Inter-media agenda-setting effects in Ghana: newspaper vs. online and state vs. private

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Inter-media agenda-setting effects in Ghana: newspaper vs. online and state vs. private

by

Etse Godwin Sikanku

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Journalism and Mass Communication

Program of Study Committee:
Eric Abbott (Major Professor)
Daniela Dimitrova
Francis Owusu

Iowa State University
Ames, Iowa
2008

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ABSTRACT

The influx of the worldwide web has brought about dynamism in the way news is formulated and reported. Over the years scholars have debated the key ingredients that influence news selection. At the bottom of this discussion rests the question: what is considered newsworthy? But an even more evolving question is: who sets the media agenda? This study argues that the news worthiness of print and online media or state and private media is based on inter-media agenda setting. It examines the inter-media agenda setting effects of four publications in Ghana-the Daily Graphic-a government controlled newspaper which has both print and online versions, the Daily Guide which is privately owned newspaper with print and online versions, the Ghana News Agency (GNA) which is a government controlled solely online publication and Ghanaweb which is a privately owned solely online website.

Traditional cross-lagged correlations, rank ordering, the Rozelle-Campbell baseline and chi-square tests are used in this research. The results show that there was limited inter-media agenda setting for Ghana News Agency, Daily Graphic and Daily Guide since they produced 80% of their own stories. There was however strong evidence of inter-media agenda setting for Ghanaweb from GNA and some level of inter-media agenda setting from the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide. Results from the cross-lagged topic agenda correlations showed that the GNA’s agenda at Time 1 was highly correlated with that of the other three publications at Time 2. Ghanaweb’s rank order for Time 1 was not significant for GNA and the Daily Guide even though there was some influence for the Daily Graphic. The two print newspapers Daily Guide and Daily Graphic influenced each other and both influenced the private online publication, Ghanaweb.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Traditionally newspapers—both state owned-owned and private—have played an important role in setting Ghana’s news agenda. During the early post-colonial era and under military rule, the state media had a significant influence due to its status as the sole player on the media scene. Nevertheless in the past 15 years, paper newspapers have flourished along with the resurgence of democratic institutions that began in 1992. By 2005, Ghana had 50 newspapers, journals and periodicals regularly appearing on the newsstands, and a total of 106 newspapers published daily, weekly, bi-weekly or tri-weekly (Africa Media Development Initiative, 2005).

However, there has also been explosive growth and development of online news sources in Ghana in the past 10 years. As has been the case in other countries, these online news providers compete with newspapers to deliver news to the public. More relevant for this study, they also compete for who sets the media’s agenda. To the extent that these online services provide news first, they may set the content and tone for what follows later in newspapers. On the other hand, newspapers—with their relatively large staff of reporters—may have the means to access news first, leaving the online services as amplifiers of agendas set by the newspapers.

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which online services or newspapers are leading in the competition for what is termed ‘inter-media agenda-setting’. It will also examine the inter-media agenda-setting effects of the state-owned media versus independent media. Inter-media agenda setting occurs when the news agenda of one medium is influenced by another (Lee, Lancendorfer and Lee, 2005). It deals with the basic issue of how the media’s agenda is set.
Many countries in Africa are now experiencing a considerable level of press freedom. Ghana is no exception. It can be surmised that this is partly due to rapid advances in information technology that have made it possible for new forms of media and news agencies to thrive.

Another reason might be the resurgence of democratic institutions that began when the country held its first free presidential and parliamentary elections in December 1992 after 12 years of military dictatorship. Indeed, Ghana is enjoying a flourishing media environment spurred by new media technologies, and political liberalization has permitted many Ghanaians to establish privately owned media (Gyimah-Boadi, 1991).

Before the years of liberalization, Ghana’s case was no different from most African countries where political repression, military coups, poverty, illegitimate elections, civil and ethnic unrest, disease and a general culture of malaise had characterized the post colonial era (Emeh, 2004). In those days Ghanaians were the victims of recurring tyranny and rapacious dictatorships which led to poverty, underdevelopment, hunger and general instability.

After almost two decades of a chequered political rule involving two short-lived civilian regimes whose terms were arbitrarily truncated by despot military juntas, the country finally decided to embrace the winds of democracy that were blowing through the continent. The influx of technology and the functioning of a buoyant democracy after years of military dictatorship was a noteworthy scenario for a country which until 1992 had experienced a 20-year dictatorship. As expected, democracy paid dividends. The encumbrances associated with military rule were lifted. Accordingly, the media, also known as the fourth estate, began to assert themselves more in the absence of state control.
Moreover, press freedom laws and technologies such as the internet and radio phone-in programs ensured that the issue of censorship and restrictions on information access were considerably reduced (de Beer and Merril 2004). Several radio stations, internet websites, TV stations and fresh newspapers joined the already dominant print media where the wide-reaching state-owned *Daily Graphic* was influential. With the ushering in of democracy, the curtain had finally been brought down on years of military misrule with Ghanaians having somewhat exorcised the ghost of despotism. A new era of media plurality--print, electronic, private and public--had been re-born.

The fact that this study is undertaken in a developing country of Africa increases its value. This is because fewer studies of agenda setting of any kind have been carried out in this part of the world. In addition, technologists often predict that new technologies such as online news services will be able to leapfrog older traditional media that are constrained by problems in delivery, shortages of paper, and low levels of literacy (de Beer and Merril 2004). Ghana is an excellent place to examine this issue, because it has a healthy newspaper and online environment, and has been relatively stable politically over time.

The inter-media agenda-setting effects of both private and government controlled online and newspaper websites will be examined. By studying how emerging online websites respond to existing newspapers, this study could provide new perspectives into the relationship between online newspapers and online news websites in Ghana. Consequently this study will contribute to present agenda-setting literature by expanding the settings of research to other geographic regions of the world and to study the relationship between state and private media.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Agenda-Setting Theory

The agenda setting theory demonstrates that the media have the ability to influence what topics and issues should be considered salient (Snider, 1967; McCombs and Shaw, 1972; McCombs, 1997; Boyle, 2001). The main proposition of agenda-setting theory is that the media can establish the main issues that will be the subject of discussions by ranking and ordering them. (McQuail, 2005).

Agenda-Setting Research in Ghana

The major research and theoretical work on agenda setting and inter-media agenda setting have been done in other parts of the world, particularly the United States and other Asian countries (McCombs and Shaw,1972; Min, Y. and McCombs, 2006; Reese and Danielian 1989; Boyle, 2001). In Africa, agenda-setting studies have been conducted in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya and South Africa, and have focused on different aspects of salience transfer from media to the public, with very few studies done on salience transfer within the media (Tanjong and Gaddy, 1994; Anokwa and Salwen, 1986; Kwansa-Aidoo, 2001).

The public’s dependence on the media for information is substantial in a sub Saharan country like Ghana, where mass media options are few and far between. Asomaning (2005) acknowledges that in the country as a whole, “the media have a very important role to play in informing the people about what is happening around them” (Asomaning 2005, p.1).

Anokwa and Salwen (1986), analyzing the answers of 1,585 respondents to a survey, found a clear case of newspaper agenda-setting among elite and non-elte Ghanaian audiences. More importantly, they found that the media agenda mirrors the agenda of those
in elite circles. Because the agenda of the non-elite publics also figures in the media agenda, the researchers conclude that newspapers can help arrive at a national consensus of issues.

Kwansa-Aidoo (2001) is among the few who have examined the agenda-setting theory in Ghana. He found that the Ghanaian media’s agenda about environmental protection did influence the environmental agenda of the public. In a country with a low literacy level, the cultural symbols the media use to frame issues and events play an important role in setting the public agenda. “The sociocultural significance attached in symbols can be appropriated by the media to frame issues and events and thereby contribute to agenda-setting. This has provided a more holistic picture of agenda-setting and has shown that the process might be much more complex than some research in other settings suggest” (Kwansa-Aidoo 2001, p. 62).

Safo (2008) submits that the mass media in Ghana wield an enormous agenda-setting role to the extent that they are almost authoritative. The real agenda setters, however, are the politicians whose views always find space in newspapers. Civil society groups and non-governmental organizations are also prominent news sources for the media. The Center for Policy Analysis, for instance, uses the media to solicit public support for their macroeconomic policy for poverty reduction (CEPA, 2007).

*Inter-media Agenda-Setting*

Inter-media agenda setting is the process by which the news agenda of a certain medium influences that of another (Gunho, 2004). The core idea is that issue salience can be transferred across media (Lopez-Escobar, E., Llamas, J.P., McCombs, M., & Rey, 1998; McCombs, 1997). Different media have different agenda-setting potentials (Cohen, 1963). For example, Reese and Danielian (1989), in their study of cocaine coverage in the
American media, found that large newspapers such as The New York Times influenced the news agenda of smaller papers.

A study of the coverage of unemployment and urban congestion in Spain showed that major newspapers dominated and in some cases dictated the news agenda of other forms of media (Lopez-Escobar et al., 1998). The inter-media agenda-setting theory has also been extended in the movie or entertainment industry. Soroka (2001) used citation indexes to show the influence of movies on Canadian news. Other scholars have explored inter-media agenda-setting effects in campaigns and elections which revealed a transfer of issue salience of presidential candidates advertising on television and newspaper reports. (Boyle, 2001).

