Comparative Media Systems in China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea and Australia

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Abstract
This paper explores the nature, operations and propellers of media systems across five countries: China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea and Australia, based on their political, socio-cultural and economic foundations and identifies the theoretical and regulatory framework that determine the nature of the Media system in those nations. Anchored on the trans-cultural perspective of Comparative media research, the findings depict an increased environment of liberalism in some specific areas especially with regard to Information and communication technology platforms and an unpretentious blend of various normative media theories especially the strangle hold of authoritarianism in some of the countries and concerted independent efforts by the media to promote sanity and dignity of media practice while promoting democratic values and national development.
Keywords: Comparative Media Systems, China, Japan, North Korea, South Korea, Australia

1. INTRODUCTION

There are different media systems in the world as there are countries. What primarily determines the media system a country adopts and practices is largely dependent on the type of government in that particular country. There are however, some countries that practice a mix of various systems. This could be as a result of the prevailing and predisposing circumstances in that country over time.

According to Nwabueze (2014, p. 283) a media system does not necessarily operate in isolation, it influences and is influenced by various structures, systems, and institutions in the society. Media systems reflect the nature of the society within which it exists. Some basic societal factors and forces that influence the media system include politics, culture, religion and the economy.

The debate on which theory or system a particular country adopts and what determines the adoption of that theory or system has been on for a long time. Researchers, Philosophers, writers and scholars after many years of investigations have been able to pin-point and identify certain basic theories which explain nature and operations of the media in society, especially the relationship between government and the press in any particular country. The most popular and prominent of these is the work by a team of researchers among who are, Schramm, Siebert and Peterson published in 1956' known as the Four Theories of the Press.

The theories, according to Ogbemi and Atake (2011, p. 98) also known as the Normative or Classical theories are, the Authoritarian, Libertarian (free press), Social Responsibility and the Soviet Communist (Totalitarian). There are however, other theories that were developed later over the years. Development media and Democratic -Participant theories were added in 1987 by Dennis McQuail to reflect the media systems in developing nations (Anaeto and Solo-Anaeto, 2010)

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A media system refers to the nature and operations of the media in a country, including landscape, relationship between and among the media in a system with other institutions in the society. The nature of the audience, media economics, media ownership, control and regulation and to some extent journalism training and professionalism also make up the media system. (Nwabueze 2014 p. 283) The factors mentioned above are thus some of the basic standards for comparative media studies by most scholars.

Hallin and Mancini (2004), however, in a seminal study in the field of international comparative media systems research, compared media systems of 18 Western democracies. The conceptual framework developed in the study became an important contribution to the field of the comparative media systems research because it provides a systematic and applicable approach to analyzing differences and similarities of the relationships between media and politics.

Despite these developments, there are still problems to comparative media studies in various countries which must be faced. Some countries under the cover of democracies still operate the libertarian or social responsibility theory, but covertly operate the authoritarian tradition. Some media systems have traits of a mixture of two or more theories depending on the government in power (dictatorship or a truly democratic government). Nwabueze, 2014 pp.285 – 286.

MEDIA SYSTEMS IN AUSTRALIA, JAPAN, CHINA AND KOREA

Which systems do Australia, Japan, China and Korea operate? Are there similarities in the systems operative in these countries? Are the systems in conformity with the governments' dictates? These are some questions this study investigated and sought answers to.

1.1.1 STUDY OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this study is a comparative study of the media systems that operate in China, Korea (North and South), Japan and Australia.

1.1.2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This paper is anchored on the trans-cultural approach within the framework of Comparative (Media) Research Method. Trans-culturality is a perspective in researching media cultures comparatively across international/intercontinental cultures.

Collier (1993) notes that:

> Comparison is a fundamental tool of analyses that sharpens our power of description, and plays a central role in concept-formation by bringing into focus suggestive similarities and contrasts among cases. Comparative research method is routinely used in testing hypotheses, and it can contribute to the inductive discovery of new hypothesis and to theory-building.

