

# Korean Journalists' Dependence in News Judgment<sup>\*</sup>

## 뉴스가치판단에 있어서의 한국언론의 종속성

### Introduction

Currently the most heated debate in many international fora is about New International Information Order (NWIO). The withdrawal by the U.S. from UNESCO is understood as a result of the failure to reach a compromise between the North and the South.

NWIO, needless to say, is a demand by the less developed countries (LDCs) for a structural change in the current international communication order. It started from the beginning of the '70s with the realization by the LDCs that the international news and information flow is monopolized by a few advanced countries' news agencies and multinational corporations (MNCs).

The impetus for the movement had been provided by, among other things, a new current in communication research called the 'cultural dependency theory,' that emphasized the importance of the cultural and ideological role of mass communication. That is, with the advent of this new perspective in communication research, the LDCs had become to realize that the existing international communication flow was, by definition, one-way from the advanced countries to the LDCs, quantitatively as well as qualitatively, resulting in cultural dependency on the part of the LDCs. The LDCs denounce this as a neo-colonialism and as a typical form of cultural imperialism or media imperialism.

The cultural dependency theory has largely been pioneered by the likes of

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<sup>\*</sup> Co-authored with Hyeon-Dew Kang. 추광영, 『디지털 시대의 글로벌 커뮤니케이션』 (서울대학교 언론정보연구소, 2005), 제12장.

Schiller and Galtung.<sup>1)</sup> As Sarti put it, “Schiller pioneered the characterization of the mass media as a commodity regulated as any other by the laws of the market”<sup>2)</sup>. Schiller views that mass media create audience to be ‘sold’ to the advertisers just as the products are sold to consumers through advertising. Schiller also demonstrated that the ‘freedom of information’ principle, or the ‘free-flow’ principle, coveted so long by the West is, in effect, a rhetoric used by the MNCs that control the mass media to promote and perpetuate their imperialistic interests both economic and ideological<sup>3)</sup>. Galtung has also contributed significantly by emphasizing the importance of communication in the development process of cultural and other forms of imperialism, or conversely, the development of dependence<sup>4)</sup>.

Since these pioneers there have been many investigators who delved into the problem of imbalance in the international communication flow, including Nordenstreng, Varis, Beltran and others. These researchers have revealed that the ‘free flow’ principle, in reality, is an effort to conceal the one-way flow of information not only in the international news flow but in the entertainment flow as well<sup>5)</sup>.

Other scholars such as Faraone<sup>6)</sup> and Mattelart<sup>7)</sup> found out the ‘ideological aggression’ by analyzing the workings of the MNCs in controlling and penetrating in not only the media industry but in almost all industries of the LDCs. Mattelart argues that, in communication technology, not a single bit of reality seems exempt from ideological implications; “No matter how well protected by the halo academism, no area can escape the issues debated in the international class struggle”<sup>8)</sup>.

Dorfman, Silva, Mattelart, Piccini and other researchers took another line of research in the form of content analysis to delineate what kinds of ideological

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- 1) Johan Galtung, “A Structural Theory of Imperialism,” *Journal of Peace Research*, 8(1971).
  - 2) Ingrid Sarti, “Communication and Culture Dependency: A Misconception” in E. McAnany et al. Eds. *Communication and Social Structure* (New York: Praeger, 1981), 318.
  - 3) Ibid.
  - 4) Johan Galtung, *op. cit.*
  - 5) Kaarle Nordenstreng & Tapio Varis, *Television Traffic: A One-way Street?* (Paris, Unesco, 1974).
  - 6) Roque Faraone, “Mass Media in Latin America,” ISAL, 4:45(1973). Roque Faraone, *The Function of Mass Media in Capitalism* (Temper University, 1974).
  - 7) Armand Mattelart, *Multinational Corporation and the Control of Culture: The Ideological Apparatuses of Imperialism*, trans. by Michael Chanan (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979).
  - 8) Ingrid Sarti, *op. cit.*, 318.

contexts of the mass communication messages from the First World project and have impacts on the audiences in the LDCs. They analyzed major forms of media messages in TV programs, comic strips and films, and found that these messages all systematically promote the capitalistic values and reflect racism and other negative stereotypes about the people of LDCs.

In sum, what these cultural dependency researchers have tried was to delineate the basic mechanisms of mass media, largely controlled by the MNCs, as an important ideological apparatus to perpetuate and promote the capitalistic values for their economic and other interests. According to their assertions, mass communications, especially international mass media, are adroitly utilized so as to export 'The Western values' alien to the LDCs in order to promote and prolong the cultural dependency.

