

FOREIGN NEWS VALUES IN THE QUEBEC, ENGLISH
CANADIAN AND US PRESS: A COMPARISON STUDY

Gertrude Joch Robinson
McGill University

The foreign news in three North American press groups is compared to determine the effect of the U.S. elite status on world coverage. The study shows that though the Quebec press has the smallest amount of foreign news, its world coverage is broader and based on more sources than the English Canadian. The implications of these Canadian interpretative differences are explored.

Les nouvelles de l'étranger émises par trois agences de presse opérant en Amérique du Nord sont comparées pour décider de l'effet du standing élitiste des Etats Unis d'Amérique sur le reportage mondial. L'étude démontre que, quoique la presse Québécoise rapporte une moindre quantité de nouvelles de l'étranger, son reportage mondial est plus étendu et est basé sur des sources plus nombreuses que celles de la presse anglo-canadienne. Les implications de ces différences prêtant à interprétations son explorées.

It has generally been hypothesized that national cultures are differentiated from each other through unique patterns of values, expressive norms and symbolic rituals. Mass media content is one such form of social expression. As such it embodies and emphasizes some of the prevailing values and symbolic conventions, but not others. What exactly these values are and how they affect content is presently not well understood. This

study scrutinizes one type of content, foreign affairs reporting in three North American press groups, to determine the news values which guide the construction and presentation of world pictures to various North American publics.

Such a symbolic approach assumes from the outset, that there are no neutral media systems. They, like school and church, reinforce the general principles and outlooks often called "ideologies" accepted by the society in which they are embedded. As early as 1922, Walter Lippman (1922, 312) noted that every editorial office has its rules according to which events are classified as news. Such news, he claimed, must arouse the emotions of readers and provide a chance for identification. More recently James Halloran emphasized that a particular society's news values are absorbed by the journalist in the practice of his or her profession (1970, 25 - 26). No matter what the lofty ideals may be, these values will be tempered by the economic and political realities in which selection and reporting occur.

Our symbolic focus is thus not so much interested in the "truthfulness" or "adequacy" of foreign affairs portrayals of the Canadian and U. S. press groups as in the social values informing and underlying their construction. These values indicate what journalists consider important in the world environment, and express his or her hypotheses about world realities. Foreign affairs news values additionally require exploring, because they determine how much play an event will receive and thus how much potential influence the report will have on audience perceptions. This perception, according to agenda setting research, is more malleable and open to media influences in situations where the reader lacks direct and personal experience (McCombs, 1976, 2 - 3). Such is precisely the case in acquiring a picture of world events.

During the past decade quite a bit has become known about the structure and content of foreign news and about the principles which underlie variations in presentation. According to Fred Siebert, three different philosophies direct and limit world press and information systems: the autocratic, the commercial and the mixed or social responsibility theories (Siebert, Peterson and Schramm, 1956). More recent work however suggests that these rather general categories need supplementation in order to account for differences in media descriptions among press systems based on the same philosophical premises.

To explain these intra system variations, researchers have turned to a country's status in the world diplomatic arena (Ostgaard, 1965), technical development indexes (Deutsch, 1966), as well as differences in historical precedents (Robinson, 1977, 14 - 15). In addition Galtung and Ruge (1965, 64 - 91) have suggested that personal and institutional information processing have much in common and are explainable in terms of the psychology of perception. Such a scheme predicts that events with certain frequencies of occurrence, threshold phenomena, meaningfulness, intensity, surprise, and consonance with existing preconceptions will be more likely to be reported than others.

Though many of these environmental and organizational factors have indeed been verified, the way in which professional values mold the manner of presentation is as yet virtually unresearched. This study therefore compares the contents of three press groups with similar philosophical assumptions, professional outlooks and commercial support arrangements. Because they differ in elite status and ethnic backgrounds, these press groups will be assumed to show some differences in their world event selections, though they will not be expected to manifest differences in modes of

portrayal. Three interrelated questions are the primary focus of investigation: what world events are selected by the three press groups? What types of portrayal utilized and what contributions do these findings make to an understanding of North American commercial news values?