Evidence of inter-media agenda setting has been found among different media. Reese and Danielian (1986) observed that television networks trailed the print media in setting the news agenda. Earlier studies on inter-media agenda setting examined the influence of newspapers on television news (Lee, Lancendorfer and Lee, 2005) and political advertising (Roberts and McCombs, 1994). These studies showed a substantial influence of newspapers on television news. Lopez-Escobar et al. (1998), examining this phenomenon during the 1995 regional elections in Spain, found that at the first level of agenda setting, newspaper agendas influenced the agendas of key issues discussed on television. In a content analysis of newspaper coverage of dowry in India, Borah (2006) showed strong agenda-setting effects of newspapers as compared to other forms of media such as television. Brosius (1996) found that German television networks influenced the extent to which newspapers covered a topic in terms of length and the frequency. In essence past research has shown that the print media often have more agenda-setting influence than television.
Other inter-media agenda-setting studies have been initiated by the desire to understand the relationship between national news agencies and daily newspapers (Lee, Lancendorfer and Lee, 2005). This research revealed that national news agencies have an inter-media agenda-setting influence on daily newspapers. It also found an inter-media agenda-setting influence of newspapers on internet bulletin boards.

In addition, scholars such as Cassidy (2007) and Snider (1967) have found a strong correlation between the agenda of newspapers and that of wire services. Before that, Breed (1955) looked at the impact of wire services on local media. In this study he concluded that most newspapers were more likely to follow the news agenda of the wire services.

The advent of the Internet as an important news medium prompted studies in the inter-media agenda-setting field. Min and McCombs (2006) showcased the significant role of the print media as compared to their online counterparts in their investigation of campaign agenda formation. They found the print media are a trend setter for other forms of media. More recent studies have focused on the agenda-setting effects between online newspapers and online news websites such as Gunho’s (2004) investigation of online news sources in Korea. Her results indicated that online newspapers and wire services showed weak agenda-setting effects on newspaper websites and did not have any agenda-setting effects on online newspapers.

Lim (2006) examined the issue agendas of three online news media in South Korea and found that the agenda of the leading online news websites influences those of secondary news websites. Still with the internet, Roberts, Wanta and Dzwo (2002) found that coverage by the Associated Press (AP) and Reuters influenced the four electronic bulletin boards (EBB) that they examined.
For the most part, the print media have shown strong agenda-setting influence on other media such as television and the internet. Roberts et al. (2002), for example, found that traditional media have some influence on online discussions, especially those that occur in bulletin boards. Gunho (2004) observed that online newspapers did not have a strong agenda-setting influence on traditional newspapers. This has spurred additional studies that examined the relative credibility of individual media channels. Cassidy (2007), for example, found that people viewed Internet news as less credible than newspapers. Johnson, Kaye, Bichard, and Wong, (2007) report that while traditional sources are generally rated as moderately credible, weblogs were found to be more in depth but less credible.

Also Althaus and Tewksbury (2002) have looked at the agenda setting effect of the new media versus the traditional media in their research on paper and online editions of *The New York Times*. They found that the paper edition usually set the agenda for the online version. The differences in the presentation of news formats by print and online news media will be important to the study of agenda-setting effects. This study will continue in this framework by exploring the agenda-setting effects of paper newspapers and online news websites. The filtering effect that the media have on each other will be examined in this study.

*Online News*

Despite the existence of the newspaper industry, widespread Internet access is apparently reshaping citizens’ news exposure habits. News websites now provide message and discussion boards, blogs and reader feedback features that enable citizens to discuss issues and express opinions. The website www.ghanaweb.com, arguably the largest Internet resource for news and analysis in Ghana, reports that it receives more than two million visits
per month. This is a significant figure for a country with a literacy rate of only about 40%.
What this indicates is that Internet journalism is gaining ground in the country. In short, online news sites—such as www.ghanaweb.com, www.modernghana.com and www.thenewghanaian.com—could potentially compete with major newspapers as the dominant source of news.

Cyber cafes that dot cities and towns provide Ghanaians easy access to the Internet. There are currently more than 150 such cafes in the country, 90% of which can be found in the national capital, Accra. There are about 15,000 users with direct connection to the internet, whilst more than 500,000 users are able to connect through shared Internet connections, which include homes, offices, through friends and cyber cafes (Balancing-actafrica, 2004).

Arguably, the most popular news website is the GhanaHomePage (www.ghanaweb.com) created by Francis Akoto in 1992 and first posted on the server of the University of Tampere in Finland. It is a privately owned site, which does not have a particular beat or focus but provides news of a wide variety to Ghanaians. Currently, the site attracts an average of about 60,000 unique visits per day and registers more than 15 million page impressions per month (Ghanaweb, 2008).

The history of the online news websites in Ghana is scant, and at present the ghanahomepage remains the most regularly updated independent website. Most news websites often face problems and have to close down due to skeletal staffing, low resources and inadequate technical expertise. Ghana is not known to have any internet censorship laws. However, Ghana’s Inspector General of Police, Patrick Acheampong, is known to have complained about increasing internet fraud and called for some form of control
According to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC, 2008), about one third of Ghanaians have access to the internet.

Clearly, in spite of the existence of the print media, internet news websites are emerging all over the continent. The continuous growth of online news websites leads one to question—which of the two dictate the media agenda? Do newspapers, the traditional dominant news sources, still determine the most important issues of the day for the other news outlets?

By looking at how the print and online media influence each other in the Ghanaian setting, this study hopes to expand the body of knowledge in the agenda-setting field. It constitutes one of the initial attempts to test this theory’s applicability within the context of a developing country that is undergoing rapid social and technological transformation. In a nation where free speech has been allowed to flourish after a long stretch of dictatorship, it is important to determine the interaction between these two important information sources and the mechanism by which this interaction happens.

The online websites that will be considered in this research include www.ghanaweb.com which is a privately owned or independent website and the Ghana News Agency, which is government owned. The questions being pursued here seek to find out to what extent the state-owned media influence private ones and whether the inter-media agenda setting varies among them depending on the news stories.

**State Ownership**

The influence of the state-owned media in setting the media’s agenda in most African countries, including Ghana, is usually powerful. Some state media in Ghana such as the *Daily Graphic* and the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation would be expected to have a large
media agenda-setting role, due to government support and their wide-reaching nature (Safo, 2008). State journalists enjoy an overwhelming access to public information and sources. Many government officials will only talk to state journalists due to the fact that they are less likely to criticize the government. In effect the state media such as the Daily Graphic have access to press releases and speeches by the state departments and consequently almost always set the media agenda since the private media have no choice other than to take cues from them (Press reference, 2006). Karikkari (1993) theorizes that censorship of private media in Ghana also gave state media networks an upper hand in setting the news agenda in Ghana. He postulates “pluralism is not a simple question of numbers. It demands that variety, difference, contrariety, divergence are permitted, tolerated and even encouraged” (p.107). This gives credence to the view the state media still have an advantage in setting the news agenda despite the existence of private media. However, he concedes that the seeming nonexistence of state control over the years presents a clear chance for the private media to break the state media’s monopoly. In Zambia, before the country’s transition to multi-party democracy, the state-owned media completely dominated the media scene. Even in the early days of multi-party rule, when private media were allowed to operate freely, the state media were still a dominant agenda-setting force due to their large resources and large staff (Phiri, 1999). The state-owned media were often a mouthpiece of the government and thus reflected government opinions with hardly any criticism of state authorities. Most of the criticism of government officials was left to the independent media (Windrich, 2006).

Censorship from the government often leads to intimidation of private media practitioners leading most journalists to practice self-censorship. During the military era a common method of intimidation was for soldiers to be present at publication houses or
broadcast studios. The National Media Commission--an independent body set up by the government--has the responsibility for controlling media content. Nevertheless, the private media, which are more profit driven, have provided good competition for the state media and helped to inject professionalism into the media scene (McKenzie, 2005).

The BBC, however, stated in its blueprint on the role of the media in Africa’s development that this situation was a great barrier to the development of the media in Africa and the development aspirations of the continent in general (BBC, 2006). In South Africa, however, civil society organizations and the early use of technology by the media such as the Internet presented a counter-balancing effect on the influence of state media (Berger, 2002).

A media sustainability index, created by the International Research and Exchanges board, notes that most private media in Ghana operate on a shoestring with only the state-owned media having greater survival possibilities due to the large amount of advertisements they receive, their wider outreach, and their ability to support more reporters (IREX, 2008). This leads to the scenario where the state media such as the Ghana News Agency (GNA) or the Daily Graphic are always the first to report most news stories, with other media following them. There is almost always a clear distinction of news reportage with the state media always applauding the role of government officials with the option of a developmental agenda in mind while the private media are left with the role of criticizing and exposing corrupt actions (Heath, 1999). The agenda-setting role of such state media in the country is thus a fait accompli. However, in more developed countries such as the United States and the UK, news networks still owned by the government such as the BBC (U.K) still maintain some amount of objectivity, thereby neutralizing their agenda-setting influence (BBC Royal Charter, 2006).
Press History in Ghana

The history of newspapers in Ghana can be traced to pre-independence days when they were used as a tool for fighting British colonial rule. Press history in Ghana has gone through various stages from these pre-colonial days when Ghana was known as the Gold Coast to post-colonial civilian and military regimes.

