

Small and Unique Yet Overlooked: Dilemma of Media Coverage of Fiji on Global Stage: Mainstream Vs Alternative Media

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Abstract

The image of a particular country in the eyes of the people at the international level depends largely on the portrayal of that country in the mass media. Introduction of new information technologies and advances in communication has greatly enhanced the scope of international communication moving beyond government-to-government and including business-to-business and people-to people interactions at a global level. The messages conveyed by news media organizations of a particular country not only inform its citizens about the significant events and issues in their localities, but also shape their understanding and opinion of significant events and issues in the foreign countries. Shaping people's global context through various political, economic, social, and cultural factors, international media such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), The Cable News Network (CNN), Common Dreams and the Real News Network have expanded their coverage over the years by including coverage of countries various other regions.

The aim of this paper is to analyze how Fiji's national image is represented by international mainstream media and independent media with specific focus on BBC News website, The Cable News Network (CNN), Common Dreams and the Real News Network website coverage of Fiji in the last 12 months that is from July, 2022 to June, 2023. The purpose of choosing the last 12 months is to allow a detailed analysis and because Fiji held its 2022 general elections and representatives from various media organizations were present in the country for its coverage. The focus of this paper will also be towards examining the degree to which news about Fiji was published on BBC News (a mainstream media) and The Real News Network (an independent, non-profit news organization). The paper will also provide a comparative analysis of the coverage by both the media (mainstream and alternative).

Keywords: Alternative media, mainstream media, agenda setting, cultivation theory, editorial focus, under-representation.

Introduction

The world of mass media has been evolving overtime leading to the introduction of many new and diverse sources of news for people to access and interpret the world around. While the expansion of mass media has provided undeniable social, economic and political advantages, it has also resulted in misinformation, prevalence of large number of fake news, people having too much information making it difficult for them to adequately understand an issue or make effective decisions particularly about events occurring in developing countries like Fiji. Recognized for their timely and trustworthy news coverage, international media such as the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), CNN, Common Dreams and the Real News Network have expanded their reach over the years by including coverage of countries from various other regions.

The health of the population, the environment and the economy of a small developing country such as Fiji is substantially affected by decision and actions of the rest of the world. Despite its significant role, the country only continues to attract the attention of international media during major crisis which leads to misrepresentation and lack of information for the public to learn about its region. For instance, based on the publication of the past news articles by BBC News, it can be noted that issues related to climate change, politics, and sports were given high priority. However, every month reflected different ratios of news coverage in regard to these four categories.

Pacific Island countries such as Fiji are provided minimal space in the international media space with only issues such as its vulnerabilities to climate change and politics being largely covered. Located in the South Pacific Ocean about 3,000 kilometers east of Australia and 2,000 km north of New Zealand, Fiji Islands have a population of about 900,000 people. The country is seen to be attracting the attention of international media mostly during the times of crisis such as political crises, major cyclones or economic downfalls. Therefore, the paper focuses on examining the types of news that were given priority by international mainstream media and independent media, analyzing the language, image used in the news articles about Fiji and examining the degree to which the news about Fiji was published by the mainstream media and independent news organization. It also explores the factors which help in determining the coverage of news from Fiji by both media organizations to explore if the coverage by the international media provides an accurate picture of the issues in Fiji or alternative media too has a relevant role to play.

Review of Literature

Media plays a vital role shaping people's global context and perspectives through various political, economic, social, and cultural factors. Developing countries are reflected to be occupying maximum space for political topics or during crisis such as natural disasters, which provides a distorted picture of developing countries like Fiji. This paper delves into the role of global media in shaping the public perceptions, symbiotic relationship between media and democracy and the contradiction between mainstream and alternative media coverage. International media tend to favor coverage of first-world nations, perpetuating stereotypes and providing limited visibility to developing countries, particularly focusing on conflict and crises. Moreover, while mainstream media set the agenda and prioritize certain narratives, alternative media serve as corrective measures, offering diverse perspectives and addressing underrepresented issues. While several research papers have explored the coverage of news from Fiji, there exists a significant gap in understanding the disparity in media coverage of Fiji in the international media and their editorial priorities in regards to reporting on issues related to Fiji.

I. The Role of Global Media in Shaping Perceptions

Media coverage is a crucial element in fostering peace and establishing the identity of a country. The media coverage plays a key role in the dissemination of information to a wider audience especially to the individuals who do not have the opportunity to witness the events that occur hundreds of miles away from them. Information circulated through mass media and a person's opinions are interrelated since mass media greatly influences the people's perception about policies, law or action (Grossman, 2022). According to Rooh Ullah and Adnam Khan (2020), the greatest power of media in this 21st century is persuasion whereby it presents stories and information in such a manner, that the general public are persuaded to buy what they are being told by the media. Therefore, over the years, media

outlets have gained control over the value judgements of the citizens who are unable to distinguish between what is right or wrong (Petrova, 2017).

In the current period where every day there are different incidents taking place which affect all countries either directly or indirectly, it is essential for the citizens to be informed, educated and equipped with a balanced perspective by weighing all angles of those incidents. Media provides all the necessary details to the masses so that they are aware of everything that is taking place around the world (Khan, 2020). Media shapes the public opinion by publicizing certain stories or stressing certain aspects of an incident (Khan, 2020). Through media, people get the opportunity to learn several things and are provided with timely and accurate information about the events that occurred abroad or domestically. Media is a powerful weapon that can change people's perspectives and beliefs; therefore, it is important for the media organizations to be transparent and unbiased in their reporting (Hamada, 2018). As evident in the media coverage of the ongoing Israeli and Palestinian conflict, several organizations have been alleged to be providing a biased coverage which is influencing people's opinion and understanding about the conflict (Nashed, 2023).

