

## **A Corpus-Linguistic Analysis of News Coverage in Kenya's *Daily Nation* and *The Times* of London**

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This study uses institutional theory, which suggests that groups of organizations within the same field, such as the press, develop shared characteristics and unique tendencies that reflect their particular social and political systems, to advance empirical understanding of non-Western media organizations. This research uses word frequency comparison to examine word use across two newspapers representative of press systems in different political and social environments. The news styles show evidence of norms shared across significant cultural and geographic distances and of influences unique to particular cultural and regulative contexts—suggesting that news organizations adapt to both shared global standards and institutional constraints unique to surrounding cultures and that, despite the globalization of journalism culture, local context still matters.

*Keywords: journalism, Kenya, United Kingdom, institutional theory, corpus linguistics*

The role of mass media in democratic governance has been studied extensively in stable Western democracies, where the mass media have been conceptualized as an institution (Ryfe, 2006a). Their role in areas with unstable or evolving democratic governance is less studied, perhaps because the media in such contexts are often not free from government constraints and thus do not fill a liberal enforcement and accountability role (Waisbord, 2007). But the fact that mass media in such countries are subject to government control does not negate their importance in informing social practices. Over the past century, investigative reporters worldwide have impacted their communities, from uncovering tales of corruption in China and Brazil to broadcasting information about food shortages in India and Africa to investigating genital cutting in Liberia, as documented by Anya Schiffrin (2014). In East Africa, recent events indicate that the government views the mass media as a powerful force. Radio broadcaster Joshua Arap Sang went on trial at the International Criminal Court for allegedly inciting national violence after Kenya's 2007 election. Prior to that country's 2013 election, government and nongovernmental organization officials made a point of emphasizing the power of the media in ensuring a peaceful election and transition of power. In Rwanda, radio broadcasts and newspaper content are believed to have primed the population for the ethnic violence of 1994.

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This article provides insight into the nature of news rules as norms created by global and local influences that affect news style. It extends literature on institutional theory beyond Western journalism and examines the ways that institutional differences manifest in a newspaper representative of a key media outlet in a semi-stable developing country with democratic governance. Using analytical tools from corpus linguistics, I examine word use in Kenya's *Daily Nation* and *The Times* of London, two newspapers with some shared cultural background that developed within vastly different institutional frameworks, to look for similarities and differences in news style.

### **The Institutional Characteristics of Media**

Three primary aspects of institutional theory have been applied to journalism and mass media (e.g., Cook, 1998; Sparrow, 2006): the concept of path dependency, the influence of isomorphism, and the nature and structure of rules. I will describe each, but focus on rules as the most crucial concept to this analysis.

*Path dependency* implies an institutional tendency to resist change and reproduce along a stable, settled trajectory determined by salient historical events, even when a particular practice is not economically efficient (Ryfe, 2006a; Thelen, 1999). This framework is useful in explaining, for instance, why newspapers across the United States shifted their quoting practices in similar ways through the late 19th and early 20th centuries, responding to the breakdown of the third-party system on the national political stage rather than elements of individual economic environments (Ryfe & Kimmelmeier, 2011). Path dependency also helps explain how press institutions developing under different political constraints could develop different norms and purposes (Starr, 2004) and allows for an analysis that incorporates history while granting actors a degree of agency.

*Isomorphism* is a constraining process that encourages homogenization by forcing one unit in a population to shift to resemble others facing the same set of environmental conditions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Three categories fall under this broad term: coercive isomorphism is imposed by political influence and a desire to appear legitimate; mimetic isomorphism occurs when institutions become more similar as a response to uncertainty from ambiguous goals, unfamiliar technologies, or other pressures; and normative isomorphism stems from professionalization and the desire of members of an occupation to maintain standard practices and procedures (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Several types of isomorphism together can pressure an institution to conform to existing or defined practices and institutional structures. The concepts of path dependency and isomorphism suggest that institutions evolve slowly over time and take the shape they do in response to pressures both internal to the profession or organization and those external from the environment—either by mandate or from a desire to reduce uncertainty.

Rules are seen as rationalized myths that lend stability, legitimacy, resources, and longevity to the organizations adopting them (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). They are normative expectations of correct behavior and, in the context of news production, can be invoked by a journalist's obligations, values, and commitments (Ryfe, 2006b). Rules constrain actors to behave "appropriately" at individual, organizational, and interorganizational levels (March & Olsen, 1998). As organizational practices, rules can be shaped by influences that are regulative (i.e., law- and sanction-based), normative (i.e., social and ethical obligation-based), or cultural-cognitive (i.e., shared logic and beliefs)—or some combination of the three

(Scott, 2013). They create formal structures as impersonal prescriptions that specify appropriate behavior and are beyond individual organizational ability to change (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Rules are procedures that constrain actors to abide by particular norms.

These concepts offer a useful lens through which to explore how journalism is impacted by cultural and social surroundings and history, and especially to pursue a comparative understanding of journalism in different institutional contexts. Institutional theories of organizational change can explain how and why news organizations shift in response to changing environmental pressures. This relationship has been examined primarily in the United States (Lowrey, 2011) and in European countries (Domingo, 2008). Institutional theory also provides a framework to expand the study of international journalism culture as a set of situationally derived values and practices (Hanitzsch, 2007; Hanitzsch et al., 2011). Recent arguments for the impact of globalization on journalism suggest that journalists around the world share some similar norms and practices (Waisbord, 2013). An institutional perspective on this discussion yields a rich account of the ways mass media guard, maintain, and change their practices in response to internal and external forces. The present study examines news content, the physical manifestation of the various norms, rules, and pressures shaping the work of journalism, and interprets differences between outlets in light of institutional theory.

