and after the Angola conflict.
4. To determine the categories of news stories reported for each of the four geographical regions of sub-Saharan

Africa by ABC, CBS, and NBC before and after the Angola conflict.

5. To determine what differences there were, if any, in the news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa by ABC, CBS, and NBC before and after the Angola conflict.

#### Research Questions

With reference to the nationwide evening news programs (ABC "World News Tonight," CBS "Evening News," and NBC "Nightly News," or their nominal equivalents between 1973 and 1978) broadcast on weeknights before and after the Angola conflict, the following questions were raised:

1. Did the three networks devote more news time to sub-Saharan Africa after the Angola conflict?

2. Did any one region of sub-Saharan Africa receive more network news coverage than the other three regions after the Angola conflict?

3. Did network news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa consist of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict?

4. Did network news coverage of each of the four regions of sub-Saharan Africa consist of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict?

5. Did network news coverage of sub-Saharan African countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia increase after the Angola conflict?

6. (a) Did CBS devote more news time to sub-Saharan Africa, compared with ABC and NBC, after the Angola conflict?

(b) Did CBS devote more news time to any one region of sub-Saharan Africa than to the other three regions, compared with ABC and NBC, after the Angola conflict?

(c) Did CBS news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa consist of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage?

(d) Did CBS news coverage of each of the four regions of sub-Saharan Africa consist of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage?

(e) Did CBS news coverage of sub-Saharan African countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia increase after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage?

#### Methodology

This study compared data obtained from Television News Index and Abstracts for two 30-month periods representative of news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa before and after the Angola conflict of 1975-76.

The Vanderbilt Television News Archive in Nashville, Tennessee, publishes the Television News Index and Abstracts, which are printed abstracts of the nationwide evening newscasts on ABC, CBS, and NBC. These abstracts, complete with

an index, consist of summaries of each news item including the origin, subject matter, length of each story, and advertising time.

The two periods under study were from January 1, 1973 to June 30, 1975 (30 months representing the pre-Angola era) and July 1, 1976 to December 31, 1978 (30 months representing the post-Angola era). The 12-month interval between the two periods was excluded from the study because it marks the highpoint of the Angola conflict, and would not be representative of the normal level of news coverage.

Selecting every seventh week within each period, beginning with the first week of January, 1973, and July, 1976, respectively, gave a sample of 19 weeks per period. The evening newscasts on Monday through Friday of each of the selected weeks were studied for the three networks, giving a total of 95 newscasts per network per period.

By reading the relevant pages in the Television News Index and Abstracts for each newscast in the sample, the following information was extracted:

1. The day, date, month, and year of the newscast.
2. The subject matter of each sub-Saharan Africa news item.
3. The network reporting the news item.
4. The geographical area of sub-Saharan Africa that the news item primarily referred to, as well as the African nation concerned primarily.

5. The news category that best described the news item, as determined from the topic of the news item and the information given in the abstract about what was reported.

6. The total amount of time devoted to news (excluding commercial breaks) on the newscast in which the sub-Saharan Africa news item was reported.

7. The amount of time allotted to the news item. In cases where two or more stories were lumped and reported briefly, the abstracts did not give the time duration for each individual story in the group. To arrive at the individual time duration for each of such stories in the group, the average of the total time spent on all the stories in the group was taken.

The above steps were repeated for every sub-Saharan Africa news item in the sample.

For each period and for each network, the following totals were derived from the results of the preceding procedures:

1. The total amount of time devoted to news of sub-Saharan Africa.
2. The total amount of time devoted to news in general.
3. The total amount of time devoted to each news category for sub-Saharan Africa news.
4. The total amount of time devoted to each of the four geographical regions of sub-Saharan Africa.

To answer the research questions, the following percentages were calculated from the preceding totals:

1. The percentage of the total news time devoted to news of sub-Saharan Africa by each network in each study period.

2. The percentage of sub-Saharan Africa news time devoted to the central, eastern, southern, and western regions of the area for each network in each study period.

3. The percentage of sub-Saharan Africa news time devoted to each of the news categories under study, by each network in each study period.

4. The percentage of sub-Saharan Africa news time devoted to each of the four regions of the area, for each news category under study, by each network in each study period.

5. The percentage of sub-Saharan Africa news time devoted to news of countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia by each network in each study period.

#### Definition of Terms

The following definitions were adapted from a study of "The Flow of the News," conducted by the International Press Institute (5). They were used in coding news categories. Some of the definitions were modified to suit this study. Some of the terms were grouped as in the study of "Five Years of Foreign News on U.S. Television Evening Newscasts" by Al Hester (4, p. 88).



1. Accident and disaster news: News of events other than war resulting in death or large-scale destruction of property.
2. Cultural news: News of the fine arts, and news of entertainment (film, music) except trivia about the entertainers and their production classified as human interest.
3. Economic news: News from a country about that country's economic life and the economic life of its citizens, dealing with the management of the affairs of a government or community, private industry or company, with reference to its sources of income, expenditures and so on.
4. Education, health, science and technical news: News of medical and scientific developments and discoveries in any field, and news of education.
5. Foreign Relations news: Political news involving the relations of the country from which the news originates with one or more other countries.
6. Human Interest news: News of a wide variety of feature material on oddities in nature and human temperament, personalities and celebrities, amusement and so on.
7. Military and defense news: News from a country about its defense forces and the efforts required to sustain them, and occupation forces abroad not necessarily engaged in war.
8. Miscellaneous news: News not defined by any of the other news categories under study.

9. Political news: News having primary emphasis on the domestic policies of the country from which the news originates.

10. Sports news: News of sporting events that may or may not be a political issue.

The use of the term sub-Sahara Africa in this study refers to all African countries south of the Sahara Desert: those south of an imaginary line running across the continent from the northernmost tip of Senegal to the northernmost tip of Ethiopia. The following countries within the given geographical regions constitute sub-Sahara Africa:

1. Central Africa: Burundi; Central Africa Republic; Congo; Gabon; Rwanda; Zaire.

2. East Africa: Djibouti; Ethiopia; Kenya; Somalia; Tanzania; Uganda.

3. Southern Africa: Angola; Botswana; Lesotho; Malawi; Mozambique; Namibia; Rhodesia; South Africa (Republic); Swaziland; Zambia.

4. West Africa: Benin (Republic); Cameroon; Cape Verde; Chad; Equatorial Guinea; Gambia; Ghana; Guinea-Bissau; Ivory Coast; Liberia; Mali; Niger; Nigeria; Sao Tome and Principe; Senegal; Sierra Leone; Togo; Upper Volta.