The dominance of the global media by the west is reflected in the representation of developing countries in the western news media. For instance, Europeans and Americans primarily encounter Africa through stereotypes and myths. Many Westerners view Africa as primarily a 'jungle or desert landscape where the people speak unintelligible languages. Africans are thought to live in rural areas, practice strange customs, and fight pointless battles against each other' (Harth, 2012). These representations provide a vague image of Africa which are influenced by several myths and stereotypes practiced over the years.

Global media and media as a whole, greatly affects and shapes people's perceptions as it can be widely accepted that an individual's understanding about an event happening all around the world is shaped particularly by how the event is projected by the news media outlets (Myers, 1999). Adjacent to the cultivation theory, media greatly shapes one's perceptions which determine their actions (Brichacek, 2018). Cultivation theory holds that the "popular media, such as television, has the power to influence our view about the world and it is "primarily responsible for our perceptions of day-to-day norms and reality (Dominic A. Infante, 1997)." Therefore, media influences public opinion as it brings simulated reality into citizens lives which leads them to rely on those sources or information that provide a conceptualized image of the real world (Fields, 2006).

I. International Media Coverage of Developing Countries

Generally, international news is seen to be "quantitatively dominated by and qualitatively favorable to first world nations while it is unfavorable to developing and underdeveloped nations" such as Fiji (Galtung and Ruge 1965; Masmoudi 1979). The coverage patterns of developing nations are characterized by low visibility, stereotypes and generalizations (Ketter, 2016). The coverage by international media often provide a distorted impression about other countries particularly developing nations as they tend to concentrate more on events that center on conflict, such as military coups, civil wars, or genocide and major catastrophes (Ketter, 2016). Golding and Elliott (2018) have argued that most of the coverage of developing nations is centered around repetitive crisis or military conflict. Extensive coverage on conflicts and crisis in developing countries confirms the twelve factors

examined by Galtung and Ruge (1965) that make an international event newsworthy. The twelve factors include frequency, threshold, unambiguity, meaningfulness, consonance, unexpectedness, continuity, composition, reference to elite nations, reference to elite people, reference to persons, and reference to something negative (Golding, 2018). These concepts have been evident in international media organization's coverage of Fiji as they have provided more attention to news about crisis, politics (involving the Prime Minister and other politicians), crime and climate change other than those relevant for public engagement and welfare.

Despite not being able to provide the coverage of all the countries every day, many international news media organizations at times provide a distorted picture about the people and the events in the developing nations (International Association for Mass Communication Research, 1985). As explained through the theory of agenda settings, news reporters and editors shape the public's knowledge of events by allowing some stories to pass through the system via gatekeeping while keeping others out (Mccombs, 2018). Agenda setting theory accounts for the connection between the rate at which media covers an event and the extent to which the public and policymakers will consider that event to be important (Fay Lomax Cook, 1983). According to Shaw and McCombs (1977), the most important effect of the mass media is its ability to mentally order and organize our world. The practice of news media organizations making conscious and unconscious decisions about what is newsworthy and what is not reflects the agenda setting theory which is parallel to gate-keeping. This gatekeeping process results in a global news system that over-represents particular issues and countries while underrepresenting others (Canada, 2017). For instance, core nations such as US, China, Russia and Germany are more likely to receive coverage from the international media while small developing county like Africa and LatinAmerica have very less low coverage in the international media (Harvey, 2012).

II. Alternative Media Coverage and Democracy

Confined with laws, organizational biases and ownership conflicts, journalists often have to juggle in choosing the type of news they want to cover for publication purposes. Alternative media, on the other hand, provides the general citizens the lens to view both sides of an event, policy or an action (Francis, 2021). In some cases where the mainstream news media are only justifying or glorifying one side of a story or action, independent media act as watchdogs to ensure accountability and transparency by shedding light on the consequences of an action on general public (Forum, n.d.).

Accessing news from alternative media along with mainstream news media has allowed readers to know the various perspectives and analyze the situation or event accordingly before making any decisions or conclusions (Francis, 2021). Citizens tend to be more empowered by getting information from different sources as they understand topics comprehensively which diminishes the possibility of biases.

III. Dichotomy of Views: Mainstream vs Alternative

Over the years, the increasing number of alternative news media online has positioned themselves as correctives to the content provided by the mainstream media (Kim Andersen, 2023). At times, alternative media disseminate content that stands in opposition to the content portrayed by mainstream news media as they aim for social and political reforms (Kim Andersen, 2023). The emergence of online alternative news sites such as on social networking sites have allowed people to participate,

access different perspectives relating to their social and political identities and fill the gap created by the mainstream media coverage.

One of the key examples of same events covered differently by the mainstream and alternative news media was the coverage of the 2020-2021 farmers protest in India. Most of the mainstream media provided coverage on the farmer's methods while the issues raised by the farmers were provided less emphasis. The protest did not much outreach through digital and social media which created a gap in the information transmitted to the public as the mainstream media's coverage formed the primary narrative of the protest (Sharma, 2022). The mainstream media was observed to be "discrediting the farmers' protest and work in favor of the ruling party and corporations" (Sharma, 2022). On the other hand, a newspaper run mainly by volunteers named *Trolley Times* provided a deep coverage into the political and historical context surrounding the protest. It profiled the protest leaders, the farmers' issues and other elements which were neglected by the mainstream media in India (Philip, 2021).