To create the three press samples, a total of seventeen Canadian and thirteen United States papers were compared. The English and U. S. papers were chosen for regional representation and varying circulation size, while the seven French journals constitute the total number of dailies appearing in Quebec in 1977. Table One indicates that the English Canadian papers are chosen from all provinces and have a circulation of approximately 1.8 million, while the French sample's circulation is 795,000. On the United States side too the papers represent the major regions, varying circulation sizes and a total circulation of about 6.7 million. The sample frame for the project is January to April 1977 for which a composite week is drawn. This gives a randomly selected Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, etc. The total sample is composed of 102 Canadian and 91 United States issues, of which 7 Canadian and 5 U. S. papers are missing. This provides a return of 94% on the original sample. Both column inch and story counts were used in this study. In spite of minor discrepancies both measures are strongly correlated (Budd, 1964).

All foreign news stories in the newspapers were coded according to dateline, subject, source, column inches, and placement within the paper. Foreign news stories were defined as items having foreign datelines or dealing with a foreign country. Entertainment and sports sections as well as weekend magazines were excluded from the analysis, though care was taken to include general news stories from these sections as well. All in all 4,134 stories were coded: 563 (13.6%) French,

2,370 (57.3%) English Canadian and 1,201 (29.1%) United States. The inter-coder reliability was $r = .95$.

I. World Events Selection in the Three Press Groups.

A variety of sources indicated that the kind and quality of a country's news product is a result of both environmental and internal organization factors. Environmental factors like ownership patterns, circulation size, availability of technical facilities for international news purchase and exchange, the deployment of the foreign correspondent corps and a country's diplomatic history and relations all limit the availability of foreign news (Robinson and Sparkes, 1976). Organizational selection practices and the professional values of the staff on the other hand determine allotment of news space to foreign affairs, particular geographical selection and idiosyncratic subject matter focuses.

In the advertising sponsored Canadian and U. S. groups the majority of space is devoted to advertisements (60%). Saleability of newspapers furthermore dictates that local reporting receives the lion's share of the news hole to ensure reader support. Foreign news in such a system is of only third rank importance and has been called the "irrelevant beat" (Worthington, 1971). In spite of this Table Two indicates that there are large variations in the amount of news space allotted to this type of information by different papers and press groups. The English Canadian press (27.8%) has double the foreign newshole of the U. S. (11.6%), while the Quebec press offers a newshole of only 7.2% for world reporting. The same discrepancies are evident in the total column inches devoted to foreign countries and the numbers of stories carried in the three press systems. The English Canadian 38,338 column inches

Table One
Canadian and U. S. Papers Selected for Analysis

Press Groups	Circulation* in 1,000	Foreign news ** hole in %
<u>Quebec Press (7)</u>		
Le Devoir	40.4	13.2
Journal de Montreal	182.0	4.9
Montreal Matin	140.9	3.1
La Presse	196.7	9.4
Journal de Quebec	53.6	5.6
Le Soleil	143.8	7.6
La Tribune	38.5	6.9
<u>English Canadian (10)</u>		
Halifax Mail Star	53.0	25.4
Montreal Star	160.1	41.7
Ottawa Citizen	106.6	32.1
Toronto Star	488.9	22.9
Toronto Globe and Mail	263.2	25.6
Winnipeg Free Press	140.0	36.7
Regina Leader Post	66.2	21.3
Calgary Herald	124.1	25.4
Edmonton Journal	164.6	26.7
Vancouver Sun	236.4	27.0
<u>U. S. Press (13)</u>		
New York Times	803.7	18.7
New York News	1,925.6	8.3
Washington Post	530.0	14.2
Louisville Courier Journal	369.8	16.1
Dallas Times Herald	227.9	7.4
Buffalo Evening News	226.6	9.3
Milwaukee Journal	338.6	9.7
Oklahoma City Oklahoman	167.7	7.8
Minneapolis Star	459.8	9.5
Denver Post	250.9	11.4
Des Moines Register	225.1	8.1
Los Angeles Times	1,009.0	27.3
Seattle Post Intelligencer	182.1	9.5

* 1977 circulation figures

** percent of total news

and 2,370 stories compare with approximately half that number (1,201) in the United States sample and about a quarter of the column inches (9,954) and numbers of stories (563) in the Quebec press.