The idea that enduring norms have global reach suggests that, wherever journalism is practiced, it has shared institutional qualities even if there are wide interpretive differences in how one should pursue and produce news. New institutionalism emphasizes the potential influence of outside forces and sets a foundation for comparative analyses of media fields and organizations operating in different institutional frameworks (Benson, 2004; Sparrow, 2006). However, many assumptions of institutionalism have yet to be examined outside the West. An institutional perspective allows for an exploration of the ways journalism perpetuates the status quo in a given context; ways the mass media maintain a presence and impact in their immediate and global environments; and the variation and similarity of media outlets within shared environments (Sparrow, 2006). Institutionalism also provides a context in which to examine change in media systems both within and outside Western democracies (Hughes, 2003; Pan, 2000) and to examine how media systems differ in their political involvement, response to the unexpected, and international and other news coverage (Sparrow, 2006). This study advances understanding of global journalism with a cross-national examination of news style in institutional context.

### **Non-Western News**

With the exception of several studies surrounding the Arab Spring (Howard & Hussain, 2013; Lotan et al., 2011), and studies examining the media's role and potential for development initiatives (Harvey, 2011; Livingston & Walter-Drop, 2014; McAnany, 2012), research on non-Western journalism is unsystematic (Sparks, 2013). Recent moves to systematize this area include the Worlds of Journalism survey (Hanitzsch et al., 2011), which compares attitudes and perceptions among journalists cross-nationally. In an edited volume, Hallin and Mancini (2011) extend to non-Western countries a theoretical discussion of the press shaped by political and social systems. These projects shape a growing discussion on the nature of news across political and cultural contexts and shed light on news production as it is practiced in non-Western countries

Many factors make media systems in East Africa, and Kenya in particular, conceptually important. Over recent years the Kenyan political system has undergone critical change, including a new constitution to government reforms on several levels. That change is occurring within the context of the existing democratic system (rather than through overt revolution). This provides an opportunity to observe the role of mass media in a country where democracy is taking shape through shifts within existing forms of governance. Kenya provides an arena to study the nature of media systems and style through political change that seeks to preserve rather than displace the overarching political institution (Mahoney & Thelen, 2010).

In sub-Saharan Africa, a growing body of research paints a picture of media by focusing on practices (for instance, brown envelope journalism in a special issue of *African Communication Research*), on ideological constraints and concerns facing journalists operating under competing and occasionally contradictory sets of rules (Kupe, 2013), and on the shape of media systems more broadly (Skjerdal, 2012). Some studies examine newsmaking in depth (e.g., Hasty, 2005). But attempts to systematically analyze content are few and relatively old (e.g., Bourgault, 1995), and most such studies rely on methods that look for meaning and patterns in texts based on imposed categories of meaning, which can prove problematic in a context where most categories have been developed based on scholarly understanding of Western journalism. This study adds to the literature by undertaking a systematic analysis of a key Kenyan news outlet, navigating the theoretical space between a descriptive analysis devoid of comparative parameters (unhelpful in understanding how an African media outlet fits in the global practice of journalism) and an analysis that imposes Western theoretical categories in ways that stifle the understanding of unique practice and form. To do this, I analyze textual differences and similarities comparatively and inductively.

### **Analyzing Institutional Differences**

Manifestations of the same institution (i.e., democracy or mass media) likely look different across social contexts. Mass media in sub-Saharan Africa have many features of Western journalism, but because of the different social and institutional contexts, one might expect the journalism practiced there to look different from that practiced in liberal Western democracies. One way this difference could appear is in media content, which tends to look similar across outlets in the same sociopolitical context (Bennett, 1990) and to be affected by contextual institutional values (Benson, 2006; Hallin & Mancini, 2004).

The study of language use in media texts can shed light on media structure and values (Bell, 1991). Automated phrase-frequency lists from newspapers have been compared with congressional records to measure newspaper slant (Gentzkow & Shapiro, 2010). Newspapers have been compared cross-culturally to determine national cultural representations through headline analysis (Develotte & Rechniewski, 2001); examine use of "pseudo-titles" (Meyer, 2002); examine newspaper use of metaphor (Krennmayr, 2015); examine language use over time (Baayen & Renouf, 1996); and compare newspaper coverage with other textual discussions of a topic (Baker & McEnery, 2005). Researchers have also used corpus-linguistic analysis to look at particular topics, including an examination of refugee discourse through concordance analysis (which studies the uses and meanings of selected words by examining them in the context of three or four surrounding words in the text) (Gabrielatos & Baker, 2008) and

examination of the genetically modified food debate through word analysis (Cook, Robbins, & Pieri, 2006). Word counts are also used to generate textual topics or themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003) and genre (Stamatatos, Fakotakis, & Kokkinakis, 2000).

Following this tradition, the present study examines news style—the form and structure of journalistic writing (Johnson-Cartee, 2005)—using methods adapted from corpus linguistics. Corpus linguistics, the study of language as expressed in real-world texts, provides useful tools for understanding patterns and differences in bodies of text, or corpora. Word-frequency comparison is one of the best ways to determine corpus similarity and homogeneity (Hunston, 2006; Johansson & Hofland, 1989; Kilgarriff, 1997). Word-frequency methods, particularly when combined with other methods such as concordance analysis and topic modeling, highlight differences between bodies of texts for analysis. This methodological toolkit lends itself well to an analysis of writing styles, highlighting differences in word choice and the contextual understanding of individual words.