Furthermore, mainstream media has been referred to as the agenda setting media as they are equipped with big resources and they set the framework in which everyone operates (Chomsky, 1997). The ownership of mainstream media plays a critical role in determining the type of content distributed which mostly serves the interest of the dominant ideologies of the system (Chamola, 2020). During the Lok Sabha election in 2014, Indian Prime minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party got more than a third of all prime-time television which was considered the highest coverage compared to other politicians or parties contesting the election, therefore, the votes of these citizens who were entirely dependent on these television channels for news might have been influenced by the content as news coverage enhanced the 'accessibility of beliefs about an issue in citizens' memories, which automatically increased their impact on relevant judgments' (S., 2014) (Krosnick, 2000).

On the contrary, defined as "another possibility to the mainstream media", alternative media has helped in feeding the public with relevant information and different perspectives when the mainstream media has discontent and dissatisfaction (University). In relation to the gatekeeping theory, alternative media has allowed different opinions to surface which has been rejected or downplayed by the mainstream media. Alternative media are often directed at communities, they address topics aimed at defending human rights and issues that are not addressed by mainstream media, such as the agenda of people with disabilities, the homeless, the LGBTQI+ community, minority ethnic groups, and women. The representation of subjects and communities which find less space in mainstream media appears as necessary for greater participation and social change (Jorge, 2021). For instance, *Green Left Weekly*, an Australian on- and offline publication, covers climate change quite differently than *The Age*, a daily newspaper in Australia whereby the *Green Left Weekly* 'focused their discussion of climate change principally on the projected 40 to 50 per cent of all food wasted in the United States, while *The Age* remained fixated on the possibility of increased carbon taxes for local businesses (Kenix, 2011).' As most of the alternative news media are operating as independent bodies, non-profit media organizations or depend on the financial support from its viewers and readers, they prioritize their news coverage and mostly cover stories that attracts or interests wider range of audience. Therefore, with adequate funding, resources and ability to reach diverse audience, mainstream media provides wider coverage of an issue which leads to information gap between the alterative news media and mainstream news media.

Methodology and Data Collection

In this research, a mixture of quantitative research approach and qualitative research approach was adapted and practiced to provide a comprehensive comparison of the international mainstream media and alternative media's reporting on Fiji.

Under the quantitative research approach, both content and discourse analysis were incorporated to identify the frequencies and recurring words, concepts and the types of images used in the news articles regarding Fiji. Through the discourse analysis the usage of words, images or language identified under the content analysis were justified and explained how it constructed the image of the country in the eyes of the readers/ audience.

Under the qualitative research approach, the manner in which each media organization portrayed Fiji was analyzed. Through critical analysis of the language and images used in each article, I identified how accurately the information and image of Fiji was portrayed by the mainstream media and alternative media. Through the qualitative element, I assessed the positive, negative or neutral coverage, as the public image of a country is shaped not only by the amount of coverage but also by its tone; such as how developing countries like Fiji are presented in the news media.

These methods enabled not only an empirical assessment but also the determination of which news are provided priority and the gaps in the coverage by both the media organizations (mainstream and alternative media).

The methodology included the content analysis of the electronic media's coverage of Fiji with specific focus on the news articles published by BBC, The Real News Network, Common Dreams and CCN. To identify and understand the common themes and specific concerns regarding the coverage over matters related to Fiji, code sheet was prepared to identify the major subjects, frequency of those subjects and to interpret the difference in both the media organization's coverage.

Period of Study

The study period ran from July, 2022 to June, 2023 with specific focus on BBC News website, The Cable News Network (CNN), Common Dreams and the Real News Network website coverage of Fiji. The purpose of choosing these 12-month period was to allow a detailed analysis and because Fiji held its 2022 general elections on December 14 and representatives from various media organizations were present in the country for its coverage.

What was Included in the Data

As a measure of objectivity, balance and fairness in Fiji's news coverage, the analysis includes all the news stories related to Fiji published including the opinion pieces. Focusing on international news media website, I confined my study to BBC, CNN, The Real News Network and Common Dreams as the aim was to focus on major international media organizations based mainly in the United States and United Kingdom. I only used news stories published by these news media organizations as data because the newsroom exercises total editorial control and responsibility over news headlines, images and story angle.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND OBSERVATIONS

News Articles Published By BBC, The Real News Network, Common Dreams and CCN Between July 2022 and June 2023.

Figure 1: This code sheet identifies the major subjects; frequency of the subjects published and interprets the difference in both the media organization's coverage.