In Ghana, newspapers, owned and edited by Africans and a small number of businesses and church organs, featured prominently during colonial rule until the establishment of the *Daily Graphic* and *Sunday Mirror* in 1950 by Cecil King, the British newspaper magnate of the London Daily Mirror Group. The Ghana-owned papers included the *Ashanti Pioneer* in 1939 and *The Evening News* in the 1950s. Nkrumah sought to Africanize the press and use it as a tool for political gains, Pan-Africanism and to promote his socialist ideology. In 1958, *The Ghanaian Times* and *Guinea Press* were established for this purpose. Government took control over the *Daily Graphic* in 1962, and also established the Ghana Film Industry Corporation and the Ghana Institute of Journalism, all under the Ministry of Information at the same time (Eribo & Jong-Ebot, 1997).

Later on during the administration of the second republic headed by Prime Minster Kofi Abrefa Busia, Party papers such as *The Pioneer, The Echo, The Star, Palaver Tribune, Voice of the People* and *The Spokesman* were established. Private papers such as the influential *Legon Observer* published by the University of Ghana thrived nationwide. The Newspaper Licensing Act of 1963, which had been in existence during the First Republic, was repealed (Eribo & Jong-Ebot, 1997). This period has been described as the most liberal in the history of Ghanaian media (Gadzekpo, 1997).
Subsequently, in the military regime that followed led by Gen Kutu Acheampong in 1973, the Newspaper Licensing Decree, and Rumors decrees were passed. Press freedom was hugely curtailed under this military dictatorship (Eribo & Jong-Ebot, 1997; Gadzekpo 1997).

In time, the press in Ghana gained back its freedom after military rule when Dr. Hilla Limann was elected president in 1979. Limann was a democrat who ensured journalistic freedom and independence and established the Press Commission to ensure this. According to Gadzekpo (1997), the Third Republican Government of Dr. Hilla Limann (1979-81) was free and benevolent.

However, these freedoms were soon lost when Flt. Lt. Jerry John Rawlings overthrew the Limann government and established military rule once more under the Provisional National Defense Council (P.N.D.C) which ruled from 1981 to 1991. The Press Commission was dissolved and the Newspaper Licensing Law (PNDC law 211) was passed. Strict press control was practiced and this period in Ghana’s history is referred to as the Culture of Silence among Ghana’s media. It remained largely so until Ghana went back to multi-party democracy in 1992 (Eribo & Jong-Ebot, 1997).

Following the return to multi-party rule, the National Media Commission (NMC) was set up in 1993 to ensure freedom and independence of the media. Organizations such as the Private Newspapers Association of Ghana (PRINPAG) and the Ghana Journalists Association (GJA) became very vocal in fighting for the independence of journalists. The NMC is charged with insulating state media from governmental interference, ensuring high journalistic standards and presiding over grievances relating to the media (Gadzekpo, 1997).

Today, according to the Commonwealth Press Union (CPU, 2005), Ghana has one of the most vibrant press systems on the African continent (CPU, 2005). The press has thus
come a long way since the country’s first newspapers, such as *The Gold Coast Gazette and Commercial Intelligencer* was published in 1822 by Sir Charles McCarthy, then governor of the British Gold Coast settlements (African Media Development Initiative, 2005). Despite government interference, newspapers have continued to play a significant role in the country’s social, economic, and political development (de Beer and Merrill 2004).

For the most part, three dailies have dominated the print media in Ghana: the *Daily Graphic* (circ.: 100,000) the *Ghanaian Times* (circ.: 50,000) and the *Evening News* (circ.: 10,000). The *Evening News*, has however, recently gone out of circulation. Generally speaking, newspapers in Ghana are either owned and controlled by the state or are privately owned (CPU, 2005). They can be grouped into those that disseminate mainly socio-political news items, business and financial reports, sports, and entertainment content (de Beer and Merrill, 2004).

According to the African Media Development Initiative, Ghana has a total of 106 newspapers (11 dailies, 67 weeklies, 23 bi-weeklies and five tri-weeklies) with national circulation. Among the 11 national dailies, the state-owned *Daily Graphic* is still the most prominent, oldest, and most widely distributed. It has offices in 10 regions; The *Daily Guide*, a privately owned paper, is the next most widely read and widely circulated. The *Chronicle*, privately-owned and established in 1990, then follows. The *Accra Daily Mail*, the fourth most widely-read paper, was established in 1998 and is privately-owned. The *Pioneer*, based in Kumasi (Ashanti Region), and the *Northern Advocate*, based in Tamale (Northern Region) are two of the top regional newspapers in the country (African Media Development Initiative, 2006). Ghana’s newspaper industry has also expanded to include entertainment newspapers such as the *Graphic Showbiz* and youth oriented papers such as *Junior Graphic*. 
The online media that will be examined in this research were specifically chosen because they were the most frequently updated and well maintained sites. The private online website is Ghanaweb. Ghanaweb’s mission is to serve as a major source of information on events happening in Ghana. A majority of its audience are Ghanaians who live outside the country. The website provides news on Ghana while at the same time allowing users to comment on news stories as well as upload their opinions pieces. It was started by Francis Akoto a Ghanaian student in Finland. Due to the skeletal nature of its staff it often reflects news articles from other media in Ghana. According to the websites, it initially started as a place to provide information about Ghana but the moderators started to update the site daily with news from Ghana and soon visiting the site became a daily routine for the ten-thousands of Ghanaians working and studying abroad (Ghanaweb, 1994).

The government online website to be looked at is the Ghana News Agency (GNA). The Ghana News Agency (GNA) is a government operated website. The goal of the agency is to provide coverage of news stories from all the country to the Ghanaian public. The agency’s mission also includes providing news stories to other media in the country. Thus there is an expectation that many media outlets in Ghana would use the GNA’s stories. According to the GNA, its main subscribers include “major newspapers, radio and television stations, diplomatic missions, corporate and government institutions. Its mission also includes “highlighting stories that promote development and integration while communicating the government’s policies and programs” (ghananewsagency.com, 2006). The agency sees itself as a primary news provider across the length and breadth of the country.
Along with political and economic liberalization in the early 1990s came the liberalization of the media in Ghana as was the case in other African countries. The private media in Ghana are experiencing a new era of media freedom that takes its roots in the constitution—a bold document enacted by the people that came into force on January 7, 1993, to herald the Fourth Republic.

The 1992 constitution guarantees freedom of expression in Chapter Five Article 21. Chapter 12 article 162 (1) of the constitution specifically states: “Freedom and independence of the media are hereby guaranteed.” Censorship is not allowed with a clause stating that “there shall be no censorship in Ghana.”

In the same chapter, the constitution requests that parliament establish a National Media Commission (NMC) to uphold journalism standards and the “insulation” of the state-owned media from government control. The Commission was thus created by the National Media Commission Act in 1993. The National Communications Authority (NCA) is responsible for allocating frequencies for broadcasting operations, in accordance with the National Communications Authority Act (1993).

Article 162 (2) of the 1992 Constitution, “Freedom and Independence of the Media” states that “subject to this Constitution and any other law not inconsistent with this Constitution, there shall be no censorship in Ghana.” It also states “There shall be no impediments to the establishment of private press or media; and in particular, there shall be no law requiring any person to obtain a license as a prerequisite to the establishment or operation of a newspaper, journal or other media for mass communication or information.”

Consequently, the existing sense in Ghana is that the country has seen progress since 1992 and particularly in 2001 with the repeal of the Criminal Libel Law. However, the
reluctance of the government to pass the Freedom of Information Act and the existence of the Official Secrets Act continue to be a source of concern.

To this extent the media landscape in Ghana is unfettered. The unregulated functioning of the private media has contributed substantially to the development of democracy in the country. With the inception of democracy, the media in Africa had the option to either privatise or commercialize. Most countries commercialized. For instance, Zambia chose to commercialize its state media system since privatising the Zambia National Broadcasting Corporation (ZNBC) would lead to loss of political control. The same can be said of Ghana since government commercialized the state owned *Daily Graphic*. The independence of the Graphic has, however, remained an issue of constant debate. The question that has remained unanswered is whether the state media have continued to influence the media agenda of private media. In essence, has technology played any role in determining who sets the media agenda? To what extent do the state-owned media and privately owned media influence each other in setting the media agenda? This study addresses this gap by examining four media networks in Ghana: *Daily Graphic* newspaper and ghananewsagency.com, which are state owned; and, the *Daily Guide* and www.ghanaweb.com, which are independently owned networks.

According to Golding and Murdock (1978), research in the third world should not mimic that of the western world without due reference to cultural and country specific issues. This research, therefore, will pay attention to the current situation in Ghana where, despite the shift to democracy in 1992, the state-owned *Daily Graphic* continues to be the largest circulating newspaper in the country. It will also examine what influence the Ghana News
Agency, which is a national state-owned wire service has had on the media particularly after going online.

Research Questions

Many scholars (i.e., de Beer, 2001; Udo and Edoho, 2000) are optimistic about the extent to which the Internet can help the African continent “leapfrog into the future.” The Internet offers new ways by which news is delivered and received. Among others, it provides links to an array of news media and different forums for discussion. It is no surprise, therefore, that the traditional media have embraced the potential of the web to convey news. Today, newspapers in Ghana regularly publish online editions of their paper versions, fueling the growth of online news websites.