The method examines individual words over many texts and integrates quantitative methods (to paint a picture of the entire body of text) with qualitative methods (to examine select parts of the text in greater contextual detail). Corpus linguistics tools include examinations of word frequencies (lists of the *N* most frequently occurring words in a text); phrase frequencies (lists of phrases longer than one word); concordance analysis; and keyword-in-context analysis, a type of concordance analysis that examines statistically important words in the text. Studies utilizing corpus linguistics typically first isolate significant features, such as words or phrases, from large quantities of text, and then analyze those features in their contexts, thus providing the tools needed to compare bodies of texts and draw conclusions about differences in writing style. Informed by corpus linguistics, I examined word-frequency lists drawn from large quantities of text and compared them with each other to draw conclusions about word use and its implications for the institutional features of the news outlets in question.

### **Kenyan and British Press Cases**

This analysis compared Kenyan and British newspapers. Key similarities and differences between these two countries make them ideal cases for a news-style comparison. Kenyan mass media first took shape as settler presses instituted by the United Kingdom at the turn of the 19th century (Huff, 1968; Scotton, 1973). The Kenyan press thus built on and responded to foundational values, inherited from the British colonial press, of mass media as a tool to inform and enhance patriotism. From there, African-language media began using that political power to promote African independence (Scotton, 1973); the *Daily Nation*, the newspaper examined in this study, formed with a desire to promote African interests (Abuoga & Mutere, 1988). The press in Kenya developed along a trajectory that emphasized the nation-building power of African- and English-language local press (Scotton, 1973) and have recently been characterized as exhibiting elements of “journalism for social change” (Skjerdal, 2012). The *Daily Nation* is known as the most independent and influential news source in Kenya, has a reputation for being a high-quality press leader in the region, and is located in one of many countries in sub-Saharan Africa generally considered to have an unstable political system.

Meanwhile, the British press developed into a strongly professionalized, self-regulating, neutral commercial press in the liberal model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). The two newspapers I examine—*The Times* of the United Kingdom, published in London, and Kenya's *Daily Nation*, published in Nairobi—fill similar roles within their respective communities. Britain's *Times* has a reputation for being the most independent elite-oriented newspaper in the country with one of the highest circulations, and is representative of a country whose press system is situated among stable and strong institutional powers. Institutional theory suggests these two press systems developed along trajectories that best fit their individual environments, but that they still share some norms based on shared professional identities (perhaps rooted in colonialism, and perhaps influenced by the contemporary global community of journalists) and the pressure of normative isomorphism from contemporary journalists, both nearby and globally.

### Research Question

Institutional theory and corpus linguistics were used to address the following research question:

*RQ: What are the similarities and differences in word use between The Times of London and Kenya's Daily Nation, two newspapers representative of press systems whose institutional characteristics have developed within different political and social environments?*

### Method

To answer this question, I downloaded and examined all content indexed by Factiva<sup>2</sup> from the news sections of *The Times* and the *Daily Nation* during 2013. A news-section comparison maintained an equivalent comparison across outlets—each has a news section—and excluded most irrelevant items such as recipes, music reviews, opinion columns, and wire stories (the latter are primarily found in international news sections and could bias the sample to appear more similar across the two newspapers). This process yielded a total of 53,638 news articles: 1,992 from the *Daily Nation* (750,720 processed words) and 51,646 from *The Times* (19,285,619 processed words).<sup>3</sup>

Using WordStat, a textual analysis software, I used this sample to create two lemmatized<sup>4</sup> word-frequency lists, each listing one newspaper's most common words (Kilgarriff, 1997). From these lists, I deleted conjunctions, infinitives, and prepositions, along with words that appeared in the Factiva metadata for each article, and retained the 500 most common words in each list after those exclusions. This study examined similarities and differences, and so followed an emergent method of iterative analysis in comparing the two lists. Because relative frequency of different parts of speech can reveal structural

<sup>2</sup> I chose Factiva rather than LexisNexis or another news database because only Factiva archived both the *Daily Nation* and *The Times* over the time period under analysis.

<sup>3</sup> The difference in the number of articles between news outlets does not affect this study, because I compared word frequencies (i.e., a ratio measure), not actual word occurrence. Where I compare word counts in the figures, I scale the data.

<sup>4</sup> Lemmatization is a common analytical process that converts words to a more limited number of canonical forms—for instance, converting plural to singular words and past-tense to present-tense verbs.

choices in texts (Biber, Conrad, & Reppen, 1998) and split the word lists into smaller functional groups for more detailed comparison, I next examined the two word lists comparatively by parts of speech (pronouns, adjectives, nouns, and verbs).

This project relied on denotative classifications of various parts of speech, but adjusted and adapted where such a change seemed to make the analysis clearer.<sup>5</sup> Where a word's part of speech was ambiguous, I tallied the word use by starting at a random point in the text and counting use in the first 100 instances, or 10% of total uses, whichever number was smaller.

I counted words by part of speech used, even if the word occurred within a proper noun. Within parts of speech, I categorized words organically. For adjectives, I followed the order in which they appear in written and spoken English: determiner, opinion, descriptive (i.e., size/shape/color), location (i.e., nationality/geographic), and purpose/qualifier. There were about a dozen adverbs, and I grouped these separately. In analyzing nouns, I first categorized the nouns by proper and common nouns then added a category for titles and roles (i.e., *president*, *Mr.*, *teacher*). Following these steps, I looked at word orientation—descriptive versus evaluative, cooperative versus conflictual, and negative versus positive—each of which can be indicators of a journalist's ideology (Hallin & Mancini, 2004). I then examined word groupings to look for related concepts and topic groupings, and concluded with a keyword-in-context analysis to analyze the use of specific words.

### Data Summary

The steps outlined above yielded data on parts of speech used, word sense, and topics. The corpora are briefly described here by part of speech.