5. Unclassified: Comoro Islands; Malagasy; Mauritius; Seychelles.

#### Limitations of the Study

This study involved only countries of sub-Sahara Africa, considering that most of the African developments that changed

the status of the continent in global politics took place in Africa south of the Sahara. Besides, most of the African countries in the northernmost portion of the continent are usually grouped with the Arab world.

Since this study was based on the Television News Index and Abstracts, visual presentation of the news was not considered. In the absence of videotape recordings or actual broadcast scripts, which were not readily available, this study dealt strictly with information that could be derived from the Television News Index and Abstracts.

Only the three major commercial networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC, were under study because they dominate the broadcasting establishment in the United States. Their particular programming under study were the major evening newscasts seen nationwide every weeknight (Monday to Friday) by 56.3 million Americans (11, p. 65). They were ABC's "World News Tonight," CBS' "Evening News," and NBC's "Nightly News." These programs are not seen nationwide on weekends (Saturday and Sunday).

#### Significance of the Study

The significance of the study lies in its indication of how the television news media respond to changing news values at the international level, in this case Africa's emergence at the center of international events.

It was important to study what Americans are being told about Africa at a time when the continent is vital to overall

United States foreign policy. This study indicates the government-news media interface in the area of foreign affairs. For example, did the television news media in the United States tilt away from news coverage of the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia as these two countries became less important to overall American interests in Africa, after the 1976 shift in United States policy? Quite clearly, American news media are independent of the government, but in so far as the news media act as a watchdog of government there should be an overlap of what the news media report about government.

This study provides empirical documentation for the television networks of how they perform in reporting an area of the world that has been uniquely difficult for Western journalists to cover.

The findings from this study increase the body of knowledge regarding the flow of news across national boundaries at a time when international relations have become more important than ever.

#### Review of Literature

In a 1967 study, "TV Coverage of International Affairs," Malcolm Warner analyzed ABC, CBS, and NBC programs between 5 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. during June and much of July, 1967, and studied documentary programs broadcast during 1964-67 (16). Warner's sample of network news showed 65 per cent of total news time was devoted to foreign affairs coverage, slightly

higher than normal since the Middle East dominated foreign news in June 1967. Twenty-nine per cent of total news time and 46 per cent of all foreign affairs coverage was either in segments or news bulletins or as background in entertainment programs.

His study of twenty-five documentaries showed that the average documentary is supportive of United States foreign policy and that there is limited and superficial attention to international affairs in general and developing nations in particular. Warner concluded:

For foreign affairs to play a larger part on evening TV news, either new and more gripping methods of presentation will have to be found or the decision makers in the networks will have to be persuaded to broaden their present criteria for selection (16, p. 75).

John A. Lent and Shanti Rao studied news flow in 1977 (9). By studying the New York Times, Washington Post, and Newsweek, and ABC News, Lent and Rao determined the amount of Asian news available to an American and the types of news presented during a six-day period.

All Asian news and information in the six-day period were coded into three categories: developmental, political-government and crisis-trivia.

The researchers found that the New York Times devoted 4.1 per cent of its total news space to Asian news-information; Washington Post devoted 4.6 per cent of its total news space to Asian news-information; Newsweek devoted 7.6 per cent

of its total news space to Asian news-information; and ABC News devoted 8.5 per cent of total news time to Asian news-information.

Lent and Rao concluded that the American reader/viewer did not get a very broad perspective on Asia and that there was an emphasis on political-government and crisis-trivia news rather than on developmental news. They wrote,

All four media used large percentage (ranging from 37.1 per cent to 82.5 per cent) of news that had implications for United States domestic and foreign policy, giving the impression that had the ties with the United States been missing, some of these stories may have gone unreported or may have been deemphasized (9, p. 22).

Al Hester, in a 1978 study of foreign news broadcast by the three television networks from 1972 to 1976, used the Television News Index and Abstracts to determine how much foreign news is made available by the networks, what subjects are covered, and what parts of the world are emphasized (4).

The sample in Hester's study was one newscast per month per network from 1972 to 1976. News items reported from outside the United States were coded by nation of origin and geographical area concerned.

Hester found that an average of 21.7 per cent of the total news time was devoted to foreign news. News from Western Europe accounted for 28.8 per cent of the total foreign news time; Indo-China, 26.3 per cent; Middle East, 19.1 per cent; Africa, 6.5 per cent; Eastern Europe, 4.8 per cent; Latin America, 3.3 per cent; and international bodies or agencies, 5.4 per cent.

The study indicated a high emphasis was placed on foreign news stories dealing with military-defense matters and portions of the globe were unreported. Hester concluded, "U.S. television evening newscasts do not seem to be presenting any thorough and balanced picture of the world to viewers, either in subjects treated or in news from the various parts of the globe" (4, p. 95).

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## CHAPTER II

### PRESENTATION OF DATA

Two 30-month periods from January 1, 1973 to June 30, 1975 (pre-Angola era), and from July 1, 1976 to December 31, 1978 (post-Angola era), were studied and the three networks were compared for their news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa before and after the Angola conflict of 1975-76. The data presented in this chapter are based on two 19-week samples drawn from the two periods. The two samples consisted of 285 pre-Angola and 285 post-Angola newscasts (95 from each network in each period).

#### News Time Allotted to Sub-Saharan Africa

During the pre-Angola period under study, the three networks devoted a total of 6,504 minutes and 20 seconds to news coverage: ABC, 2,112 minutes and 30 seconds; CBS, 2,217 minutes; and NBC, 2,174 minutes and 50 seconds. The three networks devoted a total of 23 minutes and 35 seconds to sub-Saharan Africa news: ABC, 8 minutes and 30 seconds; CBS, 8 minutes and 20 seconds; and NBC, 6 minutes and 45 seconds (see Table I).

Thus, the news time allotted to sub-Saharan Africa in the pre-Angola period under study represented 0.36 per cent of the total network news time.

During the post-Angola period under study, the three networks devoted a total of 6,411 minutes and 40 seconds to news coverage: ABC, 2,098 minutes; CBS, 2,203 minutes; and NBC, 2,110 minutes and 40 seconds. The three networks devoted a total of 287 minutes and 4 seconds to sub-Saharan Africa news: ABC, 96 minutes and 48 seconds; CBS, 116 minutes and 32 seconds; and NBC, 73 minutes and 44 seconds (see Table I).

Thus, the news time allotted to sub-Saharan Africa in the post-Angola period under study represented 4.46 per cent of total network news time.