Gerbner's inverse and close relationship between commercial sponsorship and low foreign news coverage must consequently be questioned. Large variations in the foreign newshole are found not only among the advertising sponsored U.S. and West European newspapers, but in the party sponsored presses of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as well. These range from a 11.1% newshole in the U. S. to 23.6% in Western Europe and a similar fluctuation between the Soviet Union's 16.5% newshole and the Hungarian and Czechoslovakian foreign space of 37.5%. The non-aligned presses of Ghana, India and the Phillipines with mixed sponsorship furthermore allot virtually the same space for foreign reporting 22.8% as the Western European papers with commercial bases (Gerbner and Marvanyi, 1977). Sponsorship alone it appears does not explain foreign newshole variation. It covaries instead with elite nation status, trade, geographical proximity and other environmental considerations (Robinson and Sparks, 1976, 210).

A second set of factors which are positively related to world reporting according to Rosengren and Rikardson (1975) are a paper's circulation size, quality as evidenced by audience interest and the agenda of world events during the time of study. Table One which compares circulation size with foreign news hole figures for the three samples indicates that a newspaper's size alone is also not an adequate indicator of world coverage. Some larger papers like Quebec's *La Presse* (196,600 circulation), English Canada's *Vancouver Sun* (236,400 circulation) and the U. S. *Los Angeles Times* (1,009,000 circulation) in fact devote more space to foreign reporting than most

Table Two

Foreign News in the Three Press Groups
(composite week)

	Quebec Press	English Canadian Press	U. S. Press
Total number of foreign stories	563	2,370	1,201
Percentage of total stories in three samples	13.6%	57.3%	29.1%
Total column inches	137,603	99,568	122,104
Total foreign inches	9,954	38,338	16,336
Average foreign newshole	7.2%	27.8%	11.8%
Percent U. S. news coverage	2.1%	11.5%	0.2%
Foreign newshold minus U. S. coverage	5.1%	16.3%	11.6%

smaller circulation papers. Yet the **Winnipeg Free Press** and the elite status of **Le Devoir** and the **New York Times** guarantee these papers a larger news hole than their circulation alone would warrant.

World events too may cause considerable variations in foreign affairs coverage. In spite of this however certain countries and regions, like the United States and North America, seem routinely to receive prominent and some say disproportionate coverage. Thoren (1970) places these variations at between 40% and 60% in the English Canadian press and at between 10% and 30% in the European. Other countries and regions receive considerably less attention though there is no way to predict these differences at present.

II. Sources of Foreign News

Professional values constitute a final factor which may explain variations in foreign news reporting. Since all of our newspaper groups are commercially sponsored we shall assume that their quantitative and qualitative gatekeeping practices are similar (Rosengren, 1973). Quantitative gatekeeping refers to the amount of available space devoted to different international events according to a professionally learned scale of importance. Whereas qualitative gatekeeping refers to the differential lay-out and play these events receive.

Quantitative and qualitative gatekeeping studies indicate that differential selections do occur and that they may be due to different utilization patterns of foreign news sources (Rosengren and Rikardson, 1975, 105). International agencies like A.P. sell their services at differential prices to different countries and media. Furthermore some news agency and editorial personnel seem to believe that some sources are more reliable for

Table Three

Sources of Foreign News in the
Three Press Groups
(by percent of stories)

Source or News Agency	Quebec Press	English Canadian Press	U. S. Press
CP	2.5	4.7	0.0
AP	21.3	34.1	32.1
UPI	5.5	12.8	17.7
Other U. S. syndicated	3.2	10.6	11.1
Total U.S. source or Agency	(30.0)	(57.5)	(61.9)
Reuters	22.8	17.5	4.7
AFP	27.5	0.9	1.0
Staff	12.6	7.2	28.2
Other	0.6	10.2	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

certain purposes than others and that global agencies lack "objectivity" with respect to the coverage of events in their own countries (UNESCO, 1953).