**Nouns** are the most prevalent word form in each newspaper: There are 273 nouns in the *Daily Nation's* word list and 239 nouns in *The Times's* list. In both newspapers, political nouns feature prominently. There are 142 **verbs** in the *Daily Nation's* top 500 words, and about one-third of them ( $n = 40$ ) are unique to the *Daily Nation*. There are 151 verbs in *The Times's* top 500 words, and 49 of them are unique to that newspaper. In both papers, *be*, *have*, and *say* are the three most common words and comprise about 8% of all words used. There are 85 **adjectives** in the *Daily Nation*, and most refer to geography, nationality, or politics. *The Times* uses 69 adjectives in its top 500 words; these include many temporal and political markers. There are 23 **pronouns** in the *Daily Nation's* top 500 words. These include various gendered pronouns referring to men and women (*he*, *she*, etc.), and first-person singular and plural pronouns (*I*, *my*, *we*, *our*). *The Times* uses about 10% more pronouns, with 33 in the top-500 word list. These include the same masculine and feminine pronouns as are used in the *Daily Nation*, along with first-person singular and plural pronouns.

From this corpus several observations can be drawn about topics favored by each publication. Words related to politics and education generally occur more frequently in the *Daily Nation: Kenyatta*

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<sup>5</sup> This decision follows traditionally accepted corpus-linguistic procedures, where word meanings are described with reference to the linguist's intuition and contexts in which terms appear.

(generally referring to Uhuru Kenyatta, elected president of Kenya in April 2013) occurs 1,041 times and is one of the most commonly occurring proper nouns in the *Daily Nation*. Education is also a common topic, often with a focus on teachers, schools, and Kenya's teachers' union (*teacher* and *school* are among the most common words in the *Daily Nation* corpus). In *The Times* corpus, by contrast, no one topic is overwhelmingly represented. Political words are present, but they occur in comparable frequencies to words referring to private life, such as *child*, *home* (used as a noun), *family*, *film*, *health*, *death*, and *hospital*. These word choices highlight different focuses apparent in the two newspapers: The *Daily Nation* tends to focus on citizenship and nation building, while *The Times* highlights social and private life alongside political engagement.

### Data Analysis

Analysis of the above data, presented in the following observations, shows evidence of institutional rules at work, both in the similarities between the outlets (highlighted in Observation 1) and differences (highlighted with respect to general conventions in Observation 2). These differences are particularly evident in coverage of geography and politics, as reflected in Observation 3.

**Observation 1:** The two newspapers use major writing conventions similarly, in ways that correspond with global journalistic practices.

The *Daily Nation* and *The Times* exhibit similar linguistic patterns indicative of global journalistic practices. The two papers exhibit equivalent levels of reliance on language indicating absence or negativity and show comparable discrepancies in their treatment of men and women.

### Language of Absence

In both newspapers, the word *not* is one of the 15 most common words and the most frequently used adjective. In one *Daily Nation* article ("LSK Criticizes State for Frustrating Human Rights Work," October 11), the word appears four times, and each occurrence connotes failure: "the selection panel did not forward any names"; "the President did not . . . nominate one person"; "the AG seems not to play his duty"; "the KNCHR [Kenya National Commission on Human Rights] has not been able to undertake its constitutional mandate." In a *Times* article ("Nurses 'Too Busy' to Provide Basic Care for Their Patients," July 29), the term is again used to convey failure: "[the nurses] had not done necessary tasks"; "they had not had time to do it"; "11% had not given necessary treatments." These examples suggest journalists and their sources in both Kenya and the United Kingdom favor negatively valenced sentence construction. Adjectives with a positive valence, including the word *good*, also appear, but they are much less frequent. The frequent use of *not* suggests that the writing style of both newspapers tends to emphasize absence, lack, or failure rather than a positive occurrence; this might be considered evidence of the focus on aberration and negativity traditionally considered journalistic news values (Gans, 1979; Harcup & O'Neill, 2001).

### Gender Treatment

The *Daily Nation* and *The Times* have similar discrepancies in their textual treatment of men and women. Compared to women, men are more often given voice and honorifics. In both newspapers, men

are more likely to be given direct voice through the use of *said*, while women are referenced through the objective, possessive pronoun *her*. In the *Daily Nation*, men are given voice through the phrases *he said* or *said he* once for every three masculine pronouns used. Women, by contrast, are only given voice directly or indirectly in the *Daily Nation* once for every five feminine pronouns used in the text. In *The Times*, men are cited once for every 10 masculine pronouns in the text, and women are cited once for every 12 feminine pronouns used.

Voice also is seen in the relative frequency of gendered pronouns in the text, and the phrases within which those pronouns appear. Both subject pronouns (*he, she*) and object pronouns (*his, her/hers*) appear in the text, but subject pronouns are more frequent. In both newspapers, men appear far more often than women, and they are more likely to appear as subjects when they are mentioned. Women, on the other hand, are about equally as likely to appear as an object or a subject. In the *Daily Nation*, the word *he* appears more than twice as often as *his* (5,592 occurrences for the former and 2,614 occurrences for the latter, for a ratio of 2:1), while *she* and *her* occur with similar frequency (1,390 occurrences for the former and 1,138 for the latter, for a ratio of 1.2:1). In *The Times*, *he* occurs 139,137 times, and *his* occurs 91,307 times, for a ratio of 1.5:1. *She* occurs 55,418 times, and *her* occurs 51,753 times, for a ratio of 1.1:1. Overall, men are more likely to appear in the newspaper, and they are more likely to be treated as linguistic subjects when they do appear. Women, on the other hand, appear less often and are more likely to be linguistic objects.