TABLE I  
NEWS TIME DEVOTED TO SUB-SAHARA  
AFRICA BY EACH NETWORK

Network	Time (Minutes, Seconds) Devoted to Sub-Saharan Africa	
	1973-75	1976-78
ABC	8:30	96:48
CBS	8:20	116:32
NBC	6:45	73:44

Research Question 1: Did the three networks devote more news time to sub-Saharan Africa after the Angola conflict?

Finding: The three networks devoted more news time to sub-Saharan Africa after the Angola conflict; the percentage of coverage increased from 0.36 per cent of total news time before the Angola conflict to 4.46 per cent of total news time after the Angola conflict.

#### News Time Allotted to Sub-Saharan Africa by Region

##### Central Africa

Of the amount of news time allotted to sub-Saharan Africa, the three networks devoted no time to central Africa in the pre-Angola period under study and devoted 26.52 per cent to central Africa in the post-Angola period under study (see Table II).

##### East Africa

Of the amount of news time allotted to sub-Saharan Africa, the three networks devoted 67.29 per cent to east Africa in the pre-Angola period under study and devoted 27.51 per cent to east Africa in the post-Angola period under study (see Table II).

##### Southern Africa

Of the amount of news time allotted to sub-Saharan Africa, the three networks devoted 24.73 per cent to southern Africa in the pre-Angola period under study and devoted 42.44 per cent to southern Africa in the post-Angola period under study (see Table II).

West Africa

Of the amount of news time allotted to sub-Saharan Africa, the three networks devoted 7.97 per cent to west Africa in the pre-Angola period under study and devoted 3.53 per cent to west Africa in the post-Angola period under study (see Table II).

Research Question 2: Did any one region of sub-Saharan Africa receive more network news coverage than the other three regions after the Angola conflict?

Finding: Whereas east Africa received the most network news coverage before the Angola conflict, southern Africa received the most network news coverage after the Angola conflict.

TABLE II

PERCENTAGE OF SUB-SAHARA AFRICA NEWS TIME DEVOTED  
TO CENTRAL, EAST, SOUTHERN, AND WEST AFRICA  
BY EACH NETWORK

Region	Network	Percentage of Sub-Saharan Africa News Time for Each Region	
		1973-75	1976-78
Central	ABC	-	26.95
	CBS	-	27.53
	NBC	-	25.09
East	ABC	55.88	32.33
	CBS	46.00	26.67
	NBC	100.00	23.53

TABLE II--Continued

Region	Network	Percentage of Sub-Sahara Africa News Time for Each Region	
		1973-75	1976-78
Southern	ABC	40.20	36.07
	CBS	34.00	43.36
	NBC	-	47.88
West	ABC	3.92	4.65
	CBS	20.00	2.43
	NBC	-	3.50

#### Sub-Sahara Africa News Categories

Of the amount of news time allotted to sub-Sahara Africa in the pre-Angola period under study, the three networks devoted 27.28 per cent to accident and disaster news, 5.33 per cent to cultural news, 27.43 per cent to foreign relations news, 8.67 per cent to human interest news, 17.73 per cent to political news, 1.33 per cent to sports news, and 15.64 per cent to miscellaneous news. The networks devoted no time to economic news, education, health, science and technical news, and military and defense news in the pre-Angola period.

Of the amount of news time allotted to sub-Sahara Africa in the post-Angola period under study, the three networks devoted 0.45 per cent to accident and disaster news, 3.47 per cent to economic news, 1.29 per cent to education, health, science and technical news, 32.18 per cent to foreign relations news, 0.49 per cent to human interest news, 37.01 per

cent to military and defense news, 21.11 per cent to political news, 1.26 per cent to sports news, and 2.65 per cent to miscellaneous news. The networks devoted no time to cultural news in the post-Angola period.

Therefore, whereas the three networks covered seven categories of sub-Sahara Africa news in the pre-Angola period, nine categories were covered in the post-Angola period as shown in Table III.

TABLE III

PERCENTAGE OF SUB-SAHARA AFRICA NEWS TIME DEVOTED TO EACH NEWS CATEGORY BY EACH NETWORK

News Category	Network	Percentage of Sub-Sahara Africa News Time for Each News Category	
		1973-75	1976-78
Accident/ Disaster	ABC	29.41	0.34
	CBS	8.00	1.00
	NBC	44.00	-
Cultural	ABC	-	-
	CBS	16.00	-
	NBC	-	-
Economic	ABC	-	2.07
	CBS	-	2.00
	NBC	-	6.33
Education/ Health/ Science/ Technical	ABC	-	-
	CBS	-	3.86
	NBC	-	-

TABLE III--Continued

News Category	Network	Percentage of Sub-Sahara Africa News Time for Each News Category	
		1973-75	1976-78
Foreign Relations	ABC	70.59	37.41
	CBS	8.00	27.96
	NBC	3.70	31.17
Human Interest	ABC	-	0.34
	CBS	26.00	1.14
	NBC	-	-
Military/ Defense	ABC	-	41.24
	CBS	-	36.61
	NBC	-	33.18
Political	ABC	-	16.29
	CBS	38.00	22.41
	NBC	-	24.64
Sports	ABC	-	0.17
	CBS	4.00	2.72
	NBC	-	0.90
Miscellaneous	ABC	-	1.89
	CBS	-	2.29
	NBC	46.91	3.77

Research Question 3: Did network news coverage of sub-Sahara Africa consist of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict?



Finding: Network news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa after the Angola conflict consisted of a greater variety of news categories than before the Angola conflict.

#### Sub-Saharan Africa News Categories By Region

##### Central Africa

In the pre-Angola period under study, the three networks did not report news of central Africa.

In the post-Angola period, economic news accounted for 8.75 per cent of network news from central Africa; education, health, science, and technical news, 4.68 per cent; foreign relations news, 3.18 per cent; and military and defense news, 83.42 per cent (see Table IV).

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGE OF CENTRAL AFRICA NEWS TIME DEVOTED  
TO EACH NEWS CATEGORY BY EACH NETWORK

News Category	Network	Percentage of Central Africa News Time for Each News Category	
		1973-75	1976-68
Economic	ABC	-	-
	CBS	-	1.04
	NBC	-	25.23
Education/ Health/ Science/ Technical	ABC	-	-
	CBS	-	14.03
	NBC	-	-

TABLE IV--Continued

News Category	Network	Percentage of Central Africa News Time for Each News Category*	
		1973-75	1976-78
Foreign Relations	ABC	-	-
	CBS	-	-
	NBC	-	9.55
Military/ Defense	ABC	-	100.00
	CBS	-	84.93
	NBC	-	65.32

\*For Central Africa, accident and disaster news, cultural news, human interest news, political news, sports news, and miscellaneous news were not reported in the periods under study.