Both of these explanations are relevant to explaining the different geographic and subject focuses of the Canadian and U.S. press groups. Table Three which analyzes the sources of foreign news in the three sets of papers indicates that the English Canadian press relies heavily on the A.P., U.P.I. and syndicates like the N. Y. Times. Fifty-seven and a half percent (57.5%) of its foreign news stories come from these United States sources, because it is cheaper to import than to extend the country's meager foreign correspondents network composed of 28 C.P., C.B.C. and media reporters (Robinson and Sparkes, 1976, 207). The U. S. press also utilizes primarily United States sources for its world coverage. Here 61.9% of all stories come from A.P. and U.P.I. as well as syndicates. Adding the 28.2% of stories prepared by U. S. newspaper staffs indicates that a grand total of 90.1% of all foreign stories in U. S. papers are written by U. S. personnel.

Quebec papers in contrast follow a different policy. Though Scanlon (1973) suggested that they rely exclusively on A.F.P., the data indicate this is not the case. The Quebec press utilizes the three great international agencies almost equally. According to Table Three, 22.8% of all stories originate from Reuters, about 27.5% from Agence France Presse, and 30% together from all U. S. sources. French Canadian staffs and C.P. together provide the final 15.1% of the total.

Though both the English and French Canadian press groups neglect the C.P. as a source of foreign news, their reasons are different. The English papers find much of the material a duplication from U.S. wires, whereas the French com-

Table Four
 Newsagency Utilization by World Regions
 in Three Press Groups
 (by number of stories)

Countries or Geographic Regions	Quebec Press (563)				English Canadian Press (2,369)				U.S. Press (1,201)			
	American	AFP	Reuters	Staff	American	AFP	Reuters	Staff	American	AFP	Reuters	Staff
North America	82	78	13	26	898	1	110	92	36	-	1	18
Great Britain	9	11	12	4	72	-	69	26	72	-	6	32
France	15	12	11	3	22	1	23	6	38	-	2	23
Western Europe	15	16	32	9	80	-	61	14	117	-	10	58
Eastern Europe and USSR	8	4	13	6	34	-	21	4	66	1	5	34
Arabs and Israel	9	8	16	5	64	-	16	15	96	3	7	45
Africa	7	8	5	4	44	4	33	12	97	2	5	38
Asia	10	6	18	13	87	14	40	13	125	4	11	52
Oceania	2	2	2	-	17	-	23	2	35	1	2	12
Latin America	4	8	2	8	40	1	19	9	43	1	4	28
Other and UN	-	2	-	2	1	-	-	6	9	-	3	15
Total Stories	160	155	124	80	1359	21	415	199	734	12	56	355
Percent of all stories in press group	92				84				96			

plain about a dearth of coverage in their own language. According to Claude Ryan, then editor of *Le Devoir*, Canadian Press supplies at least twice as much material in English as in French because less than 10% of its staff is French speaking (Royal Commission on the Media, 1970, 232). This imbalance will probably not be ameliorated in the near future, since the French service is already more heavily subsidized than the English.

Table Four, which relates news sources to world regions, further elaborates Quebec's diversified source policy. Out of a total of 563 stories, the Quebec press chose 160 from the United States wire services, 155 from Agence France Presse and 124 the from Reuters agency. This clearly indicates a quantitative selection policy favoring a balanced utilization of the three global agencies. The English Canadian and U. S. press groups on the contrary show no interest in such diversification. Fifty-seven percent (57%) of all stories in the former and sixty-one percent (61%) in the latter originate from United States sources.