There is an even greater discrepancy in the two newspapers' use of honorifics. The masculine title *Mr.* is much more frequent than the female equivalents *Mrs.* and *Ms.* In the *Daily Nation*, *Mr.* is the fifth most common word in the sample and appears 5,165 times in the newspaper. *Miss* and *Mrs.* occur much less frequently; *Ms.* appears 763 times, and *Mrs.* appears 217 times. In *The Times*, *Mr.* appears 48,483 times, while *Ms.* appears 10,621 times and *Mrs.* appears 4,991 times. These comparisons provide evidence that men are more likely than women to be given titles when they do appear in newspaper articles. This is evidence of an expected reliance on convention, as newspapers rely heavily on often-male elite sources (Zoch & Turk, 1998).

The *Daily Nation* and *The Times* share substantial similarities in their news style; this is evident in the number of words shared across the two papers' lists of words used with more than 0.1% frequency, in similar treatments of men and women, and in similar reliance on journalistic conventions such as attribution. Future studies can address to what extent these similarities are due to common language use or inherited from colonial influence. Regardless of causal factors, the similarities provide new evidence that journalists across cultural, political, and geographic borders today share similar senses of news and newsworthiness (Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006; Waisbord, 2013) and evidence that, even in dissimilar social and cultural situations, journalists follow some similar institutional rules that govern their professional behavior in news style (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). This behavior is indicative of normative isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), a hallmark of institutional, organizational behavior.

**Observation 2:** Within these prominent journalistic conventions, word usage in the *Daily Nation* and *The Times* expresses some cultural and political norms of the papers' home nations.

Variations in noun use, references to time, and the relative frequency of self-referential pronouns suggest that the *Daily Nation's* news style is influenced by the surrounding culture's collectivist identity and prioritization of verbal and written storytelling, while the news style of *The Times* is influenced by its culture's individualistic identity and monochronic emphasis.

### **Nouns**

The *Daily Nation* relies more heavily than *The Times* on nouns among its most frequently used words, indicating an emphasis on concrete storytelling. Many of these nouns emphasize particular characters (e.g., *Kenyatta*, *report*, *teacher*) and references to counties and their governments. One key feature of oral discourse-influenced writing, which has previously been documented in news outlets throughout sub-Saharan Africa, is an emphasis on specific and concrete details (Bourgault, 1995). Situational thought patterns and narrative, which involve concrete referents such as nouns, are also emphasized in cultures with strong oral communication traditions (Ong, 1982/2002). In addition, the noun-to-verb ratio suggests level of formality (Biber et al., 1998). Both newspapers use at least twice as many nouns as verbs, but the *Daily Nation* relies slightly more on nouns over verbs, indicating that the writing style in the Kenyan newspaper is more formal. The *Daily Nation's* longer list of nouns suggests a reliance on storytelling norms common in cultures with long histories of oral communication.

### **Time References**

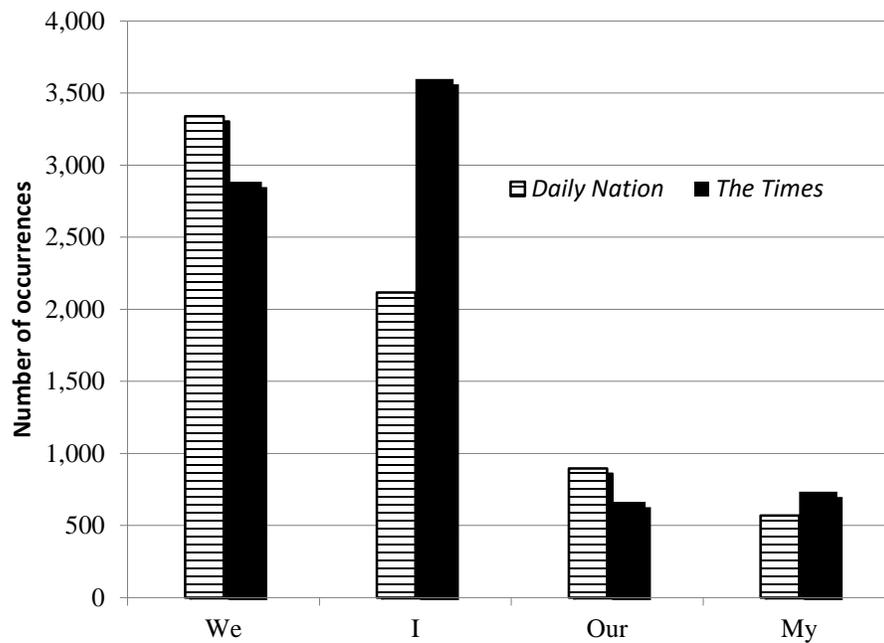
The two newspapers also refer to time differently with patterns one might expect of polychronic and monochronic cultures. *The Times* uses 23 time-referential adjectives, while the *Daily Nation* uses only 15. This is a small difference in percentage (27% of adjectives for *The Times* vs. 22% of adjectives in the *Daily Nation*), but different approaches to time become more apparent when examining individual words used in each list. The *Daily Nation* relies on primarily comparative, or relative, temporal adjectives, such as *early*, *late*, *new*, *old*, and *immediate*. *The Times* uses most of these words, but also includes the words *tomorrow* and *today*, specific temporal markers that place an event or occurrence on a calendar. Neither list includes *past*, but *The Times* includes *present* and *future*. Through all these word choices, the *Daily Nation's* list suggests a news style influenced by a polychronic culture that is concerned with people and the present moment more than schedules, while *The Times's* list reflects a news style influenced by a monochronic culture that values timekeeping, schedules, and calendars (Hall, 1983).