This method is very appropriate for this paper because it explores the nature, operations and propellers of media systems across nations based on their political, socio-cultural and economic foundations.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on the Four Theories of the Press, also known as the Normative or Classical theories. These theories are the basic ones that explain media systems across the world over the years and some of them have been modified in modern societies to suit their ideological and political systems. These theories are summarized below:

Authoritarian Theory.

According to Okon, (2001 p. 101) the popular principles of the authoritarian theory is that channels of communication (media) should of necessity support the government totally so that they can achieve their objectives, whatever they are, while seditions, or libel were used as control mechanisms on the press. "Treason was reserved for activities that shake the foundation of the state, while sedition was used for irritating comments or attacks by dissidents and non conformists.

Libertarian Theory

George (2000) cited by Ogbemi and Atake (2011), opined that the libertarian theory is anchored on two core ideas which are:

1. No one has a monopoly on truth; not even kings. Truth, if any single one exists, was discovered from a clash of ideas.
2. Citizens have a right to debate in a democracy to discover which version of the truth is acceptable

Social Responsibility Theory

In this theory, the idea is that everybody should have access to the media which has no right to invade the privacy of the individual in the cause of carrying out their responsibilities to society. They should provide variety of information to their public without any restrictions whatever.

Soviet-Communist Theory

In this system, the objective is for the media to give unflinching support to the communist party and ensure that the supremacy of the state is pursued and protected at all times. The mass media is, therefore part and parcel of the government and they are duty bound to support all government policies which are, rightly or wrongly, believed to be to the benefit of the working class.

Development Media and Democratic-Participant theories were added by Dennis McQuail in 1987 to reflect the media systems in developing nations (Anaeto and Solo-Anaeto, 2010).

It is within the purview of the foregoing four (4) normative theories that this study is situated especially as they have been forerunners in the explication of media systems and their inevitable connection with nations' political systems.

MEDIA SYSTEM IN CHINA

China basically operates the Communist media system. This is a media system, according to Nwabueze (2014 p. 287) that projects the supremacy of the communist party and media organizations in this system are government-owned; private media ownership is not allowed.

China operates one of the world's largest media sectors with approximately about 700 conventional television stations, roughly 3000 cable channels and not less than 1000 radio stations. There are also above 2,200 newspapers and 7000 magazines and journals in addition to millions of bloggers and Internet – based

communication channels.

The system in China is typical communist media system in which the state owns and controls every media establishment. Ownership of media organizations by private outfits is prohibited. Notwithstanding, with the astronomical growth of Internet as a strong communication tool, alternative views filter through the strict regulatory mechanism of the eager communist regime to the audience both within and outside the country.

The evolution of China as an economic force and the recent increasing globalization process in the globe, including the dominance of Western ideologies, in the globalization process, independent media organizations have emerged without their being restricted to stringent journalistic guidelines set by the communist party. However, the dominant Chinese Central Television (CCTV), Xinhua (one of the major international news agencies in the world), and People's Daily remain influential and dominant media in China and across the world. The media landscape in China is so diverse that some newspapers (such as Renmin Ribao) are posted on display boards located in strategic areas in some cities for the public to read. (Nwabueze, 2014).

There is hardly freedom of the media in China (just as in North Korea). This is in spite of the increasingly vibrant, competitive, and commercial nature of the landscape that boast of diversified and investigative media content. In terms of Press Freedom Index, China is rated very poor and one of the lowest in the world.

It must be noted that the characteristic image of Chinese media landscape as consisting of media that serve as mouthpiece of government, which are strictly monitored and supported by the ruling communist regime is gradually changing with government withdrawal of subsidies from a number of media organizations. It now accommodates media organizations, particularly tabloids which engage in a bit of government criticism, including other content reforms to make their media competitive to attract advert revenue as a way of remaining in business (Zhao, 1998). Surprisingly, and contrary to the impression of the media system in China, though the communist regime still gives direction and determines what should be published as news to protect the interests of the communist regime, and the same communist government gives room for competition for audience and advertisers' attention.

The Chinese media sector is increasingly becoming market driven. This is despite the fact that there are no media that are fully privately owned (Singh, 2012). However, journalists whether working in government or independent media, are still dealt with once found to be extremely critical of the Communist regime.