Quebec's balanced source policy furthermore applies not only to a breakdown of story totals, but to individual countries and geographical regions as well. In North American coverage, for instance, 41% of all stories came from U. S. sources, 39% from the Agence France Presse, and the final 20% from Reuters and Staff. Similar results are echoed in the Western European, African and Asian coverage. Comparable story figures for the English Canadian and U. S. groups are once again overwhelmingly American, leading to the conclusion that these two groups share a heavy U. S. reporting bias which will have important implications for their geographic and subject matter selections.

Table Five

Geographic Distribution of Foreign News
in the Three Press Groups
(by % of column inches)

Region	Quebec Press	English Canadian Press	U. S. Press
1. Scandinavia	0.1	0.4	0.9
2. Western Europe	32.6	17.6	28.9
3. Eastern Europe including USSR	8.0	2.4	11.0
4. Arab world & Israel	6.7	4.5	11.6
5. Africa excluding 4	3.8	4.1	14.2
6. Asia excluding 3, 4	7.9	7.0	15.9
7. Oceania	2.2	2.3	2.9
8. North America	33.6	58.3	3.8
9. Latin America	4.7	2.8	7.3
10. International Organizations	0.5	0.7	3.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Column Inches	9,200	38,338	16,336

III. Geographical Areas Covered.

To determine whether different news values in addition to news sources are operative in the geographic selection practices of the three press groups, the total number of column inches devoted to different world regions was tabulated. The unit of measurement utilized refers not to absolute space, which varies in small and large papers, but indicates the percentage of the total foreign newshole or relative amount of space devoted to various world regions.

The most obvious and expected finding of Table Five is that attention to world regions is selective in the Canadian and U. S. press groups, but that they tend to select the same regions for coverage. This seems to support the conclusion that the news values determining geographical focus are the same. Yet the amount and quality of attention, differ markedly among the three press groups. In the Quebec press the most highly emphasized regions are North America and Western Europe, which together account for two-thirds of all reporting. Next in approximately equal order of magnitude (6% to 8% of total) follow three regions: Eastern Europe, Asia plus the Arab world and Israel.

The English Canadian press on the other hand manifests an overwhelming preoccupation with North America. This amplification is surely a result of this group's virtually exclusive utilization of U. S. news sources. Two thirds of its attention is focused on the United States alone, with Western Europe following in second place (17.6%) and Asia a remote third (7%). The U. S. press finally, places Western Europe in first place (28.9%), but then divides the rest of its attention between four additional regions: Asia, Africa, the Arab world, and Eastern Europe. Each of these receives

between 11% and 15% of total coverage.

The heavy attention paid to North America by the Canadian press raises the question about "adequate" or "justified" coverage. As Rosengren (1977) notes, this kind of a question can only be answered by agreeing on some kind of a standard of comparison. Two of these have been used, among them: the proportion of the world's population occupying a region, as well as export trade relations between different countries. Standardization to these bases provide different results and may not be applicable to all categories of foreign subject matter.

Table Six utilizes world population as its base and indicates that only the U. S. papers report a few regions "adequately", e.g., show a value which represents proportionate attention (Rosengren, 1977, 70 - 71). Both the French and English Canadian papers are more myopic especially with respect to North America. The former by a factor of 5, the latter by a factor of 9. This goes contrary to earlier writing about the Quebec press which is supposed to be relatively impervious to U.S. affairs. The Quebec press does however temper this focus with almost equally strong interest in Western Europe, which is not found in the English Canadian papers. The latter seem to divide their remaining interest between Western Europe and Israel and make no attempt at complete coverage of other parts of the globe.