As these news sites grow in number, what is the relationship between newspaper websites and their online counterparts with regard to their agenda-setting influence? This study explores the inter-media agenda-setting phenomenon between newspapers and news websites in a developing sub Saharan country, Ghana. Specifically by studying these four media networks it aims to find out whether newspaper websites or online websites have more agenda-setting influence. The second question will address the influence of government-owned media on their private counterparts in terms of their inter-media agenda-setting influence. It will be interesting to find out if the government-owned media dominate media agenda-setting in Ghana or vice versa. Also, the inter-media agenda setting of issues for the various media being considered, which agenda is setting at the first level, will be assessed.

Research Questions:

1. Of Ghanaian online news sources, do newspaper web sites or non-newspaper online web sites have more inter-media agenda-setting influence?
2. Of Ghanaian online news sources, do those directly controlled or owned by government have more inter-media agenda-setting influence?

3. Does inter-media agenda-setting influence for either (1) or (2) above vary depending on the type of news story (political, economic, culture, etc.)?
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

In this research the agenda-setting function of one medium on the other is investigated by examining the relationship between news items that appear in online newspapers and online news websites. The inter-media agenda-setting influence of the state media and the privately owned media will also be examined. Two newspapers, the Daily Graphic, which is state owned, and the Daily Guide, which is privately owned, as well as two online websites, Ghanaweb.com which is private and Ghana News Agency (Ghananewsagency.com) which is government owned, will be examined. This will be one of the first studies of the inter-media agenda-setting concept in Ghana. In this regard this study will look at agenda setting at the first level and try to explicate results within the context of the unique media patterns in Ghana.

This study used cross-lagged correlations, Rozelle-Campbell baseline and rank ordering which are seen in most traditional inter-media agenda setting studies. It also employed specific story tracking and conducted chi-square tests which helped to identify the specific movement of each story from one medium to the other.

The Daily Graphic is the largest and one of the oldest newspapers in the country. It is owned by the government. This research will help to reveal to what extent the largely popular Daily Graphic newspaper is influencing other newspapers in the country especially with the evolution of new communication technology, such as the internet. It has an online version, which uploads the print version daily except weekends at www.graphicghana.com. The Daily Graphic is published in Accra by Graphic Communications Ltd. Its readership is the general public. During military regimes, it has strictly followed government lines but has become more and more neutral since the inception of constitutional rule. The Daily Graphic has
strived to give balanced reports and commentaries, and offers features on cultural and social affairs in Ghana. However, at times, it still faces accusations of towing the government line from opposition parties.

The Ghana News Agency launched its own wire service in 2006 under the name ghananewsagency.com to provide daily news to Ghanaians living in and outside the country. This was characteristic of recent changes in the media scene where many news agencies went online. It also meant the Ghana News Agency could compete with other media. It was established on March 5, 1957, on the eve of the country’s independence. It was one of the first news agencies to be established in sub Saharan Africa. The GNA was part of a comprehensive communication policy that sought to harness the nationalistic ideals of the country in the early days of independence. Because of its long existence it has a large staff and offices in all the regions of the country. The GNA is also government owned.

The Daily Guide is the largest circulating private newspaper in Ghana and the second largest generally in the country (African Media Initiative 2006); it is published by Western Publications Company. Gina Ama Blay is the Managing Editor. The newspaper is noted for the introduction of specialized reporting and is widely read by Ghanaians.

The internet news website www.ghanaweb.com operated as Ghana Homepage is easily one of the most popular news websites in Ghana. It is a private website. Each day, the site is patronized by thousands of Ghanaians living in and outside of the country. It has a very active features page where readers and journalists submit opinion articles on varying topics. Its forum is one of the most active and access has now been created for users to create their own blogs.
Research Design: Content Analysis

Data for this study will be gathered through content analysis. Neuendorf (2002) defines content analysis as the “systematic, objective and quantitative analysis of message characteristics” (p. 1). According to Kerlinger (2000), content analysis is “the method of studying and analyzing communication in a systematic, objective, and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables” (as cited by Wimmer and Dominick, 2006, p.150). Walizer and Wiener (1978) define it as any systematic procedure to examine the content of recorded information. In this process, quantification is necessary because it helps develop an “accurate representation of a body of messages” (Neuendorf, 2002, p.151).

Media Selection

The context of this study is Ghana, one of the flagships of democracy in Africa. Freedom House, an organization that tracks press freedom worldwide, ranks Ghana high in terms of political liberties, and describes the media in the country as “free.”

These media were chosen because of their attributes. According to Wimmer and Dominick (2006) a “purposive sample includes subjects or elements selected for specific characteristics or qualities and eliminates those who fail to meet these criteria” (p. 91). The top state newspaper--the Daily Graphic and the top private newspaper--the Daily Guide were chosen. The publications that were used in this research were selected because of their specific characteristics. The Daily Graphic and Daily Guide were selected because they’re the top selling private and government-owned newspapers. Ghanaweb was selected because it was one of the earliest Ghanaian news websites and is the most frequently updated and maintained. GNA was chosen for similar reasons; it’s the most frequently updated and well maintained government news website.
The study was done over a three week period. Coding was done from Monday to Friday since none of the media being examined published on Saturdays and Sundays. Thus, most news coming out of the weekend tends to be published on Monday. All the news stories appearing on the front page of the various publications were coded. The study was conducted in June 2008. June is a month when usually there is no epoch-making event that could distort coverage. The unit of analysis was the news articles. News stories were observed around 5 a.m and 8 a.m Ghana time since at this time each day; the websites upload their top stories. During the period that this study was undertaken, each website was visited everyday and stories that appeared on their front pages were coded. For instance the stories that appear on Ghanaweb’s front page were recorded and tracked on the other three media to see if any of those stories were used. The same procedure was repeated for the other three publications until all the stories were coded. Screen shots of the various websites are displayed below.

Figure 1. Screen shots of Ghanaweb (left) and Ghana News Agency front pages (Right)
Each article posted to a website was examined to see if it originated with that publication’s reporters, or if it came from another source. Almost all articles included a statement of where the article came from if it did not come from that publication’s staff, so it was relatively easy to track articles. The first two coding categories were reserved for articles that originated with the publication. Category 1 was for new articles that had not been published elsewhere. Category 2 was for articles that added new information to something that had been published earlier by the same publication. The remaining categories were used to track articles that had been obtained from sources other than the publication’s own staff. For example, if an article had first been posted on Ghana News Agency, and later appeared in the *Daily Graphic*, this was coded so that the flow of specific stories could be tracked from one publication to another. If the article originated in another publication, but was enhanced in some way by a second publication prior to its publication there, this was also coded. However, this seldom happened. In most cases, a story was used in its entirety with credit given to the other publication. Enhancements were rare.
Conceptual and operational definition of variables

This study asks the following research questions:

1. Of Ghanaian online news sources, do newspaper web sites or non-newspaper online web sites have more inter-media agenda-setting influence?

2. Of Ghanaian online news sources, do those directly controlled or owned by government have more inter-media agenda-setting influence?

3. Does inter-media agenda-setting influence for either (1) or (2) above vary depending on the type of news story (political, economic, culture, etc.)?

To answer these questions, the following variables were conceptually and operationally defined:

*Date*

The exact date on which each story was posted was recorded as a numerical variable.

*Publication*

The publications in which the news stories appeared were also coded from 1 to 4 with the numbers representing each media outlet.

*Topic*

Traditional inter-media agenda-setting studies have used grouped topics to compare the flow of influence from one publication to another. These are then compared between Time 1 and Time 2 using cross-lagged correlations. If political stories are frequent in one publication at Time 1, and they become more frequent in a second publication at Time 2, it is an indication that there may be a flow of influence from the first publication to the second. Topical categories used in previous traditional inter-media agenda-setting studies were also used in the present study (see Kiousis, 2004).
Stories dealing with school, training and literacy were coded as educational stories. Economic stories had to do with finance, taxes, income, social security and standard of living. Crime stories were articles that had to do with robbery, murder, law breaking and other offenses. Health care included stories on sickness/illness, disease, death, HIV/AIDS, national health insurance, hospitals. Cultural stories focused on the Ghanaian way of living, norms, values that guard society, art, craft, and festivals. Political stories were those that had to do with politicians, political parties, elections and the arms of government. Social stories were stories that were related to social organizations and networks, communal ways of living, day to day and other general purpose stories. The last category was developmental stories which were articles on the development agenda of the nation, the Millennium Development Goals, non-governmental organization, construction and other national building projects.

Titles

Titles were coded as string variable. Titles were coded because they were one of the most visible ways of identifying a new story. Since it was not possible to copy the entire stories, a more practical method was to code for the title as they appeared in each publication.

The general methodology also included specific story tracking where each story that appeared in one medium was tracked to observe whether it appeared in any of the other four publications. This helped not only to know the influence of one publication on the other but indeed to know the exact type of the stories that moved from one medium to the other. This is an enhancement over other traditional inter-media agenda-setting studies that only compare rankings of topics over time. The traditional approach using cross-lagged correlations was also used in this study. (Lopez Escobar, McCombs & Lennon, 1998)
Coding and Inter-coder reliability

Coding is placing a unit of analysis into a content category (Wimmer and Dominick, 2006 p.162). Intercoder reliability is the extent to which two or more coders are in agreement on the variables being coded. To test for intercoder reliability, two coders, including the author, each coded one-third of the total sample.