Mainstream Media								
Serial no.	Headline of the Story	Name of the Source	Source type	Category	Keyword	Frequency	Code	Remarks
1	Commonwealth Games 2022: Fiji's Rugby Sevens team start UK training camp	BBC News	Mainstream	Sports	Commonwealth Games	0.067	S1_C1_Sports	As the game was held on global stage, the team was provided coverage, however this was only news about the Fijian team.
2	Pacific Islands urge unity in face of China ambition	BBC News	Mainstream	Climate Change	Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)	0.53	S2_C2_Climate Change	The stories published lacked key descriptions about Fiji as it placed more emphasis on the influence of China on the Pacific region particularly Kiribati and its relationship with US.
3	Fiji PM's son charged with domestic violence in Australia	BBC News	Mainstream	Politics	Domestic Violence	0.27	S3_C3_Politics	Only the negative news about the Prime Minister was published.
4	Pacific Island Fiji aims for a high-tech future	SBC News	Mainstream	Business	High-tech future	0.067	S4_C4_Business	It was positive coverage as it highlighted the country's growth and how it is adapting to the latest technological advancements.
5	Fiji's main political rivals deadlocked after parliamentary election	SBC News	Mainstream	Politics	Parliamentary Election	0.27	S5_C5_Politics	It only covered the results, which lacked adequate information for the readers to understand the situation comprehensively.
6	Fiji election: PM Bainimarama out as opposition reaches coalition deal	SBC News	Mainstream	Politics	Coalition deal	0.27	S6_C6_Politics	Selective in coverage as they did not cover the events such as election preparation process, blackout period, voter's turnout and the human-interest stories for example the general public's reaction on the final outcome of the election.
7	Australian boy, 8, dies of suspected electrocution at Fiji resort	SBC News	Mainstream	Crime	Suspected electrocution	0.067	S7_C1_Crime	This story was only covered because it included a person from an international country.
8	The US steps up its game as China circles the Pacific	CNN	Mainstream	Climate Change	US steps- up	0.53	S9_C2_Climate Change	
9	This has quickly become the key issue at COP27 – and the most difficult to resolve.	CNN	Mainstream	Climate Change	COP27	0.53	S10_C4_Climate Change	The article did not provide a thorough insight of how the country is struggling to cope with the effects of climate change.
10	Opinion: What 2022's elections taught me about humanity, politics and 'magic sauce'	CNN	Mainstream	Politics	Magic sauce	0.27	S11_C4_Politics	The article lacked more details about the country as it was an opinion piece about the general election.

8	The US steps up its game as China circles the Pacific	CNN	Mainstream	Climate Change	US steps-up	0.53	S9_C2_Climate Change	
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10	Opinion: What 2022's elections taught me about humanity, politics and 'magic sauce'	CNN	Mainstream	Politics	Magic sauce	0.27	S11_C4_Politics	The article lacked more details about the country as it was an opinion piece about the general election.
11	How to help Pacific islanders cope with climate change and protect the environment	CNN	Mainstream	Climate Change	Cope	0.53	S12_C5_Climate Change	The article accommodated most of the Pacific Island countries affected by climate change and the organizations working to help the countries cope with the effects so Fiji was provided a small space highlighting the words of the
Alternative Media								
12	Amid Pakistan wreckage, UN chief warns against 'sleepwalking toward' planetary 'destruction'	The Real News Network	Alternative	Climate Change	Planetary destruction	0.53	S8_C2_Climate Change	It was not an original piece by The Real News Network which indicated their lack of interest in the country.
13	Not a Blacklist But a 'Whitelist': EU Slammed for Letting Tax Havens Off the Hook	Common Dreams	Alternative	Economy	Tax Havens	0.67	S13_C1_Economy	Only the name of the country "Fiji" was mentioned in the article to indicate that it remained part of the EU's list of non-cooperative jurisdictions for tax purposes
14	As COP27 Failure Looms, Climate Movement Demands 'Phase Out All Fossil Fuels'	Common Dreams	Alternative	Climate Change	Failure	0.53	S14_C2_Climate Change	Lacked sufficient coverage as to how Fiji was working towards reducing the fossil fuel emissions
15	Six Island Nations Commit to 'Fossil Fuel-Free Pacific,' Demand Global Just Transition	Common Dreams	Alternative	Climate Change	Fossil Fuel-Free Pacific Demand	0.53	S15_C2_Climate Change	Only the name of the country was mentioned.
16	Fiji Joins Call for Global Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty at UN Climate Talks	Common Dreams	Alternative	Climate Change	Join call	0.53	S16_C2_Climate Change	The article described how the country is suffering because of the effects of climate change. The pleasing thing in this article was the use of the image from the Togoro village which emphasized the impact of climate change as it showed how an graveyard has immortalised water currently because of climate change.

Figure 1: News articles published by BBC, The Real News Network, Common Dreams and CCN from July 2022 to June 2023 to identify the common words and the frequency of the subjects covered.

Coverage of Different Themes by Mainstream Media and Alternative Media

Figure 2: Themes Covered by Mainstream Media **Figure 3: Themes Covered by Alternative Media**