This value exportation or 'transplantation,' Schiller asserts, is done basically through education and training of the Third World media personnel by the advanced country's media organizations such as BBC and American major TV networks that export not only their structures but their philosophies of operation as well. Thus, the Third World imports not only the specific programs but also the professional values<sup>9)</sup>.

Though stated somewhat differently, Galtung,<sup>10)</sup> McAnany<sup>11)</sup> and Boyd-Barrett<sup>12)</sup> also emphasize the importance of 'professional values exportation' as a form of cultural intrusion. Golding specifically refers to this process as 'the diffusion of occupational ideologies'<sup>13)</sup>. According to Golding, these 'ideologies' are less tangible than formal training, but they are more important because they constitute the contextual values and assumptions built in the very ethos of media professionalism. These values generate both 'the philosophies of broadcasting' and the specific un-

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9) Herbert I. Schiller, *Communication and Culture Domination* (New York: Sharpe, 1976).

10) Johan Galtung, *op. cit.*

11) Emile G. McAnany, "The Logic of Cultural Industries in Latin America: The Television Industry in Brazil" in V. Mosco & J. Wasko, eds., *The Critical Communications Review*, II (Norwood, N.J.: Ablex, 1984).

12) Oliver Boyd-Barrett, "Media Imperialism: Towards an International Framework for the Analysis of Media System" in J. M. Curran, M. Gurevitch & J. Woollacott, eds., *Mass Communication and Society* (London: Edward Arnold in Association with the Open University Press, 1977).

13) Peter Golding, "Media Professionalism in the Third World: The Transfer of an Ideology," in J. Curran, M. Gurevitch & J. Woollacott, eds. *Mass Communication and Society* (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage, 1979).

derstanding about the correct and laudable practice in the production of mass communication. Golding cites ‘the public service’ concept in the British sphere of influence and ‘commercialism’ in the American sphere of influence as typical examples of the general philosophies of media.

Emphasizing that mass media are important ideological apparatuses that promote the capitalistic values, these authors all seem to agree that the specific process by which the Western or capitalistic ideologies and values are ‘transplanted’ in the LDCs is through some types of control over the LDCs’ media namely through training and education. And more importantly, its consequent impacts on the audiences seem to have been somehow assumed, rather than substantiated.

However, some methodological cautions maybe in order, as Sarti, Halloran and others rightly stress, because “the relationship between economic structure (media) and content of mass communication is neither linear nor clear cut.”<sup>14)</sup> Also, as McAnany asserts, “it is not enough to identify the ownership and control of communication system to make inferences about message development and its effect on audiences, ... without careful empirical research on all of these aspects of mass communications”<sup>15)</sup>.

In this context, Halloran warns that “we should not make hasty inferences about the nature of relationship between media and culture and overall social implications of these relationships from superficial structural data”<sup>16)</sup>. What Halloran suggests is a more careful empirical research into the ‘linking’ process in order to systematically trace influence of the content of the message systems and their impact on the audiences.

In short, though the cultural dependency theorists have largely been successful and adept in the ‘identification and description,’ of the state of dependency and its problems, they have yet to explain the precise ‘processes and relationships’ among the more important factors that cause dependency. This, McAnany says, is the priority area for future research<sup>17)</sup>.

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14) Ingrid Sarti, *op. cit.*, 318

15) Emile G. McAnany, “Change and Social Structure in Mass Communication” in E. McAnany et al. Eds. *Communication and Social Structure* (New York: Praeger, 1979).

16) James D. Halloran, “The Context of Mass Communication Research” in E. McAnany et al. Eds. *Communication and Social Structure* (New York: Praeger, 1979).

17) Emile G. McAnany, *op. cit.*

In light of this, the present paper purports to provide some insights into the process by which the Western values are transferred to the media gatekeepers in Korea by examining their standard of news value judgment, which may reflect typical 'occupational ideologies.' Specifically this study intends to find out if the Western values transfer in news judgement actually occur among the Korean international new gatekeepers. With this approach, it is hoped, we will be able to make some inferences on possible impacts of international news on the audiences in Korea, though somewhat indirectly, by studying the agenda setting patterns of the Korean editors.

## Methodology

The present study used the Q-Methodology developed by William Stephenson and adopted by others. Whereas most survey techniques generally ask a large number of people a small number of questions, the Q-Methodology involves asking a relatively small number of respondents to make a great number of decisions or choices. The Q-Methodology is particularly suited to testing theoretical issues on small groups. It is believed, therefore, that the method is proper for this study since it is investigating the attitudinal patterns of a small population of Korean journalists, or 'the inner world of Korean gatekeepers' on international news. These attitudinal patterns are expected to reflect the needs and desires, the likes and dislikes, that may guide these gatekeepers when actual international news selections are made.