THE MEDIA SYSTEM INNORTH KOREA AND SOUTH KOREA
This discussion of the Media System in Korea relates to both North Korea and South Korea.

NORTH KOREA
North Korea, according to Klikenny (2015), has a particularly interesting media system because the communist system is so secretive. The country does not allow majority of their media to be exported and "they allow NO media to be imported so their media structure is very unique when compared to other countries".

Klikenny notes that there is much about the media structure in North Korea that is not known. She, however, volunteers an overview of what is known to the effect that:

All media in North Korea is owned and funded by the government. Most of the media, with few exceptions is considered propaganda as the state uses the media as its mouthpiece to pass their views and opinions to the populace. The consequence of this media structure is that many of the stories are being framed or have high-level, bias-orientation. It needs to be noted that the media in North Korea has a strong effect on its people and for this reason the media shapes a lot of the citizens' beliefs (Klikenny, 2015).

PRINT MEDIA
There are several newspapers available in North Korea but all of them are run by the government. The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) produces three newspapers, the DPKR produces two newspapers and the government separately produces one paper, *Minju Choson*.

BROADCAST MEDIA
North Korea has several television stations and all of them are run by the government. The Central Broadcasting Committee of Korea overseas all television broadcast. There are four major television networks but not all of them are available in the same place. For example, Mansudae Television, which is a cultural channel can only be seen in the capital of North Korea. Other popular stations are Korean Central TV, Korean Educational and Cultural Network and Kaesong Television. Some of these channels can be seen in South Korea (Republic of Korea), but people in North Korea cannot see or access the channels, a major indicator of propagandist, communist hegemony.

THE INTERNET
The government also runs the internet in North Korea. There is only one internet provider and only high-profile

officials have internet access. A few who are lucky to use the internet can only see North Korean websites, shutting them out from the international community and the global village of pervasive internet penetration and access.

REGULATORY FRAMEWORK IN NORTH KOREA
In sum, North Korea ensures that it funds all programming of media content and it does not receive any help from external sponsors.

SOUTH KOREA (REPUBLIC OF KOREA)
The review of South Korean media system draws elaborate inspiration from the seminal and empirical study by Jukka Pekka Jouhko, titled "Korean Communication and Mass Media Research: Negotiating the West's Influence; published in the International Journal of communication volume 2(2008, pp 253-275).

Korea is one of the greatest economic success stories of Asia. Throughout its geopolitical history, the Korean Peninsula has been affected by the Japanese, Chinese, and Americans, as well as, recently, by the accelerating forces of globalization — all of them giving great impetus and delicate nuance to Korean society and culture. The Chinese sociocultural effect on Korea has been most significant in terms of its temporality, but also the effect of the Japanese, especially during the Japanese occupation (1910-1945) has been immense, influencing, for example, the Korean education system and the work culture(Jouhko, 2008).

Modern Korean journalism began soon after Korea, the Hermit Kingdom, opened up during the latter part of the 19th century. The Korean enlightenment period from the 1880s to early 1920s influenced and reformed Korean national identity toward modernity. Public discourse was introduced by new media sources like newspapers and magazines, spreading a new awareness of ideas and behavior thought of as politics and emphasizing micro-politics.

Today, Korea has a vastly developed media culture which is connected to the rapid economic growth and the resolute construction of an information society, the "Dynamic Korea." Korean media consumption and production is abundant, colourful, and innovative, forming a unique and dynamic mediascape — an interesting and manifold field of study. For example, Korean mobile phone users (almost 40 million) receive films, news, and even a mobile karaoke game in their cell phones and create a stunning 300-million-euro mobile game market. Moreover, Koreans hold the second place in the world in using the super-fast Internet which can be said to be a solid part of the sociocultural infrastructure of the nation. The Internet and SMS campaigning even helped to decide the last (2002) presidential elections, and a third of the nation is practically living in the Cyworld community connecting Koreans virtually.