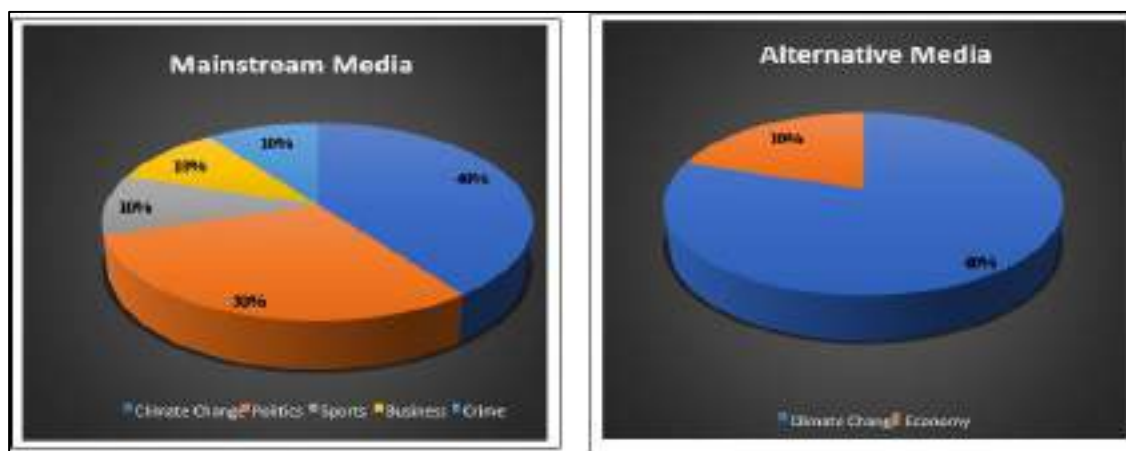


Figure 2: Major themes covered by BBC and CNN. Figure 3: Major themes covered by The Real News Network and Common Dream

Result

This section provides a critical analysis of the lexical, language and the images used in the articles published by BBC, CNN, The Real News Network and Common Dreams regarding Fiji. It identifies the types of adjectives and connotations used to describe the political parties or leaders along with the significance of the images used.

Mainstream Media

I. *The British Broadcasting Corporation*

The BBC News published a total of seven news stories on its website from Fiji between July 2022 and June, 2023.

1. Politics

- Lexical Use

Headline 1: “Fiji election: PM Bainimarama out as opposition reaches coalition deal”

- **Sub-heading:** “Fijian opposition parties have reached a deal to form a new coalition government, ending Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama's nearly 16-year rule”
- **Keywords:** coalition, alliance, government, people, party

Headline 2: “Fiji's main political rivals deadlocked after parliamentary election.”

- **Sub-heading:** “Fiji's two main rival political parties headed by former coup leaders are deadlocked after Wednesday's general election, final results show.”

- **Keywords:** coup, results, party, liberal.

The use of negative connotations such as ‘rule, loss, deadlocked and rivals’ in the headline paints a negative picture of Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama reflecting his loss. These words construct a bad image about Mr Bainimarama and its governance over the years, while the use of word such as “rival” reflect the relationship between the two parties which can influence the readers or the supporters of those parties to act in the similar manner such as regard the opposing political party supporters as their rivals.

The headline of these two articles informs the readers about the event and the location that is discussed in the article which is “Fiji election”. The other information summarizes the main outcome of the election which answers the what, who, why questions and attracts the reader’s attention urging them to read further.

Headline 3: Fiji PM's son charged with domestic violence in Australia.

In this news story, the journalist uses the element of prominence that is by identifying the relation between the Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama and the person charged. This arouses more interest and curiosity among the readers as the Prime Minister is the person of interest.

- **Keywords:** Case, offences, suppression, order, Fijian
- **Use of Adjectives**

Use of phrase such as ‘former coup leaders’ places more emphasis on the person that is been described which leads to readers referring back to the Coup that happened in the country and relating its consequences on the people. Describing Mr. Rabuka as the former coup leader helps the readers get a better view and also get additional knowledge about him.

In choosing the title, journalist Kathryn Armstrong used these interesting and eye-catching words to attract the reader’s attention and invite the FijiFirst and opposition party supporters, critics and international readers be informed and critically analyze the news which reduces hoax and hate speech.

• **Images**



Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-64037094>

The news article "Fiji election: PM Bainimarama out as opposition reaches coalition deal." Used the image of the former Prime Minister Voreqe Bainimarama along with with two Police officers on both the sides.



The second news article “Fiji's main political rivals deadlocked after parliamentary election” showed the

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-64015600>

Images can convey a message quickly. For instance, the first news article highlights that the former Prime Minister of the country had lost his position, which can be interpreted by the image where he is guided by the Police Officers.

The second article provides context to the news story and by the use of the picture of the woman with Fijian hair style, it tells the readers the location of the story. Showing a woman casting a vote also informs the readers that the article is about elections.

2. Sports

Headline: Commonwealth Games 2022: Fiji's Rugby Sevens team start UK training camp

- **Subheading:** The head coach of Fiji's men's Rugby Sevens squad says the three-times runners-up are not feeling pressure as they bid to win a first Commonwealth gold medal.
- **Keywords:** Commonwealth, gold, coach, team, rugby sevens.

In this article, reporter used the picture of two Fiji Sevens team players with their gold medals, therefore it is a positive story and it reflects that Fiji Sevens team is dedicated to winning another gold medal at the Commonwealth Games. The use of the two players with their gold medals also informs the audience that the team had won Olympic gold medalists in Rugby Sevens previously.

3. Climate Change

Heading: Pacific Islands urge unity in face of China ambition

- **Keywords:** China, climate, security, Pacific
- **Lexical Use**

The article was about the 51st Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders Meeting which was held in Fiji from July 11 to 14. The use of words such as “unity” and “face” indicates a call for action to combat or overcome a negative action which is the influence of China on the Pacific.

The use of word such as ‘face’ in the headline paints a negative picture of China. This word constructs a bad image about China and its presence in the Pacific, while the use of word such as “urge”, “unity” reflects the ways the Pacific Island nations can reduce China’s presence and influence on the Pacific.