Respondents were selected from two professional journalism companies, the Yunhap News Agency and the Hankook daily, and two student papers, the Sogang University News and Seoul National University News. The total number of respondents was 18. Twelve professional journalists were selected from the Yunhap News Agency and the Hankook Daily, six from each organization. And six student journalists were selected from Sogang and Seoul National universities. All the respondents were working journalists in Seoul during April, 1985 when the personal interviews were conducted.

The unstructured Q-sort consisted of 60 statements that were simulated news

&lt;Table 1&gt; Factorial Design of Q Sample

	Content Category	News Region	News Orientation
Levels	Political News(P)	First World(F)	Development News(D)
	Economic News(E)		
	Social News(C)		
	Culture News(C)	Third World(T)	Commercial News(C)
	Sports News(G)		

stories based on the conceptualization of the current issues of international news flow, regarding the content.

Each is a 5×2×2 design, providing 20 combinations of content categories, region, and orientation of news.

Respondents were asked to sort the 60 news stories along a quasi-normal 9 point continuum ranging from 'most selectable news' to 'the most rejectable news.'

A Q-factor analysis was employed to determine if different typologies of respondents were to be found with respect to the given international news stories. Q-factor, referred generally to as types, were composed of persons who tend to covary over a series of tests, the test in this study being the 60 statements. Each respondent may then be associated with each type in different degree, generally expressed by means of a factor loading, which is the correlation between the factor and the individual.

The factor analysis used in this study was a principle axis solution with rotation to oblique reference structure. The minimum eigenvalue criterion for factoring was 1.0. Squared multiple correlations(SMCs) were used as communality estimates. The Q-factor analysis was conducted through the use of the computer program QUANAL.

## Results

The ages of the respondents from professional journalism industries ranged from 29 to 46 years, with the mean of 38.4. The ages of the respondents from the

ranged from 20 to 22 years, with the mean of 21.2. All the professional journalists had completed college education. The length of time at the present job of respondents from the Yunhap News Agency ranged from 8 to 21 Years, with the mean of 14.8. The length of time at the present job of respondents from the Hankook Daily News ranged from 1 to 22 years, with the mean of 11.3. The length of time at the present job of student journalists ranged from 1 to 2 years with the mean of 1.3.

The two factor-solution isolated two distinct types although it did not provide the differentiation between the news agency group and the news paper group within the professional journalist world.

The two factors accounted for 55.23% of the total variance (87.92% of common variance). Chosen eigenvalues were 8.37 and 1.57. Type I accounted for 46.51% and the type II accounted for 8.72% of the total variance. Trace of the reduced correlation matrix was 11.31.

All students journalists with two Hankook daily reporters and one Yunhap wire newsman clustered into the Type I, and all but one Yunhap man and four Hankook men clustered into the Type II. The Type I was consisted mostly of student journalists and the Type II was consisted of professional journalists. The Type I was named 'the Student Journalist Group' and the Type II was named 'the Professional Journalist Group'.

While the analysis isolated two distinct attitude types, there is a fairly strong positive correlation ( $r=0.53$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) between the response patterns of the two groups. This suggests that while there are a number of important differences between the two typologies, there is also a substantial number of items upon which they agree.

The criterion for a meaningful difference between these two types is the z-score difference of plus 1.0 or more. Where there is no difference greater than 1.0 between the two types, the news stories were considered as the consensus items. Positive scores indicate strong acceptance of the news stories and negative scores indicate strong resentment towards the news stories.

## The most and least preferred news by the two types

The student journal group preferred strongly 13 news items and rejected strongly 11 news items. Seven of the 13 preferred news were about economics. (15, 19, 13, 20, 21, 16, 14) and four were about politics (6, 3, 7, 9) and two were about social problems (44, 38).

Most of the preferred economic news were developmental or Third World news. Some of the most favoured economic news of Type I are as follows:

19. (ETD) *Brazilian officials said that inflation rate of Brazil went by 12.3% in June. ( $z = 1.85$ )*
20. (ETD) *According to a U.N. report, four countries including Singapore have successfully coped with the worldwide prolonged economic recession, compared with other Third World countries. ( $z = 1.12$ )*
21. (ETD) *ILO reported that the structure of employment is being greatly improved in Nigeria. ( $z = -1.04$ )*
14. (ETD) *EC had a summit meeting, where the budget problem of EC was discussed. ( $z = 1.00$ )*

Ten out of eleven most strongly rejected news were about sports and one rejected news was a political news. However, this political news was about a scandal of a movie star in the politics. Those news are typical content categories of the international news that the Third World critics criticize most. The most rejected news are as follows:

4. (PEC) *Recently the political circles of England make ado to find who the hidden lover of an actress is. ( $z = -2.00$ )*
28. (GPC) *Ann Simon (31), who is standing out as a sports caster of ABC TV, is rising as a brand new star among the Youth. ( $z = -1.95$ )*
36. (GTC) *Razuma Bandari, 15 year old girl, created a great sensation in a gymnastic circles in Sri Lanka. ( $z = -1.52$ )*



On the other hand, Type II, the professional journalists group, preferred strongly 9 news stories and rejected strongly 12 news stories. Out of 9, 5 preferred news were about politics, 3 were about social problem and one was about sports. The Type II tends strongly to favour the political news while the Type I tends to favour the economic news.

Out of 12 rejected News, 4 stories were sports news. Type II considered that the sports news were not so much objectionable as Type I did.

Some of the most preferred news stories are as follows:

3. (PFD) *The US senate rejected the agenda of freezing nuclear weapon. ( $z = 2.28$ )*
2. (PFD) *Jimmy Carter, the former U.S. President, proposed to discuss the world's peace and the arms reduction in a conference between USA and USSR. ( $z = 1.76$ )*
1. (PFD) *Kaale Burdent, the former Mayor of West Berlin was elected the Chancellor in West Germany. ( $z = 1.59$ )*
6. (PFG) *It was revealed that 50 Grenadians had been killed in a bomb blast in a U.S. Air Force hospital. ( $z = 1.54$ )*

Four least preferred news by Type II are as follows:

58. (CTC) *It is decided that two literary men of Mozambique in Africa will participate in a PEN meeting to be held in London next month. ( $z = -2.42$ )*
43. (STD) *In Chad Republic, it has been emerged as a social problem to appoint non-Islamites as public servants. But this social problem was mitigated by the concession of the Islamic leaders. ( $z = -1.66$ )*
25. (GFD) *Italy, competing with France for the lead, won 4 out of 5 gold medals in a Swim Contest. ( $z = -1.60$ )*

<Table 2> Most Selectable News of the Two Types

Level	TYPE I(13 items)	TYPE I(9 items)
Content	Economics 7 (53.8%) Politics 4 (30.8%) Society 2 (15.4%)	Politics 5 (55.6%) Society 3 (33.3%) Economics 1 (11.1%)
Region	First World 7 (5.8%) Third World 6 (15.4%)	First World 6 (66.7%) Third World 3 (33.3%)
Orientation	Development 11 (84.6%) Commercial 2 (15.4%)	Development 7 (77.8%) Commercial 2 (22.2%)

<Table 3> Most Rejectable News of Two Types

Level	TYPE I(13 items)	TYPE I(9 items)
Content	Sports 10 (90.9%) Politics 1 (9.1%)	Sports 4 (33.3%) Economics 3 (25.0%) Culture 3 (25.0%) Society 2 (16.7%)
Region	First World 7 (63.6%) Third World 4 (36.4%)	First World (8.3%) Third World (91.7%)
Orientation	Development 5 (45.5%) Commercial 6 (54.5%)	Development 8 (66.7%) Commercial 4 (33.3%)

55. (CTD) Cultural events, the so-called 'festival for solidarity of all tribes,' were opened in Tanzania of Africa. ( $z = -1.59$ )

Following <Table 2> and <Table 3> delineate the most and the least Preferred news of the two types.

### Typal differences

The two types disagreed with each other strongly on 13 news stories. The clearest differences between the two types were found in the views about poverty and

labor news. Type I, the student group, saw poverty and labor news with strong positive news value, while the Type II, the Professional Group, saw it with strong negative news value. In addition to this difference, findings show another typical difference. Type I evaluates scandal and sports news more negatively than does Type II, which expresses some Western news values of entertainment. The news items are delineated below:

21. (ETD) *ILO reported that the structure of employment is being greatly improved in Nigeria.* ( $z_1 = 1.05$ ,  $z_2 = -1.58$ ,  $z_{diff} = 2.63$ )
44. (CTD) *The Minister of Labor Thailand said that he would try to meet the demands of workers in the commemoration ceremony of the Labor Day.* ( $z_1 = 1.33$ ,  $z_2 = -1.01$ ,  $z_{diff} = 2.34$ )
4. (PFC) *Recently the political circles of England make ado to find who the hidden lover of an actress is.* ( $z_1 = -2.00$ ,  $z_2 = 0.40$ ,  $z_{diff} = 2.40$ )
28. (GFC) *Ann Simon(31), who is standing out as a sports caster of ABC TV, is rising as a brand new star among the youth.* ( $z_1 = -1.95$ ,  $z_2 = -0.27$ ,  $z_{diff} = 1.69$ )