### **Pronouns**

Pronoun use across the two newspapers, shown in Figure 1, suggests that the *Daily Nation's* news style emphasizes collective identity, while the news style of *The Times* emphasizes individual identity (Hofstede, 1983). The pronoun *our* is the only pronoun unique to the *Daily Nation* in the list of words occurring with greater than 0.1% frequency. To understand how *Daily Nation* reporters use the word, I performed a keyword-in-context search and examined the first 200 occurrences of *our* in the text. Of the first 200 instances sampled, the word *our* appears within a quote 194 times. When not used in a quote, it refers to national identity or infrastructure, as in "our country and neighboring states"; "our roads"; "our respect for Kenya"; and "our goal of safe and secure communities." When used in a quote, the word

typically represents the speaker’s attempt to speak for a group, as in “our total revenue”; “our investigations”; “our people”; and “our culture.” The tendency to invoke collective identity in speech indicates a priority of collective identity—not necessarily at the expense of personal identity (*I* is also used frequently), but certainly in comparison with the British context of *The Times*, where *our* appears much less frequently.

The word *our* is one of a set of pronouns that highlight the newspapers’ respective cultural orientations: first-person pronouns *I*, *our*, *my*, and *we*. Most instances of these four pronouns in each newspaper appear in quotes. Thus, use of these pronouns does not imply that reporters are using personal voice, but it does send a message about how quoted sources perceive their agency. In *The Times*, singular personal pronouns are more frequent than the plural in both subjective and objective cases, while the reverse is true in the *Daily Nation*. In addition, the relative frequency points to the importance of one over the other in text patterns. In *The Times*, the singular and plural pronouns are grouped closely together (*I* is followed closely by *we*, with only *his* in between; *my* and *our* are the 18th and 19th most common pronouns, respectively). In the *Daily Nation*, five pronouns separate *we* from *I*, and two separate *our* from *my*. Whereas *The Times* shows a slight preference for singular pronouns, the *Daily Nation* shows a more pronounced preference for plural pronouns.



**Figure 1. Relative frequency of first-person pronouns in the Daily Nation and The Times. Data from The Times have been scaled down by a factor of 25.69 to give equivalent word counts to the Daily Nation.**

These differences reflect how Kenya is generally more collectivist than the United Kingdom, which is fairly individualistic (Hofstede, 1983; Ma & Schoeneman, 1997), and suggest that the rules and norms shaping journalistic practice are influenced by local cultures as well as global norms and historical development. Collectivists tend to identify themselves as group members with shared responsibility for work and success or failure of a project, and individuals in such cultures typically have a “we” consciousness, while people in individualist cultures are more likely to be driven by personal beliefs, values, and attitudes (Hofstede, 1983; Ochieng & Price, 2010).

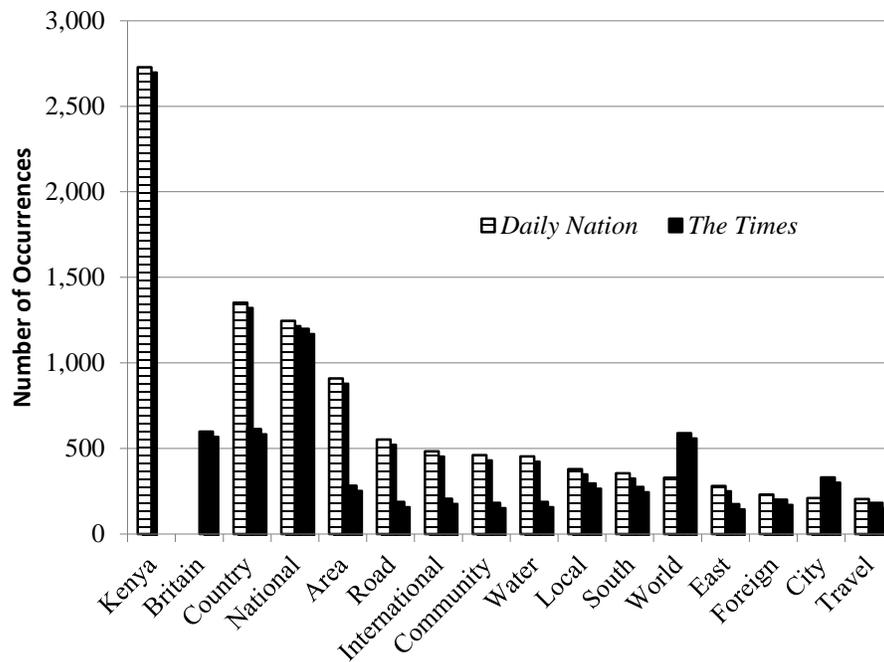
The relative prevalence of plural pronouns in the *Daily Nation* shows that news style can change to reflect aspects of national culture, as *we* and *our* each appear about 38% more often than the related singular pronouns *I* and *my*, respectively. In *The Times*, *I* appears about 20% more often than *we*, and *my* appears only about 10% more often than *our*, indicating that individual identity holds greater weight than collectivist identity in the British cultural context. Nouns, treatment of time, and first-person pronoun use all suggest that institutionalized news style is influenced by a news organization’s unique cultural surroundings.

**Observation 3:** These newspapers exhibit different understandings of geopolitical identity: The *Daily Nation* emphasizes nearby events and nation building, whereas *The Times* emphasizes presence in global politics and citizen participation.

A comparison of the relative frequency of the same geographic terms and political terms indicates different focuses in each newspaper. Using an iterative topic grouping process, I compared words that appeared in both newspapers and seemed thematically related to geography or politics. This analysis revealed that the *Daily Nation* focuses on local, national, and East African news, with a heavy emphasis on political coverage via power centers of politics; *The Times*, by contrast, focuses on global news, with a lighter emphasis on politics that highlights the role of citizens in political processes.

### **Geography**

Figure 2 shows geographic terms used in both newspapers (along with the terms *Kenya* and *Britain*, included as a comparative reference point).