The results of this pre-test were used to compute inter-coder reliability. Specifically Holsti’s formula was used to code for intercoder reliability:

\[ CR = \frac{2(M)}{N_1 + N_2} \]

Where M is the number of times coders agree and N1 and N2 are the total number of coding decisions made by each other.

Overall the inter coder reliability reached was 99%. Inter coder reliability for sources was 99%. After an initial reliability of 93% was achieved for the topics on a pre-test, the code sheet was revised and a higher inter coder reliability of 99% was obtained.

Data analysis

A chi-square test was used to answer the first and second research questions. To determine the inter-media agenda-setting relationship or influence between online news sources directly controlled by the government and those which are privately owned, stories that appeared first in government controlled media and later in non-government controlled media were compared with stories originating in non-government controlled media that are later used in government-controlled media.

The third question examined if inter-media agenda setting patterns vary depending on the type of news story. To test flows of specific topics across publications, traditional cross lagged correlations were used to examine how the topic agendas of publications at Time 1
influence topical agendas of other publications at Time 2. For each cross-lagged correlation, a Rozelle-Campbell baseline was established.

The baseline is “the level of correlation to be expected on the basis of the auto correlations and synchronous correlations alone” (Lopez Escobar et al, 1998 p. 233).

(Rozelle and Campbell 1969 In Dunn, 2006 p. 42) generated a method for using cross- lagged correlations to examine causality between variables over a time period. To do this six correlations are calculated in the following manner:

These are correlations between Variable One at the first time period (Time 1) and Variable One at the second time period (Time Two, PX1X2), between Variable Two at Time One and Variable Two at Time Two (PY1Y2), between Variable One at Time One and Variable Two at Time One (PX1Y1), between Variable One at Time Two and Variable Two at Time Two (PX2Y2), between Variable One at Time One and Variable Two at Time Two (PX1Y2), and between Variable Two at Time One and Variable One at Time Two (PY1X2).

These correlations are shown in Figure 3.

Previous studies of cross lagged correlations show that the relationships most useful to researchers are PY1X2 and PX1Y2 (Roberts & McCombs, 1994; Dunn, 2006; Lopez-Escobar et al., 1998). It shows the amount of influence a publication had over time. A
baseline is then calculated using the other four correlations. The formula for calculating the baseline is:

\[
\frac{(P_1 Y_1 + P_2 Y_2)}{2} \sqrt{\frac{(P_1 X_2)^2 + (P_2 Y_2)^2}{2}}
\]

The cross-lagged correlations are then analyzed relative to this baseline calculation.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigates (1) Whether newspaper websites or non-newspaper online websites had more inter-media agenda-setting influence in Ghana, (2) The extent of the inter-media agenda-setting influence of government-controlled news sources in Ghana, (3) Whether the inter-media agenda setting influence for (1) and (2) differed depending on the type of news story (for example, political, social, economic). This chapter presents the results of the content analysis. The results are presented in the form of descriptive statistics, chi-square tables and cross lagged correlations. Table 1 shows the frequency of articles published in the four media over the three week period. Of this Ghanaweb had a total of 136 stories (42.2%), 61 (18.9%) in Ghana News agency, 71 in the *Daily Graphic* (22.0%) and 54 in the *Daily Guide* (16.8%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ghanaweb</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>42.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Guide</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana News Agency</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Graphic</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>322</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5 show the number of original stories in each publication, and the number and source of stories that came from other publications.
Table 2. Ghanaweb articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>% of Possible Stories</th>
<th>Overall %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Used</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Ghanaweb Stories</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stories from other sources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Graphic</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Guide</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>8.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana News Agency (GNA)</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>44.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNA Inside Stories</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Local Source</td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other International Source</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct from Political Parties</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sources</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>136</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows the private non newspaper website Ghanaweb had 136 stories. It used all 61 of the stories that appeared on the front page of the GNA. Even more significant is the fact that Ghanaweb tended to use some secondary articles that were not on GNA’s front page (another 10.3%) of all Ghanaweb stories) giving the GNA a powerful inter-media agenda-setting effect on Ghanaweb. Thus Ghanaweb did not originate most of its stories but relied heavily on the GNA. Also the state-owned newspaper websites the Daily Graphic had 11 of 58 (19%) of its front page stories appearing on Ghanaweb’s front page while the private newspaper website the Daily Guide had 12 of 43 (28%) of its front page articles appearing on
Ghanaweb’s front page. On the other hand Table 3 shows Ghanaweb had none of its 8 original stories appearing on the GNA website, showing that it had no reciprocal influence on GNA. Two of Ghanaweb’s 8 stories were carried by the *Daily Graphic* and the *Daily Guide*. Overall, Ghanaweb could not have a very powerful inter-media agenda-setting influence on the other publications since it did not originate very many of its own articles.

**Table 3. Ghana News Agency (GNA) articles**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>% of Possible Stories Used</th>
<th>Overall %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original GNA Stories</td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stories from Other Sources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Graphic</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Guide</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghanaweb</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Local Sources</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other International Sources</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct from Political Parties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>61</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 shows all of the stories that appeared on the GNA website were original stories that came from their own reporters. There was no inter-media agenda setting influence on the GNA from any of the other media. The private newspaper *Daily Guide* published 6 of 61 (10%) stories from the GNA and the state-owned newspaper website the *Daily Graphic* published 7 of 61 (11.5%) of the GNA’s stories. Undoubtedly the GNA is a news originating
source which is not affected by other media. In other words it provides stories of its own but
does not take them from other sources.

Table 4. *Daily Guide* articles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>% of Possible Stories Used</th>
<th>Overall %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original Daily Guide Stories</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td>79.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stories from Other Sources</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghanaweb</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Graphic</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana News Agency</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Local Source</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other International Source</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct from Political Parties</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the private newspaper website *Daily Guide*, the results in Table 4 differed from
the other private medium Ghanaweb. A total of 79.6% of the articles on the *Daily Guide*’s
front page were original stories. A total of 3.7% were from Ghanaweb. A total of 10% of the
GNA’s front page articles appeared on the *Daily Guide*’s website and 5% of the *Daily
Graphic*’s stories appeared on the *Daily Guide*’s website. Out of the two stories from
Ghanaweb that appeared in the *Daily Guide*, one was the same as the story picked by the
*Daily Graphic*. This is the story that had to do with the Ghanaian community’s annual
festival celebration in Maryland. All three of the *Daily Graphic*’s stories that appeared in the
*Daily Guide* were stories that had the same geographical location—in the three northern-most
parts of the country—(the Upper East, Upper West and Northern regions). These articles were reports on local government (District Assembly) and the disbursement of the District Assembly Common Fund. However the *Daily Graphic’s* overall inter-media agenda-setting effect on the Daily Guide is only 5% of all its stories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5. <em>Daily Graphic</em> articles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Daily Graphic Stories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stories from other sources</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghanaweb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana News Agency (GNA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Local Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other International Source</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct from Political Parties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The *Daily Graphic*, a state-owned newspaper website, had 83.1% of its stories originating in-house. These results in Table 5 demonstrate the well-resourced state medium’s ability to produce original stories. However the *Daily Graphic*, unlike the GNA, did use some stories coming from the private newspaper website, *Daily Guide* (7%) and the private non newspaper website Ghanaweb (25%). Also the *Daily Graphic* used 11% of the possible stories from the GNA, another state owned medium.
This result was revealing since the GNA did not use any stories from the *Daily Graphic*. Of the three stories that came from the *Daily Guide*, two were political and one was about crime. The political stories both had to do with the former president and former vice president’s health and their private travels to South African hospitals for treatment. While the *Daily Graphic* has a large staff and can reach large parts of the country, it appears the *Daily Guide*’s investigative prowess and continued coverage of the former president and vice president gave it an upper hand when it came to such stories since the state media were more likely to be concentrating on the current president and his vice president. The other story was a crime story, again attesting to the *Daily Guide*’s investigative niche. The story was a bizarre case of a traditional fetish priest called Kwaku Bonsam (translated to mean Kwaku the devil) who had threatened to turn Christianity on its head by challenging Christian pastors to a spiritual power contest. Moving to Ghanaweb, both of the stories that came from this website were cases of Ghanaian community celebrations or festivals held abroad, particularly in the United States, normally dubbed ‘Ghanafest’. Due to the non-local nature of such stories, Ghanaweb, whose editors are located abroad, were more likely to report on such stories.

Additionally, a similar pattern was observed within each of the two newspaper websites, *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*. Both generated a great many of their articles in-house, and they both used articles from the other sources in about the same proportions.

To be sure, the results show that the GNA was the most frequently tapped news source. The stories that appeared on the GNA’s front page were all original and not copied from another source. That is to say, most coverage did not represent inter-media agenda-setting but independent reporting. In fact, out of the four media being considered, Ghanaweb
is the exception as it is mainly passing along material from other media, especially GNA. For the most part, therefore, where inter-media agenda-setting occurs, it is mainly from one non-newspaper online source (GNA) to another non-newspaper online source (Ghanaweb). On the whole three sources—GNA, *Daily Graphic* and *Daily Guide*—all originate much of their own news, while Ghanaweb is very dependent on other news sources.