## Consensus items

There are 47 consensus items. (78.3% of the total stories) Eight with which both types strongly agreed ( $z$  greater than + 1.0), and two with which both types strongly disagreed. ( $z$  greater than -1.0)

Six of the fourteen consensus items were in the content category of sports news (36, 33, 30, 31, 35, 26), four in the category of political news (3, 6, 2, 9), three in the category of societal news (38, 12, 45) and one in the economic news (15). Six sports news were those that both types agreed to reject strongly. The consensus items with which both types most strongly agreed and disagreed are:

5. (EFD) *John Block, the Minister of Agricultural affairs, stressed that the world distribution system of agricultural product will come to a great crisis in 1988.* ( $z = 1.99$ )

3. (PFD) *The U. S. Senate rejected the agenda of freezing nuclear weapons by a vote of 58 to 40. ( $z = 1.98$ )*
36. (GTC) *Razuma bandari, 15 year old girl, created a great sensation in gymnastic circles in Sri Lanka. ( $z = -1.35$ )*
33. (GTD) *The Caribbean Games were opened in Kingston, the capital of Jamaica. ( $z = -1.31$ )*

Korean journalists whether they are professional or students seemed to be most likely to choose political news in the international news flow and least likely to choose sports news.

## Summary and Conclusions

The present study was to find whether some typical Western journalistic values, or 'occupational ideologies', are actually being transferred to the Korean journalists and affect their international news selection patterns.

For this purpose, necessary data were collected employing the Q-sort method, utilizing sixty simulated international news stories. The total number of the subjects for the study was 18 since the Q-Method can collect a large amount of information with a small group of people. Twelve subjects were journalists selected from two professional news organizations (one news agency and one daily paper), and six were student reporters from two college papers.

A Q-factor analysis isolated two distinctly different 'types,' or factors. All student reporters clustered into Type I, together with a news agency man and two daily reporters. All the rest of the professional journalists clustered into Type II. Accordingly, Type I was named 'the Student journalists,' while the Type II was named 'the Professional journalists.'

The data analysis revealed remarkable differences between these two types in their selection of international news items for use, thus revealing their differences of values in news judgement.

Type I, consisted mainly of the student editors, was more likely to select eco-

conomic news, especially the stories dealing with such problems as poverty or wages and salaries over categories of international news. And also these young editors, in comparison with Type II, preferred news from and about the Third World rather than the First World news.

In addition, they showed a strong tendency of rejecting much more frequently news items that contain 'sensationalism,' which is believed to reflect the typical Western commercialism. They chose the 'developmental news' quite regularly instead.

In a stark contrast to Type I, the Type II professionals had a tendency of selecting political news, especially the First World news, more often than other news. Moreover the news items they rejected most often were those from or about the Third World.

These result clearly demonstrate that the Type II journalists possess significantly more Western values in their news judgement compared to the Type I people who have less exposure to international news in their daily practices. None of the Type I subjects has travel experiences to abroad, let alone professional training in the Western countries. This becomes even clearer when the general professional background of these two types of people is considered.

While the Type II professional had journalistic experiences of between 13 years to 22 years, the Type I people, all except one, had less than two years of journalistic experiences.

Besides this, all the 'professionals' (Type II) have extensive travel experiences to the West (8 times on the average), and four of them had served, for a lengthy period of time, as correspondents in the Western countries.

In light of these, it seems quite evident that there is a strong relationship between the exposure to the Western values and the orientation or the 'occupational ideologies' of the Korean journalists. And this seems to affect their news selection patterns, or their news value judgement.

The Western news values, it was suspected, may have been acquired, or transferred, through either of the following two ways. First, through direct exposure to the Western values, be it in the form of international news, travel, professional training in the West, or some other forms such as living in the West. And second, through indirect influences in the process of professional socialization in their own

newsrooms, which gradually infiltrates and rears in them such typical Western news values as commercialism or sensationalism.

Whichever is the case, the present data indicate that professional Korean editors, by and large, seem to possess Western values in their news judgement. This apparently will have a far-reaching impact on the Korean audience of international news, if we consider the fact that these editors are actively setting the agenda of international news on a daily basis as the most important gatekeepers in their respective areas. Furthermore, since the agenda-setting theories usually interpret their findings in causal terms, this may also imply that, through the mediation of these Western-oriented gatekeepers, the readers of international news in Korea are in turn gradually becoming Western oriented in their values as well, to speak only mildly. The consequences of which may be far more profound than anybody can accurately assess.