The U.S. press, located in an elite nation also has a primary focus on only two world regions. Europe and Arab oil and peace negotiations are overrepresented three fold during the January to April 1977 period. Beyond that however, the U. S. press seems to do a much more adequate job of foreign affairs reporting. It covers six of the nine world regions virtually proportionate to their populations. Oceania, consisting of Austra-

Table Six

Geographic Distribution of Foreign News
in Three Press Groups Standardized Against
Proportion of World Population
(by % of column inches)

Region	Quebec Press	English Canadian Press	U. S. Press
1. Scandinavia	0.20	0.70	1.50
2. Western Europe	3.90	2.17	3.57
3. Eastern Europe including USSR	0.82	0.25	1.13
4. Arab World and Israel*	2.00	1.30	3.40
5. Africa excluding 4	0.40	0.50	1.70
6. Asia excluding 3, 4	0.15	0.13	0.30
7. Oceania	4.40	4.60	5.80
8. North America	5.50	9.60	0.63
9. Latin America	0.60	0.40	0.90
10. International Organizations	-	-	-
Total	100.00	100.00	100.00
Column Inches	9,200	38,338	16,336

* Category 4 includes Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Democratic Yemen.

lia, New Zealand, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Korea and the Pacific Islands, are overrepresented by all papers due to the Australian election being fought during the investigation. Asia including India, China and Japan, are underrepresented. This may become a costly oversight by the year 2,000 when every third person may be a Chinese and it may become crucial for North Americans to comprehend their novel political system.

Since no other press groups have as yet been evaluated along the above lines, it is difficult to know whether the biases of the North American presses are excessive or unique. European studies employing similar methodologies found that a Swedish national paper strongly overrepresented Sweden (23 times) but otherwise recorded only two-fold overrepresentations (Rosengren, 1977). Additional work is required to illuminate this problem.

The data corroborate that differences in quantitative and qualitative selection processes do indeed result from varying organizational and audience needs. To make events "relevant" most newspapers tend to cover stories which occur close by. This closeness may represent geographical, cultural, and political, as well as psychological similarities in outlook (Ostergaard, 1965, 43). As a result all press groups tend to be preoccupied with the regions of which they are a part. Both English and French Canadian papers, as noted, select North America for primary focus. Sweden gives disproportionate attention to Scandinavian affairs (Rosengren and Rikardson, 1975, 101), Western European papers stress their area (35.8%) as do the Eastern European press (32.7%) (Gerbner and Marvanyi, 1977, 58 - 59). Only the U. S. press seems to be an exception to the rule. Their lack of politically important neighbors, however, explains this seeming aberration and transfers the United States' foreign affairs focus to Western

Table Seven

Elite Country Distribution of Foreign News
in the Three Press Groups
(by % of stories)

Region	Quebec Press	English Canadian Press	U. S. Press
United States	36.9	52.4	-
Other North American	1.0	3.2	7.9
South American	3.6	1.2	3.0
<u>Western Europe</u>	60.0	41.6	31.0
(Great Britain)	(7.3)	(10.4)	(9.2)
(France)	(9.2)	(2.7)	(5.4)
(Germany)	(1.4)	(1.3)	(3.0)
<u>Eastern Europe</u>	5.9	2.6	8.9
(USSR)	(4.1)	(1.8)	(6.2)
<u>Near East</u>	6.9	4.7	12.7
(Israel)	(2.1)	(2.1)	(4.5)
(Oil Countries)	(0.2)	(0.5)	(2.1)
<u>Far East</u>	10.2	9.8	20.9
(China)	(1.4)	(0.8)	(2.6)
(Japan)	(0.7)	(1.6)	(2.5)
Africa	4.3	4.5	12.2

Europe and the Arab countries where much of the political action is taking place at present.

Differing audience needs as Table Seven indicates are also the reason for the differing amount of coverage various elite countries receive in the three press groups. English Canada, because of its colonial ties, favors the United States and Great Britain, choosing to devote 62% of its stories to these two nations (Robinson and Sparkes, 1976, 208). The Quebec press on the other hand prefers Western Europe and France with which its population shares a common culture. Forty-six percent of its stories are devoted to these elite nations. The U.S.S.R., China and Japan however receive virtually no attention in the Canadian press, though they fare somewhat better in the American press.

The two Canadian press groups are also quite different in the kinds of issues they pick