#### East Africa

In the pre-Angola period under study, accident and disaster news accounted for 38.15 per cent of network news from east Africa; foreign relations news, 17.03 per cent; political news, 29.18 per cent; and miscellaneous news, 15.64 per cent.

In the post-Angola period, accident and disaster news accounted for 1.43 per cent of network news from east Africa; economic news, 2.15 per cent; foreign relations news, 72.29 per cent; human interest news, 0.35 per cent; military and defense news, 12.98 per cent; political news, 0.64 per cent;

sports news, 0.18 per cent; and miscellaneous news, 9.98 per cent (see Table V).

TABLE V  
PERCENTAGE OF EAST AFRICA NEWS TIME DEVOTED  
TO EACH NEWS CATEGORY BY EACH NETWORK

News Category	Network	Percentage of East Africa News Time for Each News Category	
		1973-75	1976-78
Accident/ Disaster	ABC	52.63	1.06
	CBS	17.39	3.22
	NBC	44.44	-
Economic	ABC	-	-
	CBS	-	6.44
	NBC	-	-
Foreign Relations	ABC	47.37	73.38
	CBS	-	64.34
	NBC	3.70	79.15
Human Interest	ABC	-	1.06
	CBS	-	-
	NBC	-	-
Military/ Defense	ABC	-	18.10
	CBS	-	17.96
	NBC	-	2.88
Political	ABC	-	-
	CBS	82.61	-
	NBC	4.94	1.92

TABLE V--Continued

News Category	Network	Percentage of East Africa News Time for Each News Category*	
		1973-75	1976-78
Sports	ABC	-	0.53
	CBS	-	-
	NBC	-	-
Miscellaneous	ABC	-	5.86
	CBS	-	8.04
	NBC	-	16.04

\*For East Africa, cultural news, education, health, science and technical news were not reported in the periods under study.

#### Southern Africa

In the pre-Angola period under study, foreign relations news accounted for 55.88 per cent of network news from southern Africa; human interest news, 38.24 per cent; and sports news, 5.88 per cent.

In the post-Angola period, economic news accounted for 1.91 per cent of network news from southern Africa; foreign relations, 19.88 per cent; human interest news, 0.88 per cent; military and defense news, 25.52 per cent; political news, 49.07 per cent; and sports news, 2.39 per cent (see Table VI).

TABLE VI

PERCENTAGE OF SOUTHERN AFRICA NEWS TIME DEVOTED  
TO EACH NEWS CATEGORY BY EACH NETWORK

News Category	Network	Percentage of Southern Africa News Time for Each News Category*	
		1973-75	1976-78
Economic	ABC	-	5.73
	CBS	-	-
	NBC	-	-
Foreign Relations	ABC	100.00	26.01
	CBS	11.76	20.01
	NBC	-	13.93
Human Interest	ABC	-	-
	CBS	76.47	2.65
	NBC	-	-
Military/ Defense	ABC	-	23.39
	CBS	-	19.52
	NBC	-	33.66
Political	ABC	-	44.87
	CBS	-	51.83
	NBC	-	50.52
Sports	ABC	-	-
	CBS	11.76	5.29
	NBC	-	1.89

\*For Southern Africa, accident and disaster news, cultural news, education, health, science and technical news, and miscellaneous news were not reported in the periods under study.

### West Africa

In the pre-Angola period under study, cultural news accounted for 40 per cent of network news from west Africa; and foreign relations news, 60 per cent.

In the post-Angola period, accident and disaster news accounted for 1.96 per cent; foreign relations news, 96.08 per cent; and miscellaneous news, 1.96 per cent (see Table VII).

Therefore, the three networks covered no categories of central Africa news in the pre-Angola period, and four categories of central Africa news in the post-Angola period. For east Africa, the three networks covered three news categories in the pre-Angola period and eight news categories in the post-Angola period. For southern Africa, the three networks covered three news categories in the pre-Angola period and five news categories in the post-Angola period. For west Africa, the three networks covered no news categories in the pre-Angola period and four news categories in the post-Angola period.

Research Question 4: Did network news coverage of each of the four regions of sub-Saharan Africa consist of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict?

Finding: Network news coverage of each of the four regions of sub-Saharan Africa after the Angola conflict consisted of a greater variety of news categories than before the Angola conflict.

TABLE VII  
 PERCENTAGE OF WEST AFRICA NEWS TIME DEVOTED  
 TO EACH NEWS CATEGORY BY EACH NETWORK

News Category	Network	Percentage of West Africa News Time for Each News Category*	
		1973-75	1976-78
Accident Disaster	ABC	-	-
	CBS	-	5.88
	NBC	-	-
Cultural	ABC	-	-
	CBS	80.00	-
	NBC	-	-
Foreign Relations	ABC	100.00	100.00
	CBS	20.00	88.23
	NBC	-	100.00
Miscellaneous	ABC	-	-
	CBS	-	5.88
	NBC	-	-

\*For West Africa, economic news, education, health, science and technical news, human interest news, military and defense news, political news, and sports news were not reported in the periods under study.

News Time Allotted to the Republic of  
 South Africa and Rhodesia

In the pre-Angola period under study, the three networks devoted a total of 6 minutes and 23 seconds to news of sub-Saharan Africa countries other than the Republic of South

Africa and Rhodesia, 82.49 per cent of total sub-Saharan Africa news coverage.

In the post-Angola period, the three networks devoted a total of 60 minutes and 39 seconds to news of sub-Saharan Africa and Rhodesia, 63.16 per cent of total sub-Saharan Africa news coverage.

Though the percentage of sub-Saharan Africa news time devoted to countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia dropped after the Angola conflict, the actual amount of time devoted to countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia by all three networks increased after the Angola conflict from 6 minutes and 23 seconds to 60 minutes and 39 seconds (see Table VIII).

TABLE VIII

NEWS TIME DEVOTED TO SUB-SAHARA AFRICAN COUNTRIES  
OTHER THAN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA  
AND RHODESIA BY EACH NETWORK

Network	Time (Minutes, Seconds) Devoted to Sub-Saharan African Countries Other Than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia	
	1973-75	1976-78
ABC	6:35	66:18
CBS	5:50	72:05
NBC	6:45	43:36



Research Question 5: Did network news coverage of sub-Saharan African countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia increase after the Angola conflict?

Finding: Network news coverage of sub-Saharan African countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia increased after the Angola conflict.