**Research Question 1:** Of Ghanaian online news sources, do newspaper web sites or non-newspaper online web sites have more inter-media agenda-setting influence?

The newspaper websites that were content analyzed were the *Daily Graphic* and the *Daily Guide*. The non-newspaper websites were Ghanaweb and Ghana News Agency (GNA).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6. The level of inter-media and non-inter-media agenda setting in newspaper websites vs. non-newspaper websites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Newspaper</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Graphic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Guide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghanaweb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-Square (two tailed test) = 56.63, p<.001

The chi-square test (Table 6) conducted was for the combined totals of each type of publication (newspaper and non newspaper). To construct the table, the number of original stories for each of the four publications was taken as the starting point. For example, the
Daily Graphic had 58 original stories. Then, the number of Daily Graphic stories out of the 58 that were used by the other three publications was calculated. The Daily Guide used three of 58, Ghanaweb used 11, and GNA used none. Thus, a total of 14 stories out of a possible 174 (58 x 3) were used by other media, giving the Daily Graphic an inter-media agenda-setting percentage of 8%. For the Daily Guide, 43 original stories were published, providing 43 x 3 = 129 opportunities for inter-media agenda setting in the other three publications. Ghanaweb printed 12 of the 43 stories, the Daily Graphic printed 3, and GNA printed none for a total of 15 out of the possible 129. This is 11.6%. Averaging the two newspaper sites, the overall number of inter-media agenda-setting articles was 29 out of 303, or 9.6%.

For the two non-newspaper sites, a similar approach was taken. For Ghanaweb, a total of 8 original stories were published, and the Daily Graphic and Daily Guide each printed 2 of them, while GNA printed none. This is a total of 4 inter-media agenda-setting stories out of a possible total of 24. For GNA, there were 61 original stories. Ghanaweb printed all 61 of them, Daily Graphic printed 7 and Daily Guide printed 6, for a total of 74 out of a potential 183. Combining the two non-newspaper sites, the total number of inter-media agenda-setting articles was 78 of 211, or 37%. Thus, the newspaper sites, with a percentage of 9.6% for inter-media agenda setting, trailed the non-newspaper sites with a percentage of 37%. The Chi-square test confirms that there is a significant difference between the two groups (χ²= 56.63, p < .001).

It is important to point out that the GNA’s major impact on Ghanaweb is responsible for the high results generated for non newspaper sites. In fact, the GNA had the highest number of its stories used by other media while Ghanaweb had the lowest number of stories copied by the other publications. So it certainly can’t be concluded that the technology of non
newspaper sites is taking over or is a defining factor. Instead, one concludes that GNA has a very powerful inter-media agenda-setting effect on Ghanaweb, but a much weaker one on the two newspapers.

**Research Question 2:** Of Ghanaian online news sources, do those directly controlled or owned by government have more inter-media agenda-setting influence?

To test Research Question 2, the same approach was taken as that used to test Research Question 1. In this case, the four publications were grouped in government-owned (GNA and *Daily Graphic*) and private (Ghanaweb and *Daily Guide*). Table 7 shows the grouped results. In this case, the two combined government-owned sites have an inter-media agenda-setting percentage of 24.6%, or about one in four stories, compared to 12% for the two combined privately owned sites. A chi-square test shows a significant result at the .001 level. As discussed in the results for the first research question, the significant result is due mainly to the powerful inter-media agenda-setting influence that the government-owned GNA had on Ghanaweb, which printed all 61 of the GNA’s stories. But GNA had a much weaker influence on the two newspapers, which each used only about one in 10 of the GNA articles. The other government-owned publication, *Daily Graphic*, had a much weaker inter-media agenda-setting influence – 19% of its stories for Ghanaweb and only 5% for the *Daily Guide*. Thus, the results show that one government-owned site (GNA) had a powerful influence on only Ghanaweb, and a much weaker influence on the two newspapers. These results indicate that simply being government owned does not mean that a publication has a strong inter-media agenda-setting influence. And even though GNA had a strong influence on Ghanaweb, its influence on both the privately owned and government-owned newspapers was much weaker.
Table 7. The level of inter-media and non-inter-media agenda setting in government-controlled media and non-government controlled websites

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Inter-Media</th>
<th>Non Inter-Media</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government Controlled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNA</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Graphic</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>88 (24.6%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>269 (75.4%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>357</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Government</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Controlled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghanaweb</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily Guide</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19 (12%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>138 (88%)</strong></td>
<td><strong>159</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi Square (two tailed test)=10.4553, p<.001

The results generated in answering the second question lend further support to the conclusion that the inter-media agenda setting effects in Ghana vary from one media organization to the another. Considering the results generated by examining Ghanaweb alone, the evidence seems to give credence to the observations of Phiri (1999) that the state media still have a dominant agenda-setting effect due to its large resources and staff. However the GNA’s immense influence on Ghanaweb is all but lost when it comes to the Daily Guide.
Table 8. The level of inter-media and non-inter-media agenda setting for GNA and non-GNA stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Publication</th>
<th>Inter-Media</th>
<th>Non Inter-Media</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GNA</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non GNA</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi Square (One tailed test) = 350.1 p < .0001

Because the findings indicate that GNA plays a strong inter-media agenda-setting role with Ghanaweb, while not taking any articles from any of the other three, a separate chi-square test was conducted to compare GNA’s inter-media agenda-setting influence with the other three publications. To create Table 8, the inter-media agenda-setting impact of GNA on the other three publications was calculated. GNA published 61 original articles, so the combined potential inter-media agenda-setting impact could be 61 x 3 = 183. As Table 8 shows, the three other publications printed 61 (Ghanaweb) + 6 (Daily Guide) + 7 (Daily Graphic) for a total of 74 out of the possible 183. In contrast, GNA printed no articles originating from any of the other three, for a total of 0 out of a possible 8 (Ghanaweb) + 43 (Daily Guide) + 58 (Daily Graphic) = 109. The $\chi^2$ for the table is 351.0, which indicates a high degree of statistical significance. Clearly, GNA is different from the other publications.

Research Question 3: Does inter-media agenda-setting influence for either (1) or (2) above vary depending on the type of news story?

This question seeks to find out the nature of the inter-media agenda-setting influence of the various media across topic categories. The topics were economy, education, crime, health care, culture, political, social, sports and developmental stories. Table 9 lists the
frequency of the different article topics. Political, developmental and crime stories had the highest frequencies with the rest scoring much lower. Developmental stories were articles on the development agenda of the nation, the Millennium Development Goals, non-governmental organization, construction and other national building projects. Political stories were those that had to do with politicians, political parties, elections and the arms of government.

The other initial categories included stories dealing with school, training and literacy which were coded as educational stories. Economic were stories that have to do with finance, taxes, income, social security, standard of living. Crime stories were articles that had to do with robbery, murder, law breaking and other offenses. Health care included stories on sickness/illness, disease, death, HIV/AIDS, national health insurance and hospitals. The Ghanaian way of living, and other norms, values that guard society, art, craft, and festivals were coded as cultural stories. Social stories were stories that were related to social organization and networks, communal way of living, day to day and other general purpose stories. Sports stories were all forms of competitive physical and sporting events.
Table 9 Overall distribution of topics in publications

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crime</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>36.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With respect to overall mentions, political stories led the media agenda. Out of the total number there were 116 (36%) political stories accounting for the highest percentage of stories from a single category. This finding is surprising given that Ghana is a developing nation and one would have expected that development-oriented stories would flood the media agenda. A possible explanation could be the fact that there has been a fair amount of enthusiasm on the political front since regulations and censorship were lifted as part of the new democratic dispensation normally referred to as the national “democratic experiment” in Ghana. It is significantly different from other developed democracies like the United States where other issues such as crime might be dominating media coverage (Kiousis, 2004).
10 shows that both privately owned media were more likely to print political stories. Almost half of their stories were political, compared to one quarter for the two government media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Ghanaweb</th>
<th>Daily Guide</th>
<th>GNA</th>
<th>Daily Graphic</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Economic</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>publication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crime</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>16.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Healthcare</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Culture</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Publication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within</td>
<td>43.7%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>26.2%</td>
<td>23.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>publication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>36.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>publication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sports</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>publication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Development</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>9.3%</td>
<td>31.1%</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>publication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>Count</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>% within</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>publication</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The next issue with the highest coverage was developmental stories numbering 61 (18.9%). It is interesting to note here too that most the stories in this category originated from the GNA (19), thus giving credence to the view that the state media were more concerned with acting as agents of development and thus their attention to developmental journalism. The high number of development stories in Ghanaweb is a direct result of the fact that it printed so many of the GNA stories. On the other hand, the Daily Graphic—also government owned—printed more crime stories than any other topic and almost three times as many crime stories as development stories.

In general the data suggests that the resurgence of democracy in Ghana has led to a bolder, dynamic and robust media in the absence of direct state restrictions. The results generated are in line with other research findings that maintain the use of story frequency to indicate different agenda setting influences (Kiousis 2004, Manheim, 1986).