But traditional media has not been superseded in Korea. Although the circulation of daily newspapers has not grown and the number of employees has decreased, the number of newspapers has increased since the beginning of the millennium. In addition to the Internet, the popularity of traditional newspapers has been eaten into by the increasing number of the "light press" or free-of-charge newspapers offering short news reports which are usually read by Koreans on their way to work. Moreover, the time spent on reading newspapers has decreased steadily, although Koreans are still satisfied with traditional newspapers as a reliable news medium. This is not to say that there are not considerable pressures for change. However, a regular Korean media consumer is not forced to choose between different kinds of media but is instead using numerous media simultaneously.

PRESENT MEDIA STATUS IN SOUTH KOREA (1990- TO DATE)
The Press in South Korea is experiencing a period of relative freedom after decades of state control and heavy censorship. Since the repeal of the repressive Basic Press Laws in 1987, and since 1990 tech-based online media platforms and television have been expanding tremendously in the country. Whereas there were only 28 national newspapers in South Korea in 1980, there are currently 122 national newspapers. Satellite broadcasting brought multichannel commercial television to homes across Korea in 2002. While free speech and expression are widely expanding with growth in media as well as unrestricted political discourse, there is, however, the national Security Law which allows the government to limit the expression of ideas deemed pro-north Korean or communist.

Major newspapers in South Korea include Chosun IIbo, Donga IIbo, Joongang IIbo, and Hankook IIbo all of which are published in Seoul. There are five (5) nationwide television networks: KBS-1 and KBS-2 (public broadcast), MBC(run as a public organization), EBS(state-funded) and SBS(a commercial broadcaster).

It is believed that about 70 per cent of South Korean households have broadband internet access, and the online media marketplace is rapidly expanding. Popular news websites(such as OhMyNews.com) record as many as 15 million visits daily. At present much of the news in South Korea is delivered through electronic means and the country is at the leading edge of the digital revolution and a trailblazer for high-speed and wireless internet services.

INTERNET

South Korea ranked third in the world in 2003 in internet use. According to statistics from the Korean Ministry of Information and Communication, 78 per cent of families own a computer, of which 93.6per cent use the internet (2005). Many businesses utilize the internet in Korea for services such as news, social media, shopping, banking, games and educational content. The first internet news website in Asia was developed in 1995 by one of South Korea's national newspapers-Joongang IIbo. Since then almost every daily newspaper has its own website.

MEDIA REGULATIONS IN SOUTH KOREA

Although broadcasters have freedom of expression, they are required to promote public interest because electromagnetic waves are in the public domain.Media Law in the country consists of two structures: 1). Business Regulation and 2). Content Related Regulation. Both aim at fairness among broadcasters and in exercising their freedom of expression.

RESTRICTION OF MARKET ENTRY

The restriction of market entry is the most powerful regulation that decides who willengage in broadcast business in South Korea. Because the government believes the electromagnetic spectrum is limited, financial power, social experiences and above all government license is mandatory for owning and operating terrestrial broadcasting, Cable television broadcasting, Satellite broadcasting. Government approval is required for operating News channel, General Service channel, home-shopping channel. In its determination to maintain free market and avoid monopoly or oligopoly, only one broadcast organisation can be owned by a provider.

THE MEDIA SYSTEM IN AUSTRALIA

The media in Australia are largely self-regulated. In other words, rather than being under the control of centralized government regulation, the media industries are responsible –to various degrees- for formulating and enforcing their own codes of conduct. Drawing from its colonial provenance with the United Kingdom, the Australian Communication System combines subtle authoritarianism, libertarianism and the social responsibility theory and practice.

Priestley(2004), examined regulation of Australian Media by contrasting three formats of media with differing regulatory schemes; the broadcast media, specifically radio and television, print media, specifically newspapers and the internet. Priestley's discourse (2004) locates media regulation in Australia within the purview of "public interest", analysing the current regulatory frameworks that exist for broadcasting, print media and internet media and examining the general value of regulation and its implications for the freedom of speech and protection of the public interest.

THE PUBLIC INTEREST

According to Priestley (2004), there are two basic arguments for the regulation and operation of the media system in the light of public's interest.