Table IX shows how the percentage of sub-Saharan Africa news time devoted to countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia dropped after the Angola conflict, though the actual amount of time devoted to countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia by all three networks increased.

TABLE IX

PERCENTAGE OF SUB-SAHARA AFRICA NEWS TIME DEVOTED  
TO COUNTRIES OTHER THAN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH  
AFRICA AND RHODESIA BY EACH NETWORK

Network	Percentage of Sub-Saharan Africa News Devoted to Countries Other Than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia	
	1973-75	1976-78
ABC	77.46	68.49
CBS	70.00	61.86
NBC	100.00	59.13

## CBS News Coverage of Sub-Saharan Africa

### News Time Allotted to Sub-Saharan Africa

During the pre-Angola period under study, CBS devoted 8 minutes and 20 seconds (see Table I) or 0.38 per cent of total news time to sub-Saharan Africa, 0.02 per cent less than that for ABC and 0.07 per cent more than that for NBC.

In the post-Angola period, CBS devoted 116 minutes and 32 seconds (see Table I) or 5.29 per cent of total news time to sub-Saharan Africa, 0.68 per cent more than that for ABC and 1.80 per cent more than that for NBC.

Research Question 6a: Did CBS devote more news time to sub-Saharan Africa, compared with ABC and NBC, after the Angola conflict?

Finding: CBS devoted more news time to sub-Saharan Africa, compared with ABC and NBC, after the Angola conflict.

### News Time Allotted to Sub-Saharan Africa by Region

In the pre-Angola period under study, west Africa received more CBS news coverage than the other three regions compared with ABC and NBC news coverage (see Table II).

In the post-Angola period, central Africa received more CBS news coverage than the other three regions compared with ABC and NBC news coverage (see Table II).

Research Question 6b: Did CBS devote more news time to any one region of sub-Saharan Africa than to the other three

regions, compared with ABC and NBC, after the Angola conflict?

Finding: Central Africa received more CBS news coverage than the other three regions, after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage.

#### Sub-Saharan Africa News Categories

In the pre-Angola period under study, ABC covered two news categories, CBS covered five categories, and NBC covered four categories (see Table III).

In the post-Angola period, ABC covered eight news categories, CBS covered nine categories, and NBC covered six categories (see Table III).

Research Question 6c: Did CBS news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa consist of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage?

Finding: CBS news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa consisted of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage.

#### Sub-Saharan Africa News Categories by Region

Central Africa.--In the pre-Angola period under study, all three networks did not report central Africa (see Table IV).

In the post-Angola period, ABC's central Africa coverage consisted of one news category, CBS' consisted of three categories, and NBC's consisted of three categories (see Table IV).

East Africa.--In the pre-Angola period under study, ABC's east Africa coverage consisted of two news categories, CBS' consisted of two categories, and NBC's consisted of four categories (see Table V).

In the post-Angola period, ABC's east Africa coverage consisted of six news categories, CBS' consisted of five categories, and NBC's consisted of four categories (see Table V).

Southern Africa.--In the pre-Angola period under study, ABC's southern Africa coverage consisted of one news category, CBS' consisted of three categories, and NBC did not report southern Africa (see Table VI).

In the post-Angola period, ABC's southern Africa coverage consisted of four news categories, CBS' consisted of five categories, and NBC's consisted of four categories (see Table VI).

West Africa.--In the pre-Angola period under study, ABC's west Africa coverage consisted of one news category, CBS' consisted of two categories, and NBC did not report west Africa (see Table VII).

In the post-Angola period, ABC's west Africa coverage consisted of one news category, CBS' consisted of three categories, and NBC's consisted of one category (see Table VII).

Research Question 6d: Did CBS news coverage of each of the four regions of sub-Sahara Africa consist of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage?

Finding: CBS coverage of southern and west Africa consisted of a greater variety of news categories both before and after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage. For central Africa, after the Angola conflict, CBS shared first place with NBC in the number of news categories covered.

News Time Allotted to the Republic of  
South Africa and Rhodesia

In the pre-Angola period under study, CBS devoted a total of 5 minutes and 50 seconds to news of sub-Sahara African countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia, 70 per cent of CBS' total sub-Sahara Africa news coverage; ABC devoted 77.46 per cent; and NBC devoted 100 per cent (see Tables VIII and IX).

In the post-Angola period, CBS devoted a total of 72 minutes and 5 seconds to news of sub-Sahara African countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia, 61.86 per cent of CBS' total sub-Sahara Africa news coverage; ABC

devoted 68.49 per cent; and NBC devoted 59.13 per cent (see Tables VIII and IX).

Though the percentage of sub-Saharan Africa news time devoted to countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia by all three networks dropped after the Angola conflict, the actual amount of time devoted to countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia by all three networks increased after the Angola conflict. For CBS, it increased from 5 minutes and 50 seconds to 72 minutes and 5 seconds, a greater increase than either ABC or NBC.

Research Question 6e: Did CBS news coverage of sub-Saharan African countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia increase after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage?

Finding: CBS news coverage of sub-Saharan African countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia increased after the Angola conflict, more than ABC and NBC news coverage.

## CHAPTER III

### SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The data presented in the preceding chapter indicate a marked difference in news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa in two identical samples drawn from the pre- and post-Angola periods under study. This chapter will provide a summary of findings from the study, a discussion of the shift in news value of sub-Saharan Africa in the post-Angola period and the corresponding response of the three major American television news networks. Included in this section are the study's conclusion and suggestions for further research.

#### Summary

Research Question 1: Did the three networks devote more news time to sub-Saharan Africa after the Angola conflict?

Finding: The three networks devoted more news time to sub-Saharan Africa after the Angola conflict, from 0.36 per cent of total news time before the conflict to 4.46 per cent of total news time after the conflict.

Research Question 2: Did any one region of sub-Saharan Africa receive more network news coverage than the other three regions after the Angola conflict?

Finding: Whereas east Africa received the most network news coverage before the Angola conflict, southern Africa received the most network news coverage after the conflict.

Research Question 3: Did network news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa consist of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict?

Finding: Network news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa after the Angola conflict consisted of a greater variety of news categories than before the conflict.

Research Question 4: Did network news coverage of each of the four regions of sub-Saharan Africa consist of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict?

Finding: Network news coverage of each of the four regions of sub-Saharan Africa after the Angola conflict consisted of a greater variety of news categories than before the conflict.

Research Question 5: Did network news coverage of sub-Saharan African countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia increase after the Angola conflict?