- **Images**



Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia62173864>

In this article, the reporter used multiple pictures such as Solomon Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare, US Vice President Kamala Harris and of the sea, however the leading picture used was of a selfie picture taken Australia PM Anthony Albanese with the Pacific Island leaders. The picture reflected positivity which related with the headline that called for the Pacific Island leaders to unite.

4. Crime

Heading: Australian boy, 8, dies of suspected electrocution at Fiji resort

- **Lexical Use**
- **Keywords:** Fiji, Police, family, resort.

The headline of the article informs the readers about the event and the location that is discussed in the article which is “suspected electrocution”. The use of the word “Australian boy” identifies the victim and emphasizes that a child lost his life in a foreign country. The other information answers the what, why questions and attracts the reader’s attention urging them to read further.



Source: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-australia64578442>

• Images

The article used the image of the eight-year-old Australian boy who lost his life. The picture of a child attracts the attention of the reader, causing them to sympathize with the family of the child.

II. The Cable News Network (CNN)

CNN published only four news articles about Fiji, however all these articles did not provide a detailed analysis or focused entirely on Fiji.

1. Climate Change

News Article 1: The US steps up its game as China circles the Pacific

Keywords: China, Forum, leaders, island, overshadow, influence.

This article focused mainly on Kiribati and the support by the United States and China to the Pacific Island region. Fiji was provided a small space in the article where the country’s name was only mentioned to describe the location of the event and identify the list of Pacific Island countries which would be supported by the US.

News Article 2: This has quickly become the key issue at COP27 – and the most difficult to resolve.

Keyword; Climate change, COP, damage, developed, loss, fund.

The article focused on the impact of climate change in Pakistan and the Pacific region, therefore, it only contained a paragraph on climate activist Lavetanalagi Seru's reaction about the effects of climate change in Fiji which was her home island. The article did not provide a thorough insight of how the country is struggling to cope with the effects of climate change.

In the month of December, CNN did not publish any news articles related to the events happening in Fiji. The news organization just published one article including the name of the country, however it lacked further details about the country and it was an opinion piece about the general election.

News Article 3: How to help Pacific Islanders cope with climate change and protect the environment.

Keywords: Climate, conservation, Fiji, fund, marine, moana.

The article highlighted on most of the Pacific Island countries affected by climate change and the organizations working to help those countries cope with the effects so Fiji was provided a small space highlighting the words of the former Fijian Defense Minister Inia Seruiratu.

2. Politics

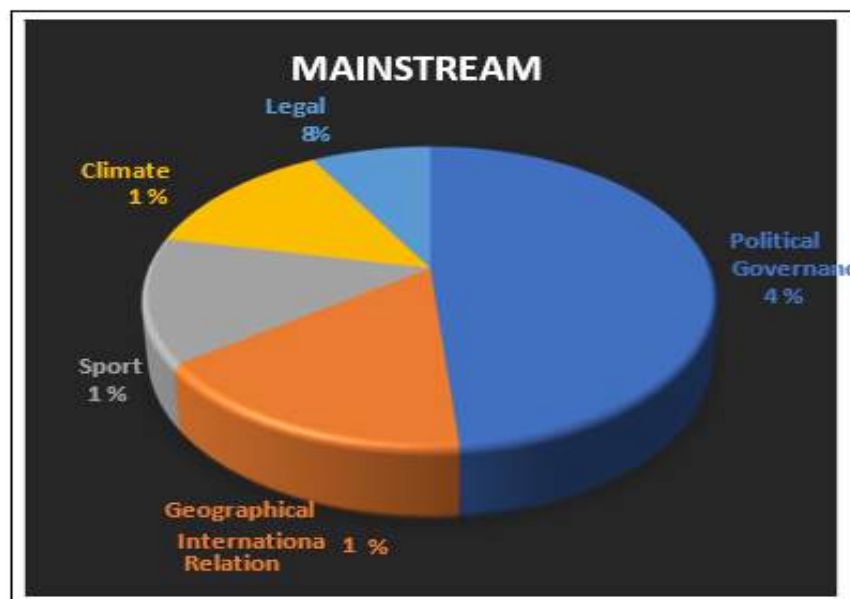
News Article 1: Opinion: What 2022's elections taught me about humanity, politics and 'magic sauce.

Keywords: election, party, power, victory, voter

The article provided David A. Adelman's experience and stance on the various country's national elections which he had chronicled where Fiji was just mentioned once to describe the latest country who held its national elections. Therefore, CNN did not publish any news that was researched and gathered by its reporters in regards to the Fijian General Election. The name of the country was only mentioned in an opinion article by David A. Adelman which did not provide the readers with a fair and verified information.

Overall Language Used

In all the eleven articles published on the BBC News website and CNN, formal, concise language with short sentences were used for easy understanding. However, in regards to the content, the content lacked background information about the former ruling party that is FijiFirst and the other Opposition parties, therefore new readers were not equipped with enough information to analyze the situation and understand the political outcome of Fiji.