**Figure 2. Geographic terms in the Daily Nation and The Times. Data from The Times have been scaled down by a factor of 25.69 to give equivalent word counts to the Daily Nation.**

The *Daily Nation* tends to focus on the nation of Kenya, with relatively little emphasis on world regions beyond East Africa. *The Times*, by contrast, mentions *world* about as often as *Britain* and uses the word *national* more frequently than it names any particular country. Next to *Kenya*, the word *country* appears more often than any other geographic term in the *Daily Nation*. While the term has multiple uses, a 10% keyword-in-context sample shows that the word is nearly always (99% of the time) used to refer to a national territory or region (often Kenya, but occasionally neighboring or faraway locations, including the United States, Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia, and the United Kingdom). For instance, it refers to Kenya in a story about a visit from the Nigerian president: "Nigerian President Goodluck Jonathan is expected in the country Thursday evening for a three-day visit" ("Nigeria's Jonathan Kenya Visit to Boost Ties," September 5). The word *country* refers to Kenya in a story about a new timber merchant lobby: "The new outfit targets to register more than 1,000 members across the country" ("Small Saw-millers Form Own Lobby," September 4). It also refers to an ivory smuggling ring "operating in the country" ("Ivory Smuggling Rings Use Briefcase Companies to Escape Police Dragnets," November 10) and a public holiday created "as part of the country's Golden Jubilee" ("Kenyans Get Extra Public Holiday," December 3). The word is used with the same meaning in *The Times*, though its use in that newspaper is less exclusively referential of the United Kingdom. Out of 100 instances, the term *country* is used in reference to the Central African Republic, Ukraine, Scotland, Egypt, the United States, Ghana, Germany, South Sudan, Russia, Afghanistan, and Syria. The word is used in reference to the United Kingdom in articles about

weather (e.g., "Holiday Plans Risk Being Blown Away," December 23) or politics (e.g., "Rate Rise Will Keep You in No. 10, Voters Tell Cameron," December 26). The *Times's* higher tendency to refer to countries other than the United Kingdom or neighbors highlights the fact that the *Daily Nation* tends to report news that is geographically Kenya-specific, while *The Times* reports news on a further-reaching geographic scale.

Other terms that appear in both papers reinforce this finding. In the *Daily Nation*, a cluster of words referring to the nation—*Kenya*, *national*, and *country*—appear frequently, while words referring to the rest of the world (*world*, *international*) appear far less frequently.<sup>6</sup> The prevalence of words related to the *Daily Nation's* country of origin suggest a preoccupation with national identity and news that one might expect to see of a newspaper with recent historical ties to the nation-building process (Huff, 1968; Scotton, 1973), such as the *Daily Nation* and other East African newspapers. In *The Times*, *national* is the most common word, and it appears about twice as frequently as *Britain*, the next most common geographic term. *Country* and *world* appear with similar frequency to *Britain*. *The Times* uses the word *world* to convey a sense of influence and awareness that a particular event, while taking place in a particular country, is significant to an audience beyond national borders. For instance, in an analysis of 100 articles from July 12, the word is used in a story discussing the possibility of an Olympic Games in China; the posthumous trial of a dead Russian man wanted for tax evasion; and a series of stories about Greenpeace protesters climbing the Shard in London. The relative frequency of these geographic terms in the *Times* implies a unique geographic identity along with awareness of other events on the world stage and the role the United Kingdom plays in those events.

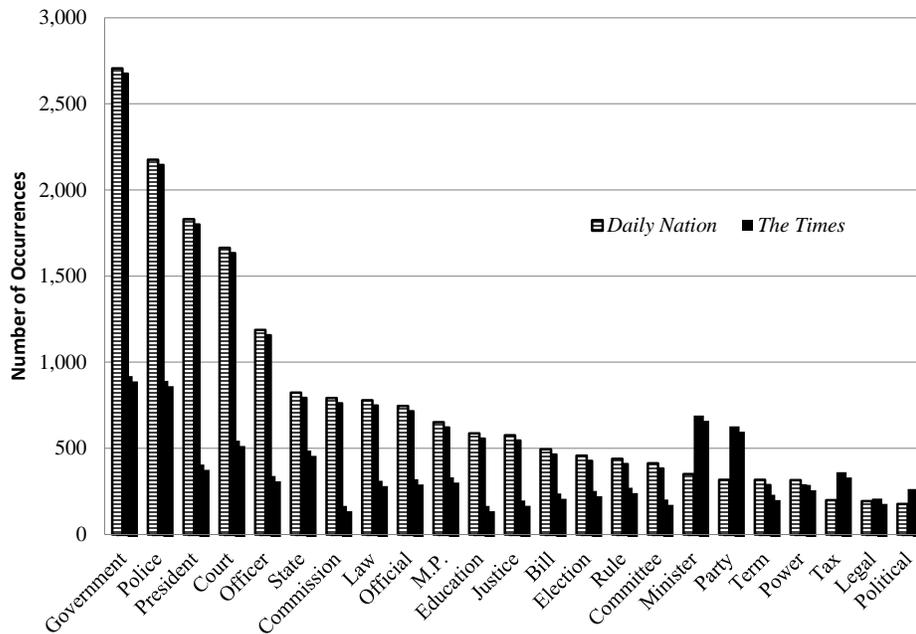
### **Politics**

Political references in both papers (shown in Figure 3) suggest that the *Daily Nation* has a stronger pro-national and institutional focus than does *The Times*.

In general, as shown in Figure 3, the *Daily Nation* uses political words more frequently than does *The Times*. By far the most used words in the *Daily Nation* refer to political branches: *government*, *president*, *court*, and *police* are among the most frequent terms, followed by *officer*. *Government* is the most prevalent noun in the newspaper, after *Kenya*, indicating a high frequency of government-related reporting in the newspaper. The five most common political terms—*government*, *police*, *president*, *court*, and *officer*—refer to institutional bodies (*government*, *police*, *court*) or particular figures (*president*, *officer*), implying that institutions and individual figureheads within those institutions are the most often featured aspects of politics in Kenya. Terms that could be related to elections or other democratic processes, including *election*, *party*, and *term*, appear much less often.