Finding: Network news coverage of sub-Saharan African countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia increased after the Angola conflict.

Research Question 6a: Did CBS devote more news time to sub-Saharan Africa, compared with ABC and NBC, after the Angola conflict?

Finding: CBS devoted more news time to sub-Saharan Africa, compared with ABC and NBC, after the Angola conflict.



Research Question 6b: Did CBS devote more news time to any one region of sub-Saharan Africa than to the other three regions, compared with ABC and NBC, after the Angola conflict?

Finding: Central Africa received more CBS news coverage than the other three regions, after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage.

Research Question 6c: Did CBS news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa consist of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage?

Finding: CBS news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa consisted of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage.

Research Question 6d: Did CBS news coverage of each of the four regions of sub-Saharan Africa consist of a greater variety of news categories after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage?

Finding: CBS news coverage of southern and west Africa consisted of a greater variety of news categories both before and after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage. For central Africa, after the Angola conflict, CBS shared first place with NBC in the number of news categories covered.

Research Question 6e: Did CBS news coverage of sub-Saharan African countries other than the Republic of South

Africa and Rhodesia increase after the Angola conflict, compared with ABC and NBC news coverage?

Finding: CBS news coverage of sub-Saharan African countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia increased after the Angola conflict, more than ABC and NBC news coverage.

## Discussion

### Time Allotment

One of the underlying assumptions of this study was that prior to Angola, Africa had little or no place in the mainstream of network television news coverage. The sample of 285 evening newscasts (95 from each network) showed that ABC, CBS, and NBC devoted 0.36 per cent of their total news time to sub-Saharan Africa in the pre-Angola era, a time when Africa was of low priority to the United States, and consequently of little news value to the commercial television news media.

After the Angola conflict of 1975-76 and because of its ramifications for sub-Saharan Africa's role in a new global strategic balance, United States involvement in that world region created a fresh set of circumstances for television news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa. Network news coverage of the area increased substantially from 0.36 per cent of total news time to 4.46 per cent, a 1,138.88 per cent increase.

In the 19-week sample of 285 pre-Angola newscasts, the three networks averaged 7 minutes and 51 seconds for sub-Saharan Africa news, whereas during the 19-week sample after the Angola conflict, they averaged 95 minutes and 41 seconds, 13 times more sub-Saharan Africa news than before.

Clearly, based on time allotment, network television news was responsive to the new significance of a previously ignored sub-Saharan Africa.

#### Regional Coverage and News Categories

In the pre-Angola sample, central Africa was not reported by all three networks, whereas in the post-Angola sample, that sub-Saharan African region was reported considerably by the three networks: 26.52 per cent of total sub-Saharan Africa news time. The bulk of central Africa coverage was in the military and defense news category, mainly attributable to extensive news coverage of the invasion of Zaire's copper-rich Shaba province by Katangan rebel-exiles from neighboring Angola.

East African news led the coverage of sub-Saharan Africa in the pre-Angola sample: 67.29 per cent of total sub-Saharan Africa news time. Prior to Angola, approximately half of ABC and CBS news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa and all of NBC news coverage was of east Africa. Accident and disaster news was the dominant category of east Africa coverage in the pre-Angola period.

In the post-Angola sample, east Africa coverage (27.51 per cent of total sub-Saharan Africa news time) by the three networks decreased, apparently in favor of central Africa, which had been getting no coverage at all. Foreign relations news dominated east Africa coverage in the post-Angola period and a greater variety of news categories was covered.

In spite of a percentage decrease in east Africa coverage during the post-Angola period, the greater variety of news categories from that region indicated a much broader perspective of the region by the networks.

Southern Africa coverage in the pre-Angola sample (24.73 per cent of total sub-Saharan Africa news time) was second only to east Africa coverage on ABC and CBS; NBC did not report southern Africa in the pre-Angola sample. The bulk of southern Africa coverage was of foreign relations and human interest news.

In the post-Angola sample, southern Africa received 42.44 per cent of total sub-Saharan Africa news time on all three networks, leading news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa. Political news dominated southern Africa coverage followed by military and defense news and foreign relations news, reflecting the political tension and escalating guerrilla war in the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia and their international ramifications.

In the pre-Angola sample, west Africa received 7.97 per cent of the total sub-Sahara Africa news time on all three networks, surpassing only central Africa which received no coverage at all. West Africa news coverage by ABC and CBS was limited to cultural and foreign relations news; NBC did not report west Africa in the pre-Angola sample.

West Africa coverage in the post-Angola sample lagged all other regions, receiving 3.53 per cent of total sub-Sahara Africa news time, mostly foreign relations news.

#### The Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia

The Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia received a greater percentage increase in news coverage than did all other sub-Sahara Africa countries combined. News coverage of countries other than the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia increased to 60 minutes and 39 seconds from 6 minutes and 23 seconds, and news coverage of the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia increased to 35 minutes and 2 seconds from 1 minute and 28 seconds. The explanation is that the global significance of the internal conflicts within the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia escalated sharply in the post-Angola era because of the new strategic balance of power resulting from the Angola civil war.

#### CBS News Coverage

Of all three networks, CBS appeared to have achieved the best quantitative response to news coverage of sub-Sahara

Africa given the significance of the area in the post-Angola era. CBS' superior coverage of the area can be assumed to reflect the fact that only CBS had a permanent news bureau in sub-Saharan Africa in the post-Angola period under study. ABC was a close second in quantitative news coverage of the area, and NBC lagged the other two networks consistently.

New Approaches to Sub-Saharan Africa News Coverage:  
Problems and Prospects

Though network news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa improved substantially in the post-Angola era, there is still much room for improvement, if only because the discovery of Africa by the networks is in its infancy.

News value conflict.--Generally, news coverage of the developing world by western news media has been a chronicle of political, cultural and social conflict. The differences in values as to the role of the news media in society, from country to country, is a yet unresolved issue. In a country where press freedom is severely limited, American journalists would find it impossible to operate without applying a new standard of journalistic judgment that may conflict with American standards. It is, therefore, quite logical to suggest that by militating against western news media coverage, the developing world has itself contributed to its being left out of the global news flow.

However, the record of news coverage of Africa, for example, raises some questions or pointers as to how the developing world may be better accommodated in the flow of international news, particularly in an era where the Third World is playing an increasingly pivotal role in the shaping of international relations.

Stereotypical coverage.--Despite a new-found interest in Africa, it still remains a largely undiscovered continent. Carl T. Rowan, award-winning journalist and nationally syndicated columnist, wrote in 1977: "Americans are no longer so naive about Africa as to refer to it as 'the dark continent,' but a lot of the stuff being written and said about Africa these days suggests that millions of Americans are still very much in the dark" (3, p. 3D).