The first of this argument is the 'natural resource' argument, outlined by Butler and Rodrick. Until recently, all radio and television programmes were delivered via the radio frequency, which is regarded as a national resource belonging to the community at large Owing to the fact that the number of frequencies available for broadcasting is limited, and that communication through this medium is not inherently available to all, the government assumed responsibility for ensuring that spectrum was allocated in a fair and system manner in the interests of the public. Turner and Cunningham in Priestley (2004) argue that the holders of radio and television licences...bear responsibilities on behalf of the rest of the community. Since the licensees operate what is a very limited resource and since this means that no one else can do so at the same time, they trading in a highly-protected commercial environment. In return for what amounts to a guaranteed limit on their competition, they are required to meet certain minimum obligations.

An even more fundamental justification for the regulation of the media on public interest grounds is based on the profound influence that the media has on society. In Australia, television and newspapers, may be operating in a commercial environment, but they nevertheless exercise an authority and responsibility in shaping public opinion and consciousness that is far beyond the scope many commercial enterprises. Turner and Cunningham describe the Media as being 'consciousness industries' because what they sell are ways of thinking, ways of seeing, ways of talking about the world. Clearly, observes Priestley(2004), there is a significant amount of public interest tied up with the media as typified by the media system in Australia.

BROADCAST MEDIA IN AUSTRALIA

The Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA), established by the Broadcasting Services Act (BSA), acts as an administrator and enforcer of the Act, which includes the granting of broadcasting licenses. However, the BSA

and the ABA do not function as a form of centralized government regulation of the broadcasting industry, but rather a framework by which media are expected to establish their own codes of conduct, and the government provides the legislative means for enforcement. A Productivity Commission inquiry into broadcasting, the BSA and the ABA found that the code of practice system 'was more indicative of a self-regulatory scheme'. Higgs (2000)described Australia as being a 'pioneer of the industry self-regulation approach'.

HOW THE CO/SELF-REGULATION WORKS

The way in which the co/self-regulation is designed to work under the BSA is as follows: Under its provision, professional associations are expected to develop codes of conduct in consultation with industry organizations, the public and government. When the codes have been finalized they are lodged with Australian Broadcasting Authority and are binding on industry members. Complaints about media content are heard by the relevant industry association and only if a resolution cannot be reached is the matter referred to the Australian Broadcasting Authority.

Therefore, the ABA ultimately retains a certain amount of authority in approving Broadcast licenses, approving and registering codes of practice and in extreme cases of code of practice breach, suspending, or cancelling licenses. However, the regime clearly emphasizes self-regulation.

PRINT MEDIA

While the government has the constitutional authority to regulate broadcasting media, it wields a lesser degree of power over the print media on a constitutional basis, specifically through the international and interstate trade and corporate affairs powers. The print media are also liable under general laws covering intellectual property, defamation and contempt. Essentially the print media have been left largely unregulated by the government as the trend in the last couple of decades has been towards a greater degree of self-regulation. More attention has been given to the Journalists Code of Ethics of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance.

According to Armstrong, Lindsay and Watterson (1995), although there are almost no laws directed at print media, the reality is that the press operates within a web of regulatory and legal restraints. Since, as a private body it has no legal power, whatsoever, the Australian Press Council perhaps epitomizes media self-regulation. Founded in 1976, and funded by the majority of major Australian newspaper and magazine publishers, the members of the Council include several newspaper representatives, and independent chairperson. The council works firstly to maintain a standard of ethical and responsible behavior amongst the press as well as the level of free speech that the press has enjoyed. It also functions as a dispute resolution and disciplinary body when standards are breached.

INTERNET

In Australia, internet regulation is a novel and especially exciting area of media law, since the magnitude, accessibility and global character of the internet seems almost unbeatable. The Broadcasting Services Act (BSA) has recently been amended in order to cover the internet, under Schedule 5, the first part of what Butler and Rodrick describe as the government's threefold strategy for regulating online content.

The Schedule aims to restrict access to internet content that is likely to offend reasonable adults, protect children from internet content that is unsuitable for them and provide a means of addressing complaints about certain internet content. The regulation is imposed on internet service providers and internet content hosts. The second element of the scheme makes it an offence to use the internet for illegal means under State, Territory and Federal criminal laws, and the third element is a non-legislative education programme aimed at the public, concerning internet content and management.