Inter-media agenda-setting influence was weak for political stories. It was expected that inter-media agenda-setting would be strongest for political stories. Table 11 shows the opposite was true; political stories resulted in less inter-media agenda setting.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Inter-Media</th>
<th>Non Inter-Media</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>33 (28.4%)</td>
<td>83 (71.6%)</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Political</td>
<td>97 (47.1%)</td>
<td>109 (52.9%)</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi Square (One tailed test) =10.7098, p<.0005

In terms of newspaper websites and non newspaper websites, the influence is greater on one non newspaper website--Ghanaweb. Of the total number of political stories appearing
on Ghanaweb 16 (40%) of them were from the GNA which is a non newspaper website. Inter-media agenda setting therefore exists for political stories from GNA to Ghanaweb. The newspaper website *Daily Guide* had the next highest inter-media influence on the non newspaper website Ghanaweb with about six (10.2%) of its political stories printed on Ghanaweb’s front page. The *Daily Graphic* also had one political story from its website appearing on Ghanaweb.

When it came to the next non newspaper website the GNA, none of the political news stories from the other media appeared on the GNA website, therefore showing no inter-media influence. However the *Daily Guide* and the *Daily Graphic*, which are newspaper websites, had two and one political stories respectively coming from the GNA first and then appearing on their websites.

For developmental stories, which in general were the second highest reported category, there was a total of 61 (18.9%) stories. A total of 29 of these stories were on Ghanaweb (21.3%). Five (9.3%) appeared on the *Daily Guide* website and 8 (11.3%) in the *Daily Graphic*. The remaining 19 (31%) were on the Ghana News Agency website.

For *Daily Guide*, 3 of the developmental stories that appeared were from the paper itself and 2 from the GNA. The highest case of inter-media agenda setting was found with respect to the two non newspaper websites, Ghanaweb and the GNA. A total of 24 (79.3%) of the developmental stories on Ghanaweb came from the GNA. Four of these came from the *Daily Graphic* and 2 came from the *Daily Guide*. The *Daily Graphic* also had 3 of its developmental stories coming from its own reporter while 2 came from the GNA. Table 12 compares political and developmental stories. Results show significant inter-media agenda-setting differences (Chi square=12.6551, p<.0005, df=1).
Table 12. The level of inter-media and non inter-media agenda-setting for political and developmental stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Inter-Media</th>
<th>Non Inter-Media</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>33 (28.4%)</td>
<td>83 (71.6%)</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>34 (55.7%)</td>
<td>27 (44.3%)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi square(one tailed test)= 12.6551, p<.0005

Table 13 The level of inter-media and non-inter-media agenda for developmental and non-developmental stories

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Inter-Media</th>
<th>Non Inter-Media</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Developmental</td>
<td>34 (55.7%)</td>
<td>27 (44.3%)</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Developmental</td>
<td>127 (48.7%)</td>
<td>134 (51.3%)</td>
<td>261</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>322</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi Square (One tailed test) = .99, p=N.S

Table 13 shows that although political and developmental stories differ, developmental stories are not significantly different from other stories, indicating that it is political stories that are unique.

Traditional inter-media agenda-setting studies compare rank ordered topics by time periods across media via cross-lagged correlations. If the rank ordered list of topics of one publication at time 1 matches the rank order of a second publication at time 2, this is an indication that the first publication’s agenda might have had an impact on the second publication at time 2. Up to this point, this study has examined the actual flow of specific stories from one publication to another, which provides precise evidence of the influence of one publication on another. However, it is also possible that even though a publication might not carry a specific article, it might be influenced by the topic, causing it to assign reporters
to something in the same topical area. To examine this possibility, traditional cross-lagged correlations were conducted for the four publications. Because the previous analysis already indicated that individual differences rather than private/government or newspaper/non-newspaper differences are more important, cross-lagged correlations compare each of the four publications with the others.

For this analysis, the data from the three-week period were divided into two portions, one for the first week and a half, and the other for the remainder. This is a common procedure used in other studies of inter-media agenda setting.

**Results of Cross-Lagged correlations between topic agendas**

Figures 4-8 show the cross lagged correlations between the topic agendas of the four media under consideration.

Figure 4. Cross-Lagged topic agenda correlations between Ghanaweb and Ghana News Agency

Rozelle-Campbell Baseline = +.367
Figure 5. Cross-Lagged topic agenda correlations between Ghanaweb and Daily Guide

Rozelle-Campbell Baseline= +.384

Figure 6. Cross-Lagged topic agenda correlations between Ghanaweb and Daily Graphic

Rozelle-Campbell Baseline= +.667
Figure 7. Cross-Lagged topic agenda correlations between GNA and Daily Guide

Figure 8. Cross-Lagged topic agenda correlations between GNA and Daily Graphic
As seen in figure 4, there is a high correlation between the issue agendas for Ghanaweb Time 1 and Ghanaweb Time 2. The same can be said for the issue agendas within the GNA at between the two time periods. However comparing the two media, the cross-lagged issue agenda for GNA Time 1 on Ghanaweb at time 2 is significant (.525) since it is above the baseline. However, the cross-lagged between Ghanaweb Time 1 and GNA Time 2 (.35) is not significant. In terms of topics the GNA does have a substantial influence on Ghanaweb across time. The fact that the correlations within the two, both Ghanaweb and GNA at different time periods are very high shows that they maintain a very high consistency in terms of the type of news articles that they cover.

Figure 5 shows correlations between Ghanaweb and Daily Guide. Daily Guide’s issue agendas at Time 1 show a significant correlation with those of Ghanaweb Time 2, but this influence is not present between the issue agenda of Ghanaweb Time 1 in relation to Daily Guide Time 2.
Cross-lagged correlations between Ghanaweb and the Daily Graphic are shown in Figure 6. The correlation between Ghanaweb Time 1 and Daily Graphic Time 2 and then Daily Graphic Time 1 and Ghanaweb Time 2 are both above the baseline.

Figure 7 compares GNA and the Daily Guide. There was no correlation between the Daily Guide’s agenda at Time 1 and the GNA’s agenda at Time 2. However the GNA at Time 1 had a statistically significant correlation (.684) with the Daily Guide’s issue agendas at Time 2. A closer look at the agenda correlation between the GNA and Daily Guide both at time two show that they are above the baseline (.734).

In Figure 8, the issue agenda of GNA at Time 1 did not influence that of Daily Graphic at Time 2 while the agenda of Daily Graphic at Time 1 also did not influence that of the GNA at Time 2. This is the case because the correlation between GNA at Time 1 and Daily Graphic at Time 2 is below the baseline (.734) while that between Daily Graphic Time 1 and GNA Time 2 is below the baseline (.534). Again, the Daily Graphic’s correlations with its own agendas at the two different time periods exceed the baseline (.8667), showing evidence that when it came to specific topics the GNA did not influence the Daily Graphic and vice versa.

For the two newspaper websites, the Daily Guide and the Daily Graphic, figure 9 shows the correlations between them at both time periods are above the baseline. Specifically, the relation between the Daily Graphic at Time 1 and Daily Guide at Time 2 is significant (.784) while that between Daily Guide Time 1 and Daily Guide Time 2 is also significant (.484). This shows both influence each other’s agenda.

The idea of a ‘prestige press’ (Boyle, 2001), which is the notion that prestigious papers tend to influence smaller ones, does not work here given that the GNA and the Daily
Graphic can both be categorized as ‘prestige press’ (Temin and Smith 2002; Press reference, 2006). However the GNA had a stronger inter-media agenda setting influence especially on Ghanaweb and to some extent across board than the Daily Graphic.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

This study provided two different types of tests of the inter-media agenda-setting influence of four media on each other in Ghana. The first type traced each front page story published by each of the four media to see if the stories moved from one medium to the others. In this way, the movement of specific stories was tracked, enabling the researcher to document in a very concrete way the influence that one publication has on another. The second type used the more traditional approach to investigating inter-media agenda setting, in which rank ordered lists of topics from each of the four publications were compared between Time 1 and Time 2, a three-week period. Cross-lagged correlations were used to compare the influence that one publication’s agenda at Time 1 might have on a second publication’s agenda at Time 2.

Two of the publications selected for study were newspaper websites, and the “front page” stories listed on these websites matched the actual stories printed in the newspapers. One newspaper (the *Daily Graphic*) was government owned, and the other (*Daily Guide*) was private. Similarly, two non-newspaper websites were studied. One was government owned (Ghana News Agency, or GNA), and the other was private (Ghanaweb). Some previous studies suggested that traditional newspapers, with their large staffs, would continue to set the inter-media agendas of other publications. Because Ghana has government-owned media, which are now being challenged by emerging private media, the relative inter-media agenda-setting influence of each was also of interest.

Results showed that of the four publications, three – Ghana News Agency, *Daily Graphic*, and *Daily Guide*, generate more than 80% of their own stories with their own staff reporters. Thus, their direct dependence on other media for story content is rather limited.
The first phase of the study, which examined the actual flow of stories from one publication to the others, found that in the case of these three, there was relatively little inter-media agenda setting. Ghana News Agency printed no stories from any of the other three publications. The two newspapers used about one in 10 of the stories from Ghana News Agency, and about one in 20 from each other. The fourth publication, Ghanaweb, is a privately run medium published outside the country. It has only a minimal staff, and generated only 8 original stories during the period of study. Thus, it is very dependent on other media. It printed every front page article the GNA ran, and about one in four or five of the front page articles of the two newspapers. Thus, for Ghanaweb, there is strong evidence of inter-media agenda setting from GNA, and some evidence from the two newspapers. There was no reverse flow from Ghanaweb to GNA. The two newspapers each printed two out of the eight original articles, which suggests some reciprocal flow, but the numbers were too low to draw conclusions.