There is a myth of Africa. To use the language of Richard A. Koenigsberg, this myth "defines the manner in which Africa is perceived, and, therefore, is a fundamental determinant of the kinds of reality-encounters that are possible" (11). The perception of Africa and Africans derives "not only in the objective situation, but in the unconscious phantasies [sic] which are projected into this situation," Koenigsberg wrote (11).

The result is that network television has consciously or unconsciously projected oversimplified stereotype images of Africa into American homes. In a study of "TV Coverage of

International Affairs," Malcolm Warner's impression was that the average documentary did not dispel previously held images and stereotypes of developing nations (21, p. 66).

William Hachten, professor of journalism, wrote,

Many journalists and travel writers managed to convey misleading pictures of life there [Africa]. Such stereotypes, conditioned by Tarzan movies and similar adventure movies and stories, still inhibit clear understanding of events in Africa today (8, p. 75).

When Africans are not portrayed in those Hollywood movie stereotypes, they are being "portrayed as racist, anti-western and susceptible to Communist blandishments," wrote William Attwood, journalist and former American ambassador to Guinea and Kenya (1, p. 327).

Vernon McKay suggested, "The oversimplified treatment of African issues in the press leads to unsophisticated public relations which can be harmful to our foreign policy when they inspire such heated and ill-informed controversies as the debate over American policy toward Katanga [Congo]" (13, p. 267).

Commercial orientation.--In appraising the performance of the three television networks' news coverage of sub-Sahara Africa, it is imperative to acknowledge the commercial structure and orientation omnipresent in their minute-by-minute operation.

The three networks are locked in the exigencies of a race for prestige and profit, in which audience-drawing



power is directly proportional to advertising revenue, the backbone of the television industry. As of 1976, television's potential audience was 71.5 million homes or 146 million people, and commercials during highly rated primetime programs were costing advertisers approximately \$120,000 per minute (2, p. 4). In 1978, total advertising revenue for the three networks amounted to three billion dollars; with a 15 per cent increase in rates, 1979 revenues were projected to exceed four billion dollars (5, p. 7B).

The networks are organized into news, entertainment, and sports divisions and the showcases of the news divisions are the half-hour-long evening newscasts that command high viewership nationwide (9, p. 94).

In terms of dollars, network news is a serious operation. For example, NBC News operates on an annual budget of more than \$100,000,000, employs more than 1,000 people, and operates 23 bureaus around the world (5, p. 7B). ABC News has eight domestic and eleven foreign bureaus employing more than 800 people, and CBS News employs more than 1,000 people (14, p. 70).

For commercial reasons, it is believed that network television cannot support large amounts of foreign news that do not have a direct bearing to the United States. The showcase nationwide evening newscasts approach the news from a national and international perspective with foreign news secondary to domestic news.

The commercial orientation of the networks means that "since television news is business as well as journalism, news producers have to be concerned with ratings and advertisers," Andy Klein wrote (10, p. 357). They must organize their newscasts with a view to gaining the interest of the viewer.

To justify the light coverage of foreign news, it is usually argued that people generally are more concerned about events that are within their proximity, and that are more likely to affect their lives. To counter that argument, Barry Rubin wrote: "It is precisely because more and better-written foreign news is not available that the 'mass' audience does not demonstrate greater interest" (16, p. 14).

Rubin contended that it is because most journalists and editors think that the "mass" audience is disinterested in more foreign news that they end up encouraging "superficial presentations" and emphasizing the sensational rather than the more serious story angles (16, p. 15).

Although other factors such as time, equipment, and costs, present special problems for television news gathering, competition necessitated by commercialization is central, if not pivotal, in network news operation.

Necessarily, editors have to be selective about what goes in a news program. As television critic Edith Efron wrote, "Selectivity--the decision to include or exclude

information--is the essence of a news operation" (4, p. 9). This process of deciding which information to include or exclude is guided by certain criteria that journalists employ in resolving the potential newsworthiness of the numberless occurrences from which the news is selected.

However, abstract they may be, the fundamental factors of human interest, timeliness, conflict, proximity, consequence, and prominence are taught to students of journalism, with the understanding that the element of judgment is an integral part of the news reporting process. The actual definition of news itself remains a matter for debate, although it is generally agreed that news values, or how news is defined by an individual or organization often determines what is reported by the journalist (19, pp. 19-23). As Hachten wrote, "Journalism and mass communication are highly subjective pursuits, relative to the place and circumstances of their production" (8, p. xvii).

Though news values in television hinge on considerations such as time limitations, broadcast time, signal area covered by transmission, and the personalities involved, the visual element is by far the major consideration (7, p. 37). Stories that make better pictures enjoy a position of priority.

Television news seems preoccupied with disseminating what the public wants to hear and see, in the networks' judgment, rather than what it needs to know.

Leonard R. Sussman, executive director of Freedom House, wrote in Newsweek,

The news media should consider what the American public needs to know. The U.S. world-news services, AP and UPI, understand this need far better than the local press, radio and TV editors they serve. These local editors emphasize news of countrymen and neighbors. They provide little international news, still less from the Third World.

Americans, however, should know far more than they do about the great human developments in distant places. The uneventful reduction of hunger can be reported as interestingly as a threat to peace (which hunger can be). For sometimes, as in Vietnam, people far off can change the lives and thoughts of a generation of Americans (20, p. 15).

In appraising television and the news, media critic Harry J. Skornia wrote,

There is increasing evidence that Americans are still not receiving from TV and radio the diversity and depth of news, clarification and interpretation of the right type, from the right places, that they need for responsible decision-making (17, p. 2).

The Federal Communications Commission requires the networks, in the words of then CBS president Fred Friendly, "to operate in the public interest by devoting a reasonable amount of time to the coverage of controversial issues of public importance" (6, p. 379).

The power of the mass news media to shape public opinion cannot be overemphasized. In fact, the potential for manipulation of the individual and the public by those having access to the news media, is a major controversial concern regarding the political and social power of mass communication (22, p. 100).

The news media essentially make the difference between an informed and an uninformed citizenry. The news media have a major agenda-setting role in society, with the ability to ignore or emphasize certain news events. In a democratic society where the people are the eventual arbiters of decisions, the role of the news media as sources of information is even more critical. For television news, which is America's major information source according to studies, this role is crucial.