Some scholars and professionals acknowledge the dynamism of the mix of liberal government control and self-regulation of the Media system in Australia. Priestley notes that the co-regulatory schemes seem to have often been able to strike a healthy balance between free speech, commercial and public interests.

MEDIA SYSTEM IN JAPAN

Japan falls in the domain of western media system. Western media systems are those media that are prevalent in developed nations of the world. They are mainly found in Europe and North America. The media landscape in Japan, as it is in other developed nations of the world, is highly democratic. This invariably means that the media in Japan operate the libertarian system. In Japan, the media are owned by the individuals.

According to Nwabueze (2014 p205), the western media system operate within the libertarian and social responsibility tradition which uphold a free and responsible press. Since the media in Japan operate the libertarian principles, the media therefore serve as free market place of ideas, thereby providing diverse and divergent views for the masses to make informed decisions on various pertinent issues as they affect the country. The media are free to comment on any issue of relevance.

The media in Japan are socialized hence they are able to contribute to the growth and development of the

country in all ramifications. Socialization instils broad cultural modalities of thinking, feeling and behaving stereotypically associated with desirable socio-cultural groups.

McKeas (1981: p98) asserts that socialization is the basic process by which human beings become persons and functioning members of the society. Based on this free nature, Japan media are used to shape the citizens' minds positively. A major flaw of the Japan media is that they place so much emphasis on profit making. The owners of the media are interested in profit making hence they struggle to balance their stories to enable them appeal to readers or listeners. However, since this quest for profit making may launch them into struggle and strive for adverts from governments or politicians, they could sometimes be biased and compromise news coverage.

Despite these flaws, the Japan media system remains a model system characterized by press freedom, free-market system, responsible to both governments and the inhabitants and above all practice citizen journalism.

COMPARING MEDIA SYSTEMS IN JAPAN, AUSTRALIA, CHINA, NORTH KOREA AND SOUTH KOREA

Comparatively, a media system does not operate in isolation. According to Nwabueze (2014 p207), it influences and is influenced by various structures, systems and institutions in the society. Media systems invariably reflect to a very large extent the nature of the society it exists. The pre-requisite basic societal factors and forces that influence a media system are politics, culture, economy, religion, and ethnicity.

The normative theories of the press viz-a-viz the authoritarian, the libertarian, the soviet communist and the social responsibility theories explain the nature and operation of the media in any society, most especially the relationship that exist between government and media in any particular country as the case may be. These theories, referred to as the four theories of the press, determine the practice of journalism in each country.

However, most nations which operate community journalism, such as Japan, South Korea and most Asian countries operate the western media system. Media systems in Japan as it is in other Asian countries are diverse in the areas of professional standards. Japan operates private media which are found in liberal democracies (Asadu and Usua 2011; p. 55-56).

Private media, which are mainly commercial, are established by investors who having got operating licenses from relevant agencies, purchase broadcast equipment, recruit staff and fund the running of the media. Japan operates private media system mainly. This is why the country practices community journalism. By this, media professionals in Japan are able to sieve through the chaff of convoluted theories and known facts. Their clients trust them to pass information undiluted and by so doing the media perform the duties of the "Fourth-Estate of the Realm" in a more professional manner. Marshal McLuhan's often quoted phrase "the media is the message" makes it plausible to argue that the carrying of powerful messages of mobilization and socialization by the media in this country reduces the chances of cultural imperialism; rather the information coming from them are regarded as global which penetrate every nook and cranny of the developing countries. The media in Japan affect the individual groups and carved a niche for the citizens. Japan evolved a form of participatory communication-characterized by a 2-way horizontal flow of communication based primarily on dialogue which is increasingly being considered a key component of development process, projects and programmes, around the world. This could be adduced as one of the major reasons why Japan is regarded as a super power in terms of development of modern technologies.