Figure 4: Common Keywords Used by Mainstream Media*Figure 4: Common keywords used by CNN and BBC. (Source: Self-Generated)*

Political and Governance	Geographical/ International Relations	Sports	Climate Change	Legal terms
Coup	China	Commonwealth	Climate Change	case
Result	Fijian	Gold	COP	offences
Order	Resort	Coach	Damage	Police
Leaders	Island	Rugby Sevens	Marine	
election	Fiji	team	Moana	
Power	Developed			
Fund				
Loss				
coalition				
Party				

Liberal				
suppression				
Voter				
victory				
rule				
rivals				
overshadow				
influence				
18	6	5	5	3

Figure 4: Common keywords used by CNN and BBC. (Source: Self- Generated)

Alternative News Media

I. *The Real News Network*

- **Headline:** Amid Pakistan wreckage, UN chief warns against 'sleepwalking toward' planetary 'destruction'
- **Keywords:** climate, destruction, flooding, global, people, support.
- **Image Used**



The article used the image of Pakistan citizens being evacuated following flash flood in Kalam in 2022 to identify flooding as one of the effects of climate change which is affecting many countries. The article was originally published by Common Dreams and The Real News Network shared it on its website.

- **Content/ Lexical**

This article focused mainly on the content provided by UN secretary General Antonio Guterres.

Fiji was provided a small space in the article where the screenshot of the tweet by country's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama was published. The tweet emphasized the effects of climate change which was caused by everyone particularly the high-emitting nations and called for all the countries to reduce the "addiction to fossil fuel".

II. Common Dreams

Out of the four news articles published by Common Dreams between July 2022 to June 2023, only one news article had a thorough description of Fiji.

- **Headline:** Fiji Joins Call for Global Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty at UN Climate Talks
- **Lexical Used**
- **Keywords:** climate, COP, crisis, Fossil fuel, non-proliferation, Fiji.

The use of words such as "joins call" indicates Fiji's efforts to fight climate change along with other countries suffering its effects as highlighted in the article by the use of words such as "already suffering". The other lexical in the headline provides description and fulfills the what and where questions of the audience.

The article further stated a quote by a Fijian government official which said "'We cannot afford to delay action any longer". The use of this quote reflected the severity and emphasized the need for urgent action as they were losing their culture, ecosystem and livelihood.

•Image Used:

The article used the image from the Togoru village which emphasized the impact of climate change in Fiji as it showed how a graveyard has immersed underwater currently because of climate change.



Source: <https://www.commondreams.org/news/fijiraises-voice-for-fossil-fuel-non-proliferation-treaty>

Figure 5: Common Keywords Used by Alternative Media

Geographical/ International Relations	Climate Change
Fiji	climate
Global	destruction
Support	floods
	COP
	Crisis
	Fossil fuel
	non-proliferation
3	7

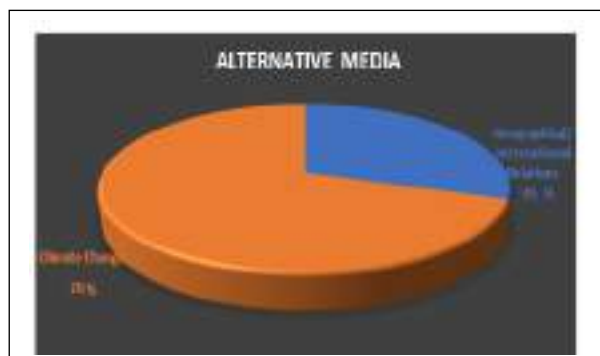


Figure 5: Common keywords used by The Real News Network and Common Dreams. (Source: Self-Generated)

Analysis of Collected Facts

I. Determinants of Fiji's News Coverage by BBC News, CNN (Mainstream) and The Real News Network (Alternative)

Based on the publication of news by BBC News between July, 2022 and June, 2023, it can be noted that issues related with or topics such as climate change, business, politics and sports were given high priority, however, every month did not have the same ratio of news covered from these four categories as evident in Figure 2. In the month of July, BBC News only covered sports news from the Commonwealth games, as reflected in Figure 1, which was like a build-up article to the Commonwealth Games coverage in Birmingham from July 28 to August 8.

The second subject was the 51st Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) Leaders Meeting which was held in Fiji from July 11 to 14. As the PIF meeting was held in July, the BBC News covered stories related to it to fulfil the news element of timeliness as it was a current event and it included representatives from Australia, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, the Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Despite covering the event, news stories by BBC News and CNN were lacking key details about Fiji. The stories published placed more emphasis on the influence of China on the Pacific region particularly Kiribati and its relationship with US as China's political, economic and cultural influence had been steadily rising in the Pacific region as a whole. Over the years, China has been seen as the second largest donor to the region and largest financier to Fiji, however BBC News did not elaborate about the benefits and disadvantages of China's presence in Fiji.

On the other hand, alternative media that is The Real News Network did not publish any news that was researched and gathered by its reporters on climate change. The website published an article originally compiled by an independent news outlet Common Dreams where the name of the country was only mentioned to identify a tweet shared by the Fiji's Prime Minister.

In regards to politics, BBC News mostly covered news which fulfilled the element of prominence or involved a person of interest such as the Prime Minister such as the article "Fiji PM's son charged with

domestic violence in Australia.” Most often negative news related to a country are given high priority and prominence by the international media. However, coverage of a foreign nation can affect people’s perception of the foreign nation (Perry, 1990; Salwen & Matera, 1992), therefore, BBC News covering only the outcome of the General election in Fiji in December does not provide a clear image of the country to the international readers and for them to evaluate the situation accordingly. CNN did not publish any news that was researched and gathered by its reporters in regards to the Fijian General Election. The name of the country was only mentioned in an opinion article by David A. Adelman which did not provide the readers with a fair and verified information.