As it relates to this study, the way American television news networks report events in Africa shapes the opinions and stereotypes of Africa that crystallize in the minds of Americans. The American public then draws upon these opinions and images in the process of influencing United States policy toward Africa, which consequently determine the direction of African-American relations and the global picture.

Foreign correspondence.--Given the importance of the television news networks in influencing public response to the American government's Africa policy, Africa should be covered from Africa just as Europe is covered from Europe. As Olav Stokke, author of Reporting Africa, wrote,

There are few specialists on African affairs and even fewer permanent correspondents stationed in Africa. Internal or international crises in Africa have, therefore, been one of the major reasons why the majority of the media have sent special correspondents to Africa (18, p. 13).

Therefore the networks' move to establish a permanent presence in Africa will enhance the credibility of news coverage that has lacked the benefit of the correspondent's eyewitness account as is available from the battery of network correspondents sent to other continents.

However, the director of world services for The Associated Press (AP), a major American news agency with Africa coverage experience, cautioned against numerical comparison of news staff deployment to various parts of the world. In response to an inquiry for this study, Stanley M. Swinton, vice president and assistant general manager for the AP, wrote,

In a country where AP news is distributed in another language than English, such as Germany or Sweden, the AP staff includes a number of translators. Where we distribute photos nationally, there is a separate staff for photo distribution (in addition to the photo staff which takes and collects photos). Thus the numerical strength in any individual country cannot be compared to another country, or in a single continent with another continent, because the functions performed in each and their manpower requirements vary widely (12).

More than 40 nations constitute the area of Africa usually referred to as sub-Sahara. "As the numbers of countries around the world have proliferated," Swinton explained, "the former practice of maintaining permanent full-time staff in each country necessarily has had to give way to area coverage" (12).

The AP staff in Africa is not as large as in other parts of the world because, as Swinton put it,

In Africa there are no translation staffs. The service is received either in English or in French. The French translation is done in Paris. Photocasts to Africa are made from London so no photo distribution staff is required in Africa, only photo collection staff. Staff in Africa is concerned solely with news and photo collection. Obviously this means the numerical staff is not as large as where translation or photo distribution takes place. Also, AP has many part-time correspondents (12).

Stationing correspondents abroad has grown to be rather expensive. Mort Rosenblum, formerly of the AP, wrote, "Including salary, expenses and communications, the cost of maintaining a single reporter overseas for a year can be well over \$100,000" (15, p. 819). This is responsible in part for a steady decline in the number of correspondents abroad.

Another factor in the decline of the foreign correspondent corps is "a steady pattern of pressure on correspondents in many parts of the world," Rosenblum wrote in reference to an AP censorship study for 1976 (15, p. 816). Rosenblum wrote,

New measures have been taken to ban, censor or intimidate foreign reporters in many countries of the Middle East, Africa and Southeast Asia, as well as in several countries of Latin America.

It reflects not merely a lack of mutual understanding but rather fundamental conflicts among differing concepts of a government's role in society and of a people's right to be informed. While Western newsmen generally act on the assumption that a free press is vital to a well-governed nation, many Third World leaders maintain that the greater goal of national development requires them to subordinate the ideal of free expression (15, p. 816).

Finally, television news technology places some limitations on news coverage. Satellite transmission facilities are now a part of television's infrastructure. Whereas it

would ordinarily take hours--if not days--for a correspondent to send reports back to New York, it is now done almost instantaneously via satellite or microwave transmission. Since television news thrives on its immediacy, it is necessary that adequate and accessible communications facilities be available where a correspondent is covering a story. The limited availability of such facilities on the African continent further compound the problem of sub-Saharan Africa news coverage by the networks.

#### Conclusion

In the wake of the Angola conflict of 1975-76 and the sweeping changes the conflict brought about in United States government policy toward sub-Saharan Africa, network news coverage of that part of the world experienced a positive metamorphosis. As the American government sought to establish a new image on the suddenly important continent, so did the three major television news networks seek to establish a permanent presence in a suddenly newsworthy Africa.

Not only did the three networks achieve a relatively equitable coverage of sub-Saharan Africa compared with other world regions, there was also a relatively more equitable coverage of the four regions of sub-Saharan Africa. Though much of the coverage was of military and defense news, foreign relations news, and political news, a greater variety of news categories was covered than in the pre-Angola era.



However, large areas of sub-Sahara Africa still were not reported; less than half of the forty-four countries under study were reported in the periods under study. Quite clearly, the networks were concentrating on the race wars in the Republic of South Africa and Rhodesia, with little or no coverage of countries such as Nigeria, next to Saudi Arabia, the largest exporter of oil to the United States.

Therefore, to network viewers, it would seem that sub-Sahara Africa was no more than a few territories with blacks and whites engaged in perpetual conflict, the outcome of which would be of strategic importance to the United States.

Insufficient attention is given to the economic significance of the African continent to the United States in particular and to the West in general; much of the world's raw materials come from Africa.

It is questionable if the image of Africa presented by the news networks reflects the new significance of the continent that has itself precipitated an intensified Africa coverage. But considering that the networks lack Africa coverage experience, this study makes no attempt to castigate them.

Now that the networks are devoting more news time to sub-Sahara Africa, it remains for them to reassess the tendency to oversimplify and stereotype news from that part of the world. Understandably the extreme time limitations of television encourages superficial crises reporting; that can

only be counterproductive if the news media are to inform and clarify with regard to America's stake in Africa. The American public cannot take very seriously an Africa consistently painted in violence and conflict. These news events should be reported, but without adequate background they amount to exaggerated perceptions of the whole story. This could be a case for an overdue increase in network news time duration.

In conclusion, this study confirmed the responsiveness of the three television news networks to changing news values at the international level by showing that the networks increased their coverage of sub-Saharan Africa substantially as the region's importance grew in the aftermath of the Angola conflict of 1975-76.

Therefore, a government-news media interface in the area of foreign policy exists to the extent that one can detect shifts in government foreign policy priorities through corresponding news value shifts, necessitated not by government control of the news media but by the news media's commitment to reporting actions of government in the public interest. In other words, network news coverage is a reflection of the intensity of United States government activity at the international level.

### Suggestions for Future Studies

One of the major limitations of this study was that it did not take into account the visual presentation of sub-Saharan Africa. A future study could examine videotape recordings of network newscasts available at the Vanderbilt Television News Archive in Nashville, Tennessee.

Considering that news documentaries are aired by the networks as a supplement to evening newscasts, it would be worthwhile to study news documentaries of sub-Saharan Africa before and after the Angola conflict.

From an international perspective, a future study could compare British and American television news coverage of sub-Saharan Africa before and after the Angola conflict.

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