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<sup>6</sup> Not included in this analysis, because the words do not also appear in *The Times*, are references to nearby countries, including Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda, *Africa*, and *African*, and references to specific geographic spaces in Kenya. *The Times* also refers to other countries in the United Kingdom and a few European countries often enough to make the top 500 words.



**Figure 3. Political Words in the Daily Nation and The Times. Data from The Times have been scaled down by a factor of 25.69 to give equivalent word counts to the Daily Nation.**

Only four political words appear more frequently in the *Times* than in the *Daily Nation*: *minister*, *party*, *tax*, and *political*. *Minister* most often refers to Prime Minister David Cameron (whose last name also makes *The Times*'s top 500 list), but it also refers to other public officials, such as "minister of finance" or "social affairs minister" from the December 16 article, "Merkel Anoints Popular Rival as Heir Apparent." *Party* most often refers to political parties (e.g., Labour, Conservative, or Tory), though it is also used to refer to festivities such as dinner parties, birthday parties, and office parties. When the word appears in the *Daily Nation*, it rarely refers to politics (though occasionally refers to third-party candidates or proposals). *The Times*'s emphasis on party politics suggests that the newspaper focuses more on political processes involving popular representation through political parties than on political systems involving particular leaders or institutions.

The word *tax* is often mentioned in the context of political activities that may result in higher (or occasionally lower) taxes on citizens. The word is used, for instance, in reference to a tax break afforded to French taxpayers ("Hollande to Vacate His Unloved Island," August 13); in an article blaming "debt dodgers for soaring tax bills" (the headline of an August 13 article); the possibility that rising taxes will not cover health services for the elderly ("Few People Are Confident NHS Will Care for Them in Old Age," August 12); and an article about taxpayer subsidies for rail fares ("Return Rail Fares May Rise to Pay for Halving of Singles," August 12). As an activity that grants citizens some ownership of and representation in government endeavors, the relatively high appearance of the word *tax* in *The Times*'s news style

implies that the newspaper places a high news value on news related to citizens rather than governing authorities.

These findings are not surprising in light of the different regulative pressures facing mass media organizations in the United Kingdom and Kenya—a key element of institutional influence (Scott, 2013). In the United Kingdom, news media generally have a strong market orientation and are heavily influenced by what the audience as consumers wish to see or read, and strongly market-oriented newspapers tend to have a less exclusive focus on political news and stronger focus on nonpolitical, lifestyle news (Beam, 2003; Hallin & Mancini, 2004). In Kenya, by contrast, news media face strong government regulation, suggesting that regulative pressures on the news media to support a nation-building role might have a greater influence than market pressures on news content. The data support this: Politics is covered more frequently in the *Daily Nation* than in *The Times*, and political word choice in the *Daily Nation* tends to focus on the nation and government institutions rather than individual involvement or global issues.

### Conclusion

Through the lens of institutional theory, this study compares aspects of news style at two key newspapers—Kenya's *Daily Nation* and *The Times* of London—and extends institutional theory to a new arena. Institutional theory provides explanatory elements that can help researchers systematically study and understand the differences and similarities between journalistic practice and content across cultural and political borders. The present study highlights such an application and sheds new light on cross-national differences in news style. The study found that some journalistic rules are held in common across geographic divides, evidence of occupational normative isomorphism. Other rules differ across geographic boundaries, an indication that journalists are influenced not only by shared professional rules but also by local factors. Newspapers exhibit patterns in news style that one would expect of organizations developing in path-dependent ways under disparate pressures.

Shared linguistic patterns between the *Daily Nation* and *The Times*, such as the similar ratios of parts of speech used and reliance on attribution, male sources, and language of absence, support existing research finding that journalism is a global practice with some rules enforced across the occupation (Shoemaker & Cohen, 2006; Waisbord, 2013). This study also finds differences in news style across the two newspapers, which institutional theory suggests are due to different constraints and social factors at work through each newspaper's evolution and possible evidence of path dependency; future studies should more closely identify and examine those social factors and constraints and explore ways they are translated into newsroom practices and content choices. The *Daily Nation* and *The Times* exhibit some key differences indicative of stylistic and topical variation. The *Daily Nation* devotes generally greater word frequency to both politics and geography and tends to address the topics in terms of internal news and institutional power, while *The Times* devotes more space to international and global news and citizens. The relative prevalence of the geographic terms in each newspaper support research findings that newspapers have global news agendas but put national spin on that news based on their particular geopolitical and cultural orientations (Clausen, 2004). The variation in political language follows from each newspaper's different political contexts: East African media, including the *Daily Nation*, are grounded in settler press traditions, rooted in political enterprise, committed to African interests, and constrained by political

regulation, while the press in the United Kingdom is committed to autonomy, neutrality, and market-oriented self-regulation.

This study is not longitudinal and cannot draw conclusions about the nature of change that may be occurring or that may have occurred to generate the current media system in Kenya and the news style practiced there. It also cannot draw conclusions about isomorphism across news outlets in Kenya's media system, because it seeks to understand one news outlet in depth through comparison with another country. Longitudinal and cross-organizational analyses would enhance the present understanding of the effects of path dependency and cross-organizational isomorphism in non-Western contexts.

This study provides new evidence that mass media in East Africa, as evidenced by the *Daily Nation*, is influenced by both its place within a global journalistic culture and its local context within an unstable democracy and a culture that prizes collective identity. In outlining some news style differences indicative of different institutional influences, this study sheds new light on a globally important occupation and practice.

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