Results from the cross-lagged correlations in general supported the results of the first phase of the study. GNA’s rank ordered agenda at Time 1 was more highly correlated with the rank ordered agenda of the other three publications at Time 2, suggesting it had inter-media agenda-setting influence. The influence of Ghanaweb’s rank ordered agenda at Time 1 on the other publications at Time 2 was not significant for GNA and the Daily Guide, but there was some influence for the Daily Graphic. The two newspapers both appeared to influence each other across time, and both influenced the Ghanaweb agenda.

The first research question asked: Of Ghanaian online news sources do newspaper web sites or non-newspaper online websites have more inter-media agenda-setting influence? One non-newspaper website, the GNA, had a huge (100%) agenda setting influence on the
other non-newspaper website Ghanaweb. The GNA also had some influence on the newspaper websites *Daily Graphic* 7 (11%) and *Daily Guide* 6 (10%). Conversely the newspaper websites *Daily Graphic* (8.1%) and *Daily Guide* (8.9%) had some inter-media agenda-setting influence on the non newspaper website Ghanaweb but absolutely no influence on the other non newspaper website GNA. The overwhelming role of Ghana News Agency in setting the media agenda for Ghanaweb colors the findings of the first two research questions. A total of 44% of the stories in Ghanaweb come directly from Ghana News Agency, and there is no reciprocal influence. The first research question asked if traditional newspaper websites dominate inter-media agenda-setting in Ghana. The answer is clearly “no.”

While the two newspapers did provide some stories that were used by each other, and by Ghanaweb, the percentages are relatively low. The chi-square test comparing the combined two newspapers with the combined two non-newspaper websites was statistically significant, indicating that the non-newspaper websites had more inter-media agenda-setting influence. But that was due completely to the dominance of Ghana News Agency over Ghanaweb. Ghanaweb had no inter-media agenda-setting influence on Ghana News Agency, and very little on the two newspapers. These results indicate that there can be no generalization about the inter-media agenda-setting influence of newspapers versus non-newspaper websites in Ghana. The results are split.

The second research question sought to find out the differences in inter-media agenda-setting between government controlled news sources and non-government controlled websites. Despite a strong case of inter-media agenda setting of one private medium (Ghanaweb) the same did not occur for the other (*Daily Guide*). Also while one government-
controlled ‘prestigious’ medium (GNA) has had a strong influence on another media, the influence of the other (*Daily Graphic*) was relatively weak.

Similarly, there can be no generalization about the power of government-owned or managed sites versus private sites. Ghana News Agency, a government-owned site, has substantial inter-media agenda-setting influence, but mainly on Ghanaweb, a private non-newspaper site. Ghana News Agency had only minimal inter-media agenda-setting influence on the private newspaper *Daily Guide*. The government-owned newspaper, *Daily Graphic*, on the other hand, had only low levels of inter-media agenda-setting power on either the private newspaper or the private website. The chi-square test which compared government-owned media versus the private media showed government media dominate inter-media agenda setting. But as for the first research question, this is due mainly to the dominance of Ghana News Agency, and not to any pattern of government media. Again, the results are split. The private newspaper, *Daily Guide*, had almost the same inter-media agenda-setting power on the government-owned *Daily Graphic* as the *Daily Graphic* had on the *Daily Guide*. In other words, for the two newspapers, being government-owned or not appeared to have no effect.

The third research question asked whether the inter-media agenda setting influence varies by topic. The results showed a significant difference between political stories and non-political stories, and between development and political stories but not between development stories and others.

These results indicate that Ghana has a strong and independent media. It confirms recent studies that affirm the growth and diversity of media networks in Ghana (Temin and Smith, 2002) thus demonstrating that media recipients will have to look to manifold sources
in order to get a fair knowledge of the major issues happening in the country. In other words, the different media provide alternative sources of news for the public. Yet, it should be noted that Ghanaweb’s ensconced role of mostly reflecting articles from the other media and more especially its wholesale adaptation of news stories from the GNA could serve a useful purpose as a compilation of news from multiple news outlets in the country.

Furthermore, the results clearly show that the GNA is a major news media supplier in Ghana. Still, there is enough reason to suggest that the private media in Ghana do not parrot the agenda of the government controlled media. This is because although the GNA had an exceptional amount of influence on Ghanaweb, the *Daily Guide* by contrast used fewer stories from both the GNA and the *Daily Graphic*.

This study shows that the inter-media agenda-setting concept in Ghana does not necessarily relate to whether a news medium is a solely online medium or a newspaper website. Nor does it have to do with government control.

Reese and Danielian, (1989) mention the concept of news “manufacturing” and “discoveries.” By looking at how many of the stories were original stories and those that came from different media we are able to distinguish those that were manufactured from the media themselves and those that were discovered in other media and reported or copied. In this study the Ghana News Agency, *Daily Graphic* and the *Daily Guide* were leaders in manufacturing their own stories. In a developing country like Ghana, where media pluralism only recently came about as a result of the shift to democracy, the mass media have become major independent sources of information.

The erosion of state monopoly did not upend the government controlled GNA’s leading inter-media agenda-setting role, but it has certainly led to a more autonomous press
culture in Ghana. The implications of this could be far reaching for the expression of divergent views in national discourse, free expression and the portrayal of pluralism in the media landscape. In other words while media pluralism seems to have taken root, the private media will have to move beyond this to actually create and set the media agenda in order to wield greater influence. In summary Ghana’s democracy while nascent yields an expanding, independent and competitive press system.

Limitations and suggestions for future study

This study has several limitations. First, the question arises whether a longer period of study would have generated different results. Although the election months are not near, it is not known whether different results would have been generated had this study been done in a non-election year.

Secondly the influence of ideology in shaping a medium’s agenda is also important in determining what it considers salient. In choosing which topics it considers salient, a medium’s ideology could be a good thing to look at which can explain why certain topics are chosen over others.

Thirdly it would have been interesting to have coded for other specific media such as radio, television, film or magazines. This is in light of the fact that studies have found a natural proclivity of Ghanaians towards radio which is also a cheap and easy-to-use medium (Temin and Smith, 2002). Tanjong and Gaddy, (1994) also found that international magazines influence the international news agenda of the Nigerian public. This would have given some insight into future inter-media agenda setting studies in Ghana or other African countries.
The inter-media agenda-setting theory has expanded and gone on to look at both “within- and between-channel agenda-setting effects” (Sweester, K., Golan, Guy J & Wanta, Wayne 2008, p.199). One of the most significant contributions of this study is to illustrate that Ghana possesses a vigorous if not vibrant media landscape. It shows that while one non newspaper state owned GNA had a substantial inter-media agenda-setting effect on the private non newspaper website Ghanaweb, the other mediums under consideration such as the privately owned Daily Guide and state owned Daily Graphic have the potential of originating their own stories. The operationalization of the media news sources can further be used and developed for other inter-media or general agenda-setting studies in Ghana.

Furthermore I believe the results of this study will be helpful in understanding the media landscape in Ghana, future studies in Ghana/African mass communication studies and specifically the inter-media agenda-setting theory in Ghana. It also would be interesting to find out the tone of the stories from the government controlled media vis a vis the private media considering for instance that the former first lady of Ghana Nana Konadu Agyeman once said “The state owned media are supposed to support the government because they are paid from the government resources” (Temin and Smith 2002 p. 585).

This content analytic work could be supported by in-depth qualitative interviews with editors to offer insight as to how they select their front page stories and what sort of relationship exists between the media houses and their staff. It may also uncover reasons why certain type of stories from certain media houses makes it to the front page of their counterparts and not some others.
REFERENCES


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APPENDIX: CODING MANUAL

Unit of analysis: News articles

1. What is the category of the news story? Choose one of the following.
   a. Political
   b. Developmental
   c. Economy
   d. Education
   e. Crime
   f. Healthcare
   g. Culture
   h. Social
   i. Sports

   a. Political: stories that have to do with politicians, political parties, elections and the arms of government
      Example: 40,000 people register to replace their Voter IDs in WR

   b. Developmental: stories were articles on the development agenda of the nation, the Millennium Development Goals, Non-governmental organization, construction and other national building projects.

   c. Economy: stories that have to do with finance, taxes, income, social security, standard of living and general well
      Example: GSB worried over influx of imported inferior goods despite efforts

   d. Education: stories dealing with school, training and literacy
      Example: 125 pupils out of school due to collapse of school building in 2006

   e. Crime: Robbery, Murder, law breaking and other offenses
      Example: Farmer in court for sex with an imbecile

   f. Healthcare: Hospitals, Sickness/Illness, disease, death, HIV/AIDS, National health insurance
      Example: Don't scratch your body with sea sand, Chicken Pox patients advised

   g. Culture: Right or wrong situations, chieftaincy and other norms, values that guide society
      Example: Oman Fm brings Christians together

   h. Social: other general issue, growth of the state, day to day issues, social security, pension,
      Example: One-month-old baby declared a witch?
j. *Sports*: stories were all forms of competitive physical and sporting events.
Example: Juve chase Muntari

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