Fiji’s news coverage by BBC and CNN between July, 2022 and June, 2023 showed that they were selective in their coverage as they only covered the major events which included the National General Election, Commonwealth Games and Pacific Islands Forum leader’s meeting. Even by selecting to cover the General Elections in December, BBC News did not fulfil all the elements as they did not provide pre-election and post-election coverage. The media organizations did not cover the events such as election preparation process, blackout period, voter’s turnout and the human-interest stories for example the general public’s reaction on the final outcome of the election. However, in comparison to the alternative media, The Real News Network did not publish any news related to politics or elections so as a mainstream media BBC News portrayed its role effectively by providing citizens the important information about the general elections which was not covered by the alternative media.

Climate change issues in Fiji were discussed by both the media organizations as it is affecting everyone, however both media organizations lacked human-interest stories and field reporting. In 2021, Fiji was ranked globally among the top 15 countries with the highest disaster risk, a situation that will worsen as climate impacts intensify.

II. Factors affecting Coverage of News from Fiji by Mainstream Media and Alternative Media

Serial No.	Factors affecting coverage	Type of Media	Important Observations
1.	Resources	Mainstream Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BBC News and CNN lacked human-interest stories such as while highlighting the topic of climate change, or when covering the Pacific Islands Forum meeting. Human-interest story could be covered by interacting with the people affected or by visiting the vulnerable communities and highlighting how they are coping with the effects of climate change such as Vunidogoloa village which became the first inhabitants of Fiji to be relocated owing to significant saltwater intrusion and regular floods in 2012.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Despite covering the country briefly, the number of news articles in regards to Fiji published by BBC News and CNN outweighed the number of articles published by the alternative news media. • The higher coverage of Fiji by mainstream news media reflected the financial strength of the mainstream media as they have resources, connections and funding to access news or send its correspondences to various countries.
		Alternative Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Real News Network lacked human-interest stories. • To some extent it was achieved by the alternative news media Common Dreams where they used the image of the submerged graveyard in Togoru, however it did not provide a detailed description. • The lack of human-interest stories could be because of media organization's budget of sending its journalists/ news crew to Fiji. • The Real News Network is a non-profit media organization and depends on the financial support from its viewers and readers, therefore they prioritize their news coverage and mostly cover stories that attracts or interests wider range of audience.
2.	Reach	Mainstream Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In regards to Fiji, BBC News and CNN both has Asia Pacific or international correspondences who provide coverage from the Pacific region whenever needed.
		Alternative Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Real News Network and Common Dream published a total of five news stories about Fiji between July 2022 and June, 2023, which also included opinion pieces. • This reflects that these organizations had limited access to the on-the ground information from Fiji because of absence of their reporters or correspondences in the country. • The alternative media missed out on one of the major events which was the national elections and provided more coverage of climate change and ways the Pacific Island countries were coping

			with its effects which mostly included details from other countries such as Pakistan, Samoa.
3.	Editorial Focus	Mainstream Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The coverage by both BBC News showed that they were only focused on covering sports, politics which included prominent people, major changes and climate change issues. Between July, 2022 and June, 2023, BBC News did not cover any news related to health in the country such as 370 children were detected with congenital heart defects, Fiji's major hospital has run-down infrastructure or issues with crime such as major brawl in the capital city of the country.
		Alternative News Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Real News Network did not prefer to cover news specifically and entirely focused on Fiji which may be because of lack of audience and interest in the country.

Conclusion

The world is increasingly interdependent particularly in areas such as economic, environment, health, crime and immigration. While the report indicated high number of articles published by the mainstream media in regards to Fiji compared to alternative news media, there is a need for both mainstream and alternative news media to further enhance their reach of news from Fiji to cater to the increasing Fijians shifting abroad.

Fijian population in UK and Atlanta has increased over the years. According to the 2021 Census, there were over 7,700 people from Fiji living in England and Wales at the, therefore it is crucial for this population to receive adequate and detailed news about Fiji to decide the wellbeing of their family and friends residing in Fiji (Statistics., 2021). News media is undoubtedly a critical source of news for the public and audiences depend enormously on the media for information on public issues, particularly issues that in some way or another impact their lives.

To improve the overall coverage of foreign news, BBC News and The Real News Network should create a framework which highlights the role and importance of news from Fiji for its populations and reflect an increasingly diverse and multicultural society. Secondly, greater efforts should be made to cover other realities beyond conflict, sports and disasters which only occur at the large scale or affects the international relations.

BBC News and The Real News Network can get in contact with the Fijian immigrants based in UK and Atlanta to explore how these communities perceive foreign news that is happening in their countries of origin. Similarly, correspondences can reach out to the people from UK and Atlanta based in Fiji to get news and their experiences of an event. For instance, a UK based businessman in Fiji can

be helpful in analyzing the economic and trade issues in Fiji or a UK family settled in Fiji can provide account of their experience of cyclones or disasters in Fiji.

Based on the analysis of news published by BBC News, CNN, Common Dreams and The Real News Network, it reflects that it is essential for the editors and producers particularly The Real News Network to encourage its journalists and foreign correspondences to enlighten their audience and readers with issues which are neglected globally. By expanding and improving its Fiji's news coverage, these media organizations will provide greater understanding of global affairs in Fiji and a better sense of Fiji's role in the world.

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