Unlike the Japanese media system, Australia practices the democratic corporatist model. Under this system there is a strong intervention of the state through subsidies and censorship but the protection from press freedom. The democratic corporatist model of central European countries is characterized by a newspaper dominated media landscape, with higher newspaper circulation than in media sector of nations operating other models. The Australia media are also categorized among the groups of the western media systems because though some of them receive subsidies from the government in power but the governments do not exert a total form of control on them as in the case of developing countries of the world. Though the media receive subsidies from governments there is minimal element of censorship of the media in Australia which is still in the process of transformation in order to imbibe all the characteristics of a full-fledge western media as the case may be. Be that as it may, the Australian media system is basically libertarian. Though the media are owned by private individuals, government gives subsidies to some of them that are not too viable financially in order for them to forge ahead and perform their duties effectively and efficiently as expected.

The Australia media are facilitating development which is the major aim of any country. The media through their reports expose areas that are lagging behind in terms of development. Development communication as viewed by Anaeto and Solo-Anaeto (2010) concerns facilitating the process of development by sharing development oriented information and fostering necessary collaborations to help more people from lower income social groups. Its concern is change for the better; helping people to move to a higher critical state of awareness where they think and analyze their situations and take viable decision with the intent of improving it. This is what the media in the western countries which Australia is part and parcel of are meant to achieve.

In a different vein, China practices a typical of communist media system where the state own/controls every media. Private ownership is prohibited in China. However, with the emergence and speedy use of the social media as a strong communication tool, alternative source of undiluted information is guaranteed. Also, as one of the economic power nations in the world and increasing globalization as well, independent media organizations have started springing up without being "forced" or "cajoled" to take the principle of journalistic guidelines of the communist government.

The characteristics of China media fall under the domain of media that serve as mouthpiece of government which are strictly tele-guided by the communist government. Though, China practices communist media system, the media are still allowed to compete for audience and advertisers' attention. According to Singh (2012) the media sector in China is becoming market driven, though there are no media that are fully privately owned.

In North Korea, all media are owned and funded by the government. Most of the media, with few exceptions are considered propaganda as the state uses the media as its mouthpiece to pass their views and opinions to the populace. The consequence of this media structure is that many of the stories are being framed or have high-level, bias-orientation. It needs to be noted that the media in North Korea has a strong effect on its people and for this reason the media shapes a lot of the citizens' beliefs. To sum it up, North Korea ensures that it funds all programming of media content and it does not receive any help from external sponsors.

In contrast, the South Korean press have started experiencing relative freedom. The South Korean press are now operating in a free market place of ideas. However, there are still elements of authoritarianism. The media in South Korean media consist of television, radio, camera, newspaper, magazines and internet-based web sites. Despite the fact that the media in South Korean practice libertarian system, the National Security law allows the government to limit the expression of ideas deemed Pro-North Korean or communist. Also, the South Korean government has been criticized greatly for using pressure tactics against media professionals that oppose the regime. This goes to show that the media in South Korea operates a mixed media system. However, much of the news in South Korea is delivered through electronic means and the country is in the lead, in terms of cutting edge digital revolution, which is also responsible for high-speed and wireless internet services.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it is apparent that different nations of the world have different media systems based on their political and socio-cultural development. In China, communist system of government predisposes the national communication system to communist media theory and practice as the entire gamut of media operations and control are vested in the hands of the government, albeit vestiges of libertarianism are creeping in with the benefit of the internet. In North Korea, the story is not different from China because all aspects of media operations and practice are in the hands of government.

Japan falls in the domain of western media system. Western media systems are those media that are prevalent in developed nations of the world. They are mainly found in Europe and North America. The media landscape in Japan as it is in other developed nations of the world is highly democratic. This invariably means that the media in Japan operate the libertarian system. In Japan, the media are owned by individuals. The western media system operates within the libertarian and social responsibility tradition which uphold a free and responsible press. Since the media in Japan operate the libertarian principles, the media therefore serve as free market place of ideas, thereby providing diverse and divergent views for the public to make informed decisions on various pertinent issues as they affect the country.

In Australia, the media are largely self-regulated. Rather than being under the control of centralized government regulation, the media industries are responsible –to various degrees- for formulating and enforcing their own codes of conduct.

The situation in South Korea is that of libertarianism. Relative press freedom is beginning to evolve.

The various media systems, however, depict the historical and social evolutions as well as the political system of those countries. There is not much that can be done to streamline them internationally. However, countries should try to study the media system in other countries to enable them adjust to contemporary realities.

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