

Haiti 1990–6: older and younger journalists in the post-Cold War world

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In the early 1990s, there were tumultuous events in Haiti – the overthrowing of the first democratically elected President, Bertrand Aristide, in a coup d'état in 1991, the subsequent internationally imposed economic embargo, and the international military intervention that reinstated President Aristide in 1994. These events placed the tiny Caribbean nation on the front pages of the world's newspapers. The US media paid particular attention given the proximity of Haiti and the influx of Haitian refugees to the USA at that time. Although they were covering the same events, interviews with journalists who reported from Haiti in those years revealed considerably different attitudes and practices that correlated with the journalists' chronological and professional age, giving us a new insight into the dynamics of news content production. Using US journalists in Haiti as a case study, this article documents a generational shift in foreign affairs journalism, and examines the process by which the shift has occurred.

Theoretical background

Research in the 20th century on journalists and the content they produced tied the content of news to the ownership and structure of industry¹ (Curran et al., 1980; Herman and Chomsky, 1988; Murdock 1981) or it linked news content to deep-seated cultural patterns in a society² (Schudson, 1989), or it traced news content to the daily practices and routines of journalists within news organizations³ (Epstein, 1973; Gans 1979; Molotch and Lester, 1974; Tuchman, 1980). As I am focusing on the attitudes and daily behaviors of journalists in a short period of time in a particular place, my theoretical

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base is in the latter social construction and social organization perspective. This perspective only developed later in the last century, during the 1960s and 1970s. Before that, in the 1940s and 1950s, studies of the media accepted the presupposition of facts as objective phenomena (Gans, 1979).

World events that partly contributed to the re-evaluation of journalism included the oil crisis of 1973, Vietnam and Watergate, although there was not as much change in journalistic practices as popularly perceived. In fact, as Hallin (1984, 1986) shows, throughout the Vietnam and Watergate era, in processes of newsgathering, official sources persisted as the primary source of news. The difference was that official sources came to encompass a wider range of opinion as the consensus within the government and governmental institutions disintegrated. Indeed, the range of liberal opinion in the press has not gone beyond the range of opinion expressed in Congress (Bennett, 1990).

However, most research has been on the domestic press and was conducted prior to the end of the Cold War. The onset of globalization has given rise to developments which have been challenging for an expanding and more diversified body of journalists working in an ever more competitive market. In the 1990s, a survey of US foreign correspondents indicated their increasing diversity in terms of gender and ethnic status (Hess, 1996a). Another study indicated the difficulty news outlets have in placing international events in a context that matters to US audiences in the wake of the end of the Cold War (Hess, 1996b). Journalism itself is certainly in a state of flux. In a study of US journalists working in El Salvador in the waning days of the Cold War, the late 1980s and early 1990s, Pedelty (1995) described differences in attitudes and behavior based on professional status, with staff journalists more willing than stringers to rely almost exclusively on official sources.

The journalists working in Haiti in the early 1990s were a diverse group of journalists struggling to make sense of a new type of US intervention overseas and who, in the course of interviews, exhibited sharp differences in their attitudes toward the practice of journalism. The differences were about the same issues that have been the subject of research since the 1960s and which emerged as contentious in Pedelty's study – the possibility of objectivity, the role of values and sources – but in this case the journalists split along generational rather than professional status lines.

This article documents how the journalists covering Haiti were divided in their attitudes and practices, and how these differences correlate with the chronological and professional age of the journalists. In Haiti in the 1990s there were journalists who had been working since the 1950s, those who began working during or just after Vietnam and those who were relatively new, who had begun working in the late 1980s. The older journalists (called the Old Guard from here on) worked a very traditional beat centered round US government sources and lived and worked 'apart' from

mainstream Haitian society. The younger journalists (New Guard), in sharp contrast, were much less reliant on official sources of information and did not believe in or act upon the traditional notion of ‘objectivity’. They were also much less involved with the diplomatic and local elite. The middle group (Middle Guard) bridged the gap, working the official sources almost as much as their older colleagues and socializing with them, but some of them also included other sources, and expressed misgivings in private about the possibility of objectivity and the reliability of these sources. Although in practice the younger journalists stated that several of the middle-aged journalists were part of ‘the pack’ of older journalists the fact that they did seem to bridge the two groups in important ways merits their delineation into a separate group for purposes of explication. The older journalists were on the verge of retirement and merely remnants of that age cohort, and thus were heavily outnumbered by the younger journalists. However, documenting their attitudes and practices gives some indication of a difference along generational lines and some insight into the work of journalists in the post-Cold War era. I argue that what I observed in Haiti was a particular historical moment that captured a group of journalists which spanned several generations working alongside each other in a situation that caused divergent attitudes and practices to be evident.

Methodology

The analysis draws on 16 interviews I conducted with US foreign correspondents who had worked in Haiti in the first half of the 1990s that documented their attitudes and practices as journalists during this period. I used a ‘snowballing’ and ‘opportunistic’ sampling strategy (Miles and Huberman, 1994). I began interviewing journalists who had bylines in that period, went on to include journalists referred to by NGO workers and US military personnel during a research trip I made to Haiti in 1997, and, finally, tracked down journalists referred to by other journalists. They were all print journalists, as the scale of the research project did not encompass TV coverage. Besides the prestigious national newspapers, I chose several papers in regions or cities of the USA that have a large immigrant Haitian population – New York, Boston, Miami – and so provide greater coverage of events in Haiti. Some of the journalists had been reporting on Haiti for over 30 years, others had covered Haiti since the early 1980s, others the early 1990s. The older journalists were white men and the younger journalists had several women and minorities in their ranks. Their age was not closely correlated with the status of their news organization. Logistical constraints required me to opt for telephone interviewing rather than face-to-face interviewing as the respondents were primarily in cities on the Eastern seaboard of the USA, and in Haiti. I used a formal interview

schedule with open-ended questions to guide the interviews. These questions covered their background demographic and career details, the nature of objectivity in journalism, the role of personal values, considerations of consequences of stories covered, and stories they consider especially good or especially weak (by themselves or other journalists). I also asked about their contact with the major actors in Haiti at this time, including the US military, the United Nations (UN), the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the local elite, the US State Department and the local population.

My findings are constrained by the small number of older male journalists. However, the differences were so strongly expressed by the younger journalists in particular, that I feel the documentation of their respective attitudes and behaviors contributes to our understanding of objectivity and autonomy among the press in the post-Cold War era of globalization. The younger journalists were much more willing to discuss the issues and spontaneously and individually talked about how they viewed the older journalists' *modus operandi* as very different to their own, and elaborated extensively on the reasons why. They were passionate in their answers and wrestled with what their role should be. Their views, perceptions and descriptions of the older journalists were consistent with each other and with the content of the interviews with the older journalists. In addition, as I conducted the interviews, several of the interviewees explicitly and spontaneously referred to 'the Sunshine Boys'. It is not clear where the sobriquet originated but it is referred to in a book by a *Time* journalist, Amy Wilentz (1989) and was also the subject of a controversial article in the *Columbia Journalism Review* (Shacochis, 1995). According to these accounts, the Sunshine Boys consisted of three or four older reporters (one older reporter consciously distanced himself from the group in protest in 1994) in addition to several middle-aged reporters who socialized and worked with them.

Analysis

There is a clear correlation between the age of the reporter and their attitudes and practices. In my sample, the older generation (Old Guard) is a numerically small number – two – of older, male journalists. Both were coming up to retirement age. They came of age professionally in the years just after the Second World War and expressed perplexity at the challenges their younger colleagues posed to their routinized, official sources-based journalism. The middle generation (Middle Guard) is those who are middle-aged and who began work during or in the five years after the Vietnam War. Also numerically small – three – they advocate less reliance on official sources in theory but in practice do rely on them, and are not

able to fully articulate a critical stance. They are more reluctant to overtly challenge the established way of doing things. The three of them work for large, prestigious newspapers and socialized with the older journalists, though the degree to which they did this varied. The youngest journalists (New Guard) were numerically most dominant – there were 11 of them. They are the post-Cold War generation, diverse in ethnicity and gender, and – as yet in the early stage of their careers – mostly working for smaller news organizations. Although unlike the journalists in Pedelty’s (1995) study, they were for the most part not stringers or freelancers. Several have since gone on to staff positions at the most prestigious newspapers in the USA but their views have not changed.

Each generation responded to the challenges of the end of the Cold War differently. Journalists had a new global geo-political order within which to report in a new and different way and in which their relations with the military and the US State Department were significantly different than before the 1990s. There was no longer a ‘virtual’ war situation that involved a high degree of patriotism with regard to government sources (Gans, 1979). Similarly, in these post-Cold War ‘Military Operations Other Than War’ (Moskos, 2000), the press are not reliant on the military for access or transport, and the military has to justify its existence and budget, thus requiring the military to be in a position of having to court the media for coverage. Women journalists have brought a new dimension to the experience of foreign correspondence, as have immigrants and non-elite educated correspondents. The journalists from the prestigious news organizations were more likely to be elite-educated and their status on these two factors, plus the fact that they were mostly male, meant that there was a social and socializing into an ‘old boys network’ factor involved in the expression of their attitudes. The three generation categories overlap as they are an inevitably crude device attempting to document processes that are fluid and complex. Moreover, different factors were relevant to different degrees for journalists, and it was often in the people who were influenced by both older and younger journalists that the currents of change could be seen most clearly (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
Factors influencing the attitudes and practices of journalists
working in Haiti, 1990–6

Journalist	⇒ era when they came of professional age ⇒ socio-political attitudes ⇒ political context ⇒ increased competition ⇒ demographics (gender/race/class)	Professional practices and attitudes
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Objectivity and values

When asked about the beliefs and practices that inform their work, the older journalists focused on techniques, and said they didn't understand my question when I asked about values. They see their profession as a set of transferable skills – they could be anywhere in the world. They were perplexed when asked about values; they said they went out and reported the news and that was that. For them, their practice of journalism is inherently neutral, given the long-established routines and the ideal of 'objectivity' that they adhered to. '[Objectivity is] trying to give all sides . . . you try to talk to all sides at least, and give all sides and balance the differing viewpoints' (B, Old Guard).

The Middle Guard was less sure about the role their values played and didn't mention the subject spontaneously, as several of the New Guard did. They were ambivalent about objectivity; they were not sure if it was possible, but neither did they have an articulated or defined vision of an alternative position. The Middle Guard wanted to preserve an appearance of neutrality while having reservations about the possibility. They didn't insist on the existence of 'objectivity' but were evasive on how and what values informed their reportage:

One can reduce the notion of 'objectivity' to a sterile, computer-like notion of total indifference, almost coldness. I don't think that is necessarily what is understood by journalists when they talk about being objective. I think that a good journalist can be impartial and honest, and thorough in his or her work and it doesn't mean not having one's own opinions and not being shaped by one's experience. (F, Middle Guard)

The New Guard was very clear on what role their values and beliefs played in their reportage, and were explicit about what they felt to be the impossibility of objectivity and the necessity of being honest rather than neutral. They do not see themselves as neutral purveyors of facts and do not see this as problematic for their reportage. They are similar to the group of journalists who covered the post-Cold War ethnic conflict in Bosnia, who made a distinction between objectivity and neutrality, suggesting that accurate reporting among this generation includes determining responsibility (Strobel, 1997: 104). The emphasis for the New Guard is an interpretation of a reality or 'truth' that cannot be grasped in its entirety by any one individual and theirs is but one honest attempt to convey what they see. S (New Guard) is adamant: 'There's no such thing [as objectivity].' He complained:

A *New York Times* reporter can't [write in the first person], they have to serve forth this very stupid, archaic conceit of the reporter or a visitor. 'A visitor came to the National Palace on Tuesday and heard President Aristide say "Everybody gets free cake".' And the visitor happens to be a *New York Times*

reporter. That is so funny. That they have to create that illusion of objectivity; because if it was you who went to the palace, suddenly it's corrupt, corrupted by subjectivity.

The New Guard took a strong historically based view of what was happening in Haiti. This was sometimes because it was also their family and country of origin's history (P, O, V, all New Guard), but also because they felt that if a journalist is going to report on a country he or she should know its history (G). If the history is known, it is often radicalizing. G emphasized Haiti's history of a successful slave rebellion, followed by ostracism by fearful colonial powers, and its subsequent economic underdevelopment, and sees that history as a major determinant of Haiti's position today. He believes that to ignore it is to know less than half the story. But reporting in the second half of the 20th century has not emphasized history and context (Cohen 1963) and the Old Guard followed in this tradition. B (Old Guard) in a discussion on his work covering Haiti for 35 years did not articulate a view on the role Haitian history played in contributing to his understanding of the country.

The older journalists exhibited a weariness with Haiti, one said 'with this attitude I probably shouldn't be covering it' and, in the words of a younger journalists describing her older and some of her not much older colleagues (the Old and Middle Guard):

A lot of journalists go there and hang out with each other. [B, member of the old guard] when he goes, doesn't really have a feel for the people anymore, and I'm not sure, because he feels hopeless about it, he doesn't let himself get emotionally involved or whether it's because he just wants to keep his distance from the filth, but I think it doesn't do anybody any good.

The Middle Guard (R, FH, F) did not mention their emotions at all and did not talk about how the poverty of Haiti impacted them. As they talked about older journalists' habits it became clear that they did not seem to notice it, and were certainly removed, physically and emotionally, from what the younger journalists were experiencing. DR (New Guard) outlines what she saw:

They go, find a translator, they get three or four quotes, and they go back to the hotel, write their story, and have a nice dinner. You know? And I don't think that's really covering it and it does, it troubles me. . . . Shallowness is not necessarily something they don't want! To me, people should be fired for that. There's a famous book called *Scoop*, by Evelyn Waugh, and it's all about a fake war, about this guy who bumbles into a job and goes to cover a war that doesn't exist and all the journalists get together and they put the rumor around and it becomes a story and they never leave their hotel, but they become famous and win the equivalent of the Pulitzer. I think there's a lot of truth to that. It's very easy nowadays with faxes and phones and satellites, to go somewhere and not experience the place. It's scary. Print journalists could really sit in their hotel room all the time, or the alternative, be the ugly American, who rents the

biggest most expensive car you can get, drives around the countryside scattering the peasants, which I've also seen. I know somebody, a reporter who was in Haiti, he drove around there and knocked over a woman's cart with all her stuff in it, it was probably a month's worth of sustenance for her, and didn't stop, didn't even stop. To me that's so distressing, because what it shows is a complete contempt for the place where you are.

The younger journalists all talked about the personal impact on them of working in Haiti: there was a strong emotional component to their work that strengthened it rather than undermined it in their view:

Whether you are writing from a first-person point of view or a third-person point of view, credibility is still everything. And I happen to think that you build credibility by being an honest person telling what you see and what you feel. And revealing part of yourself. (S, New Guard)

Attitudes influencing practices

The Old Guard's practices had changed little since Cohen's analysis of foreign correspondence in the early 1960s; their beat was the US official sources present in Haiti – the Embassy, the State Department and representatives of US government agencies. The Old Guard's world was the hotels, restaurants and diplomatic circles of the capital, Port-au-Prince, with occasional trips into what B (Old Guard) called 'the interior', that is, the provinces. The Middle Guard followed this beat for the most part but was a bit more exploratory (according to O, New Guard). They socialized with the older journalists but also somewhat with the younger ones. The New Guard, in contrast, spent the larger portion of their time on the 'street beat'; they walked the streets of Port-au-Prince, including the slum areas, and made constant journeys to the provinces. The New Guard spoke critically of the Old Guard's removed, and what they regarded as lavish, social practices. S (New Guard) described how the younger journalists referred to the Old Guard as the 'MRJs' (morally repugnant journalists), a play on the military's food ration packages called MREs. They lived and worked between the Holiday Inn and later the Montana Hotel, two elite, luxurious hotels in Port-au-Prince, the US Embassy and the restaurants of Petionville, a suburb of Port-au-Prince where most of the elite resided. V (New Guard) recalls:

I remember when the Embargo was at its height and things were so dangerous there was a curfew. . . . I remember them [the so-called Sunshine Boys] going to Petionville and they were having caviar and chocolate mousse and . . . not that they should starve like the people, I don't expect that, I used to eat when I was there, I had to, but it was a real wantonness. I thought it was really unseemly and arrogant . . . then they'd buy a case of beer and hang out in the lobby until 2 in the morning, drinking and boozing it up, the day was real easy

for them. I felt they treated the country like it was a banana republic, and there were a lot of seasoned veterans but they had been covering the country when I was a teenager, they thought they had seen it all, it was hopeless. I remember hearing stupid jokes and thinking they rely too much on Embassy sources, and Embassy sources were putting their own spin on thing. . . . Amy Wilentz writes about them in her book, *The Rainy Season*, the Sunshine Boys, it was all true, I worked with them. I remember them saying ‘V, I don’t know why you work so hard, you could just watch the stuff on CNN or stay in the lobby and drink.’ It became a joke because they used to call me the ‘nerve-cell’ because I would always be running around . . . they were very nonchalant.

The New Guard stayed in more modest hotels, particularly the Oloffson, or if they did stay at the Holiday Inn (their choice of hotels was limited in Port-au-Prince) they ate in their rooms or when out in the city, expressing discomfort at the habits of the Old Guard. They spent most of their working time on the street, travelling around the poorer areas of the city (which is most of it) and the slums of Cité Soleil. This was the home of the bulk of Aristide’s supporters and hence they viewed it as essential to understand.

‘I just did plain old street reporting’, says V (New Guard). K stated: ‘I had lots of ties with people on the street, very little ties with the elite or the diplomats.’ O states: ‘The news was really out on the streets.’ V recalls:

One thing I always heard from people was they felt I helped them understand the situation beyond just the policy. I put them on the street, I showed them how this was affecting Haitian culture, how the people were suffering, I wrote about how the elite felt: ‘Screw the poor people: we’re the ones who make this country.’

VE, EG and D (all New Guard) also emphasize the importance of street reporting. VE, who lived in Port-au-Prince in the mid-1990s, socializes with local street musicians and rode the tap-taps (very crowded Haitian public transport). She says: ‘Journalists who aren’t used to getting around, they miss a lot of things here.’ This level of interaction is particularly important in a country where illiteracy is very high, newspaper readership and television ownership is extremely low, and the press is far from free. The principle source of relaying news is ‘*le telediòl*’, the system which relays news by word of mouth throughout Haiti and which is faster, say the journalists, than any electronic media, though rarely as accurate. Knowing what the people are saying about events and developments is impossible without access to this system.

Sources

The Old Guard’s focus was political news from government sources. In the interviews they assumed the ‘news’ was political news, and the sources

they discussed were official ones. The Old Guard accepted the elite's views as articulating the views of the Haitian populace, but more from expediency than anything else. 'That's a trap you fall into. Those people who are a little more sophisticated and speak English or Spanish who you can talk to face to face without an interpreter, you probably pay more attention to . . . ' (B, Old Guard).

The choice of sources reinforces perceptions of the people and place. Two very different perceptions of Haiti emerged. B (Old Guard) said:

You try to talk to all sides at least, and give all sides and balance the differing viewpoints . . . which you try to do in Haiti too, except that one side is top-heavy. . . . It's hard to explain. As I say, Haiti is a very complex place to deal with, and when you've got 90 percent of the population which is not really politically aware or active . . . obviously they're very emotional about people like Aristide of course . . . they just don't have a broad awareness of what's going on in the country other than that they're not doing very well.

The younger journalists who did speak to some of the 90 percent had a very different view. G (New Guard) complains that the dominant picture from the US media has been that:

. . . these Haitians, you know, will never get anything together, which has always been the viewpoint. My viewpoint is that the Haitians are the most politically conscious people in the Western Hemisphere. I mean, I'm amazed how politically astute the average person on the street is, and the fact that they have so many political parties, and so many factions, is really sort of a reflection of the incredible battles that this country has been through. . . . It is kind of depressing when you see the divisions among them, but some people see that as some sort of reflection of some savagery rather than a reflection of a society with sharp contradictions, and a long process of political maturation that's gone on there. The average Haitian knows more, even the ones who are illiterate, about politics, than the average American . . . and I think that's because they've lived it.

Several of the New Guard (G, K, V, P, O, CE) criticized the older journalists' routine practice of going for Haitian official sources or lacking those, people who socialized with the resident foreign diplomats and who spoke English. The latter were usually from the wealthier elite who had backed the coup that overthrew the democratically elected President Aristide. They felt it was unjust that the Haitian elite represented a small minority of the population yet were given a hugely disproportionate representation by the Old Guard in their reports.

The State Department was never sympathetic to Aristide, and once he was reinstated directed the US military to treat a militia, FRAPH, who had been part of the military coup, as the legitimate opposition. The Old Guard, getting their news directly from the State Department, did not see the framing of FRAPH as a legitimate opposition and the rejection of Aristide as problematic. Their stories gave FRAPH equal credibility with Aristide's

party Lavalas. FRAPH, however, was seen by the younger journalists to be a small bunch of thugs given money by the CIA because the Pentagon was desperate to have somebody they could label ‘the opposition’ to Aristide. When the Pentagon and White House realized their error and instructed the military not to treat FRAPH as the opposition, the older journalists flip-flopped with them and uncritically reported those statements.

The New Guard was openly skeptical about the statements from the State Department (the US Embassy) in Haiti. Most preferred to leave reporting the Embassy’s statements to a member of the Old Guard if their paper had one (*Miami Herald*, *New York Times*, *Time* magazine in my sample). Their opinion of the State Department was low, even if they had not lived through the Vietnam War or Central America in the 1980s. In Haiti, the State Department was repeatedly exposed as dishonest and manipulative according to the younger journalists.

O (New Guard) recalls that during the military coup that forced democratically elected Aristide from power, the Haitian military were running riot, shooting civilians all over Port-au-Prince:

. . . and the [US] embassy pulled in this group of older reporters and gave them this run down of human rights abuses. And Lee [Hockstader] went because he’s from a major newspaper [*Washington Post*]; he was shocked because the Embassy gave these statistics that were only about human rights abuses during the seven months or so that Aristide was in power, they gave xeroxes of 26 lynchings by Lavalas [pro-Aristide] people, and this was a time when the Haitian army [who supported the right-wing coup] was running riot, killing and raping people. Lee came back agog, shocked that other reporters from the large media were so attuned to the Embassy way of viewing things . . . there was this ongoing perception within the Embassy that Aristide, if he’d been brought back would have been very dangerous, so perhaps the military wasn’t such a bad kind of way station to something else. Or as the UN people said, when they finally came there, they kept saying, ‘We can’t figure it out, but the US seems to want democracy in Haiti but without Aristide’ [who had been elected by an overwhelming majority of the population in the 1991 presidential election].

She continues:

There was a weird ambience there for a while. Some of the journalists, this older group, took the embassy much more seriously than some of the others. Lee [Hockstader] . . . he was probably the only reporter from a major newspaper that time, that didn’t. He was really between the two camps. He was in the A-team but broke away. But not many people did that.

A journalist had two choices, as articulated by G (New Guard). First, if they are critical of government officials, they will be denied access in the future; this puts the reporter at a disadvantage as the routine requires that the journalist provide certain coverage. Alternatively, the journalist can follow what is an important story and accept the fact they will lose that access. Then they have to find their story through alternative channels. G

says it is easier for him to choose the second, as he is a columnist and the newspaper he works for can get the political news from the wire agencies. But some choose the second out of principle. V (New Guard) incurred the wrath of the US Embassy for a number of stories and was warned that she was in danger of becoming *persona non grata* at the Embassy. She recalls:

They [the Embassy] complained to the Sunshine Boys and they would tell me 'You're making it hard for us, "de-dah" won't talk any more if you name your sources.' I said 'I'm not going to write a story with not one source. How do I know these people exist?' My stories needed to have more credibility than some of the stuff they were writing. I knew where they were getting the stuff, it was the American Embassy, but you have to think they would have their own spin. At least if you're going to quote the Embassy, go and quote somebody from the other side.

R (Middle Guard), when threatened with having his credentials removed, shrugged it off with 'The US Embassy is not the only embassy in town, and the Pentagon is not the only military show.' Coming from a prestigious daily newspaper, the Embassy would hesitate before closing its doors to him and anyway, he pointed out, he 'could always get a quote from the Washington Bureau'.

But the trade-off between access and honesty was not as easily handled by F, a member of the Middle Guard. G (New Guard) recalls:

They can't really escape the fact that that's what they're doing [making a trade off in favor of the Embassy]. . . . So you know, you could always see F, F would write a, one day he'd write a slightly pro-Aristide or pro-popular movement article and the next day he felt he had to come out with another one to sort of balance it off by giving something that was basically a PR job for the military regime. And he'd go back and forth like this constantly, in the hopes that the last positive story for the regime would keep his avenues of communication for the government open.

In an interview for this article, F spelled out a description of being a journalist that closely matched the routinized and official-source-reliant approach. He was defensive on the controversy surrounding an article he wrote which put forward the Embassy's argument that Aristide was no longer supported by the Haitian non-elite population. The article was greeted with outrage by the New Guard who were aware of the Embassy's dislike of Aristide and also were aware of the tremendously deep attachment and reverence the Haitian population felt for their exiled President. F refused to concede that the criticism had any validity, arguing that his (unnamed) sources had 'disappeared into the woodwork'. Some members of the New Guard, according to F, felt he was the mouthpiece for an apologia for the coup, which had overthrown democratically elected Aristide, a charge that F denies. However, it is still an issue that concerns him: it was the one time in the interview when he became agitated and less

than coolly articulate. For G (New Guard), who is sympathetic to F personally but not professionally, Washington wants to control the media if it is to maximize its political power; he cites Bob Woodward's observation in his book on the first years of the Clinton presidency: 'The journalists just follow whatever the State Department or the Defense Department says is the story today.' Other younger journalists shared this view of the Old Guard's working practices; O, V and S all argued that the truth was obvious to anyone who was out on the street:

I felt that certain assessments were being made based on what diplomats said when really our responsibility was to go out and, to give you an example, there was a story written on the front page of the *New York Times* saying basically the people had given up on Aristide coming back. And I at that point had learned some Creole and was spending time in Cité Soleil (one of the poorest sections of Port-au-Prince) because that's where things seemed to be happening. I felt like you know, if anything Aristide had become like Jesus, he had become a demi-God in his absence. I didn't really see them as having given up on him. And, quite frankly, I think if they held an election tomorrow, he's going to win in a landslide . . . that story was making the rounds among diplomats and some analysts. I don't know why, they just dreamed it up one day. I think someone decided that the people had grown exhausted and were tired of waiting for Aristide to come back. Which didn't turn out actually to be true. But I think if the reporter had spent a little bit more time in the slums, he would have known it wasn't true. (O, New Guard)

The New Guard was much more likely to see the issues in Haiti as economics, human rights and ecology and international politics.

When you go to Haiti and 80 percent of the people don't have running water, then whoever addresses the issue of running water is really the only person who's concerned about the people. Everybody else is involved with some other game. I think they want to be successful journalists but they don't really spend much time thinking about what their purpose is and what their role is. (G, New Guard)

The older and middle large paper journalists did not factor in poverty in what they chose to cover or as an aspect of Haiti that was part of the story. The younger journalists, in contrast, were keenly aware of the poverty and the intertwining of economics and politics not just in Haiti's history but in the current situation. V (New Guard) repeatedly did stories that articulated the impact of the Embargo and the effects of the US and UN intervention on the impoverished population. Her personal experience of Haiti (she was born there and grew up in the USA) sensitized her to the issues: shortly after she arrived, her cousin, a mother of six, died in childbirth because she did not have \$15 to pay for a doctor. 'And this was TYPICAL! The desperation – that's what I brought home. I wasn't saying I was right or wrong. I was saying "This is what it's like". I was writing stories that I thought showed . . . [during the embargo] when you said someone is a

political refugee versus an economic refugee, sometimes it's really hard to separate the two because the economics are based on the politics and vice versa.'

As the story in Haiti progressed, the US-based editors did begin to request more of the colorful stories the younger journalists were bringing back from the streets – the issues, the sources and the way they seemed to reflect the shift of news values in the public domain. 'Soft news' began to be seen as 'legitimate news' (Hallin, 1998). The stories also added something to news in an increasingly competitive field that has had a proliferation of outlets in recent years. The editors began to expect and demand a similar approach and material from all their journalists. The Old Guard did not know how to deal with this: their working practices and ideals were ingrained and anything else inspired fear and confusion. The beat for them was the Embassy and dining with the Ambassador, a life that did not include the street beat. They were not accustomed to spending time in the hot sunshine of the streets and provinces writing stories about the minutiae of ordinary Haitians' lives under the economic embargo that preceded the US-led military intervention. Yet they had to respond to what the editors requested. According to the younger reporters, they did this by attempting to harass the younger reporters for material that they could then incorporate into their stories. V (New Guard) recalls:

One of my colleagues from my newspaper was the lead person on Haiti, one time he told his friends from the *New York Times*, *LA Times*, *Time* magazine, that I would give them all quotes. One of them called my room and said 'Give us the quotes.' The first time it happened I did, but when it happened again, I said 'Let me tell you something, I'm not some kid working for you guys, I'm not giving you the quotes.' The guy from my paper got really mad and said: 'You're making things hard, we work as a team here. You're not being a "team player".'

In 1994 at the height of the Embargo, as the story progressed, the working practices of the older journalists came under sharper criticism from their younger colleagues. One of the Old Guard (BD), who had lived in Haiti off and on for many years, was for a long time part of the group dubbed the Sunshine Boys (Shacochis, 1995) who – in the words of a younger journalist – would 'sit at the Holiday Inn and phone over to the Embassy to get the story'. But the younger journalist describes how:

[BD] eventually fell out with them. He didn't like what they were doing. He thought that they were the problem. He thought the regime [this was between 1991 and 1994] kept its magic act going based on the illusion that these guys helped create. (O, New Guard)

The military and the Pentagon

The difference in the degree of reliance on official sources and traditional routinized practices between the three categorized groups was also evident in how they framed and reported on the military presence in Haiti, of both the UN and the US forces. The different attitudes to the press in the US military and Pentagon also indicates there is a similar generational effect at work within these institutions as they grapple with the post-Cold War world.

The situation was markedly different from any the journalists had experienced before. Editors and journalists were used to doing battle to gain access to military operations but the military in Haiti was opening up to and courting the press in an unprecedented manner. With the advent of Military Operations Other than War (MOOTW) the US and UN peace-keeping forces need the media as much as the media needs them (Moskos, 2000). The older journalists did not pick up on the nuances of the UN or US military intervention. The focus of what they wrote was almost completely political and, when there were no statements being released by the UN in the months before the US troops arrived, they did not write other news stories. They did not see the US intervention as anything new and the patriotic values underpinning their work were those Gans (1979) described from the 'virtual war' state of the Cold War.

The Middle Guard did regard it as something new; a key difference between them and the Old Guard was that some of them (R in this sample) articulated the discrepancy between Washington DC and on-the-ground policy, and were observant of the new context for the military. However, they continued to report from the official sources even when they knew what they were hearing was not true, both from the Pentagon, the military and the leaders of the military coup that ousted Aristide.

There's been times where you know, I talk to somebody and I say to myself, you know, they're lying here, but this is what they're saying and even though it may be baloney, you know, I have an obligation to put this in the story and, you know and thus it will appear. (R, Middle Guard)

The middle-aged journalists had come of age professionally in the years after the Vietnam War ended and were intrigued by the new openness of the military on the ground, having expected a 'built-in hostility'. In fact, at the same time as they balanced what they knew were often false statements from the Pentagon and State Department, there was also a new respect and fascination emerging with the US military and the role they can play in situations like Haiti. They saw the military's massive resources being put to use in traditionally 'unmilitary like ways' restoring civil order and providing security.

The New Guard openly criticized the older journalists as well as the Pentagon and State Department for being slow to relinquish the old Cold War approach of needing a good guy and a bad guy, and of framing their operations in terms of rejecting any leftist-type governments in order to protect capitalism and democracy. This was particularly evident when the White House was not clear in its stated aim and policy for the intervention. This 'old' framing, they felt, was evident not only in how the State Department framed the situation to the journalists in Haiti prior to the intervention in 1994, but also in how they framed the arrival and purpose of the troops (although this framing changed as the younger journalists' reports, among other things, communicated back to the White House what was going on and more explicitly humanitarian policy was articulated). Initially the USA, in its desire to support a fledgling democracy, insisted that there would have to be an opposition and the military treated FRAPH as that legitimate opposition, and the military were instructed not to get involved, merely to observe. The response of the different journalists was revealing. The Young Guard did not concentrate on the political machinations between the White House, State Department and Pentagon, as did the older journalists. Instead they viewed the military as but one of several important actors and one they did not concern themselves with getting access to – they didn't need to, as there was no 'battle zone', the soldiers were out on the streets also. They recorded what was happening on the ground: what the military were doing, how the local population viewed them, the discrepancy between the articulated aims of the White House and what the troops were being told to do or not to do on the ground. V (New Guard) recalls:

The first day they were there, the Haitian military started beating all the onlookers. I wrote a story about how mad the soldiers were; they were like 'I can't believe they killed a man in front of me, I wanted to shoot him, but our orders were not to shoot anyone, not to get involved in the politics, just to be peacekeepers, but we're not really keeping the peace if people are getting killed.'

S (New Guard) observed that the field was 'wide open', as were some of the military in their response to the press. He says: 'We wondered what the military was doing to come up with this, because it was good.' The officers of the army were still wary of the press though the young soldiers were not. Again, there was evidence of a generational effect at work. S argued that the Special Forces (aged 25–40) and troops (mostly late teens–20s) were all generation X-ers (post-Cold War), whereas most of the senior officers were Vietnam veterans. 'This explains', he claimed, 'why the officers are paranoid about the press while Special Forces are not'.

Conclusion

This article documents a clear correlation between the age of reporters and their professional attitudes and practices in Haiti in the early 1990s. It documents how and puts forward an explanation as to why journalists covering Haiti in the early 1990s adopted substantially different journalistic beliefs and practices, and reveals how the impact of a new geo-political order is manifested in differences along generational lines among the US journalists in Haiti. The older journalists, especially those who began working between the Second World War and the Vietnam War were socialized into a highly routinized practice of journalism that was heavily reliant on official sources. The middle-aged journalists, especially the ones who began working during or just after the Vietnam War, were much more skeptical of official sources but were also used to reporting within a Cold War framework. The youngest journalists, those who have begun working since the end of the Cold War, have a different set of professional values and practices and see official sources as merely one way of getting an adequate view of what is happening. In particular, the younger journalists were able to adapt to the more open relations with the military and investigate the wider context of the operation. The older journalists in contrast, continued to rely on official sources and did not explore the range of stories presented by the military working with a number of other organizations and entities. In addition, socio-historical changes within the USA contributed to a more diverse body of journalists who had grown up with post-1960s values and ideals.

Haiti was a historical moment when the correlation of the age of journalists with their professional attitudes and practices were thrown into sharp relief as three generations worked alongside each other in a radically changing world. These dynamics of the journalists working in Haiti has thrown some light on the changes taking place within US foreign correspondence in the post-Cold War era.

Notes

1. This perspective argues that the news serves established power interests and looks at the big picture rather than the day-to-day practices of journalism.

2. Schudson notes that this perspective has not been codified nor established as any sort of 'school', indeed that most understandings of the generation of news merge a 'cultural' view with social organizational views. He argues, however, that it is analytically distinct: it is recognizing news as a form of literature, and one key resource which journalists work with is the cultural tradition of story-telling and picture-making and sentence construction they inherit, with a number of vital assumptions about the world built in.

3. The theoretical source for this perspective is the symbolic interactionist or social constructionist view of society, as in the work of Molotch and Lester and Tuchman, and organizational or bureaucratic theory, as in the work of Edward Epstein (1973), and Herbert Gans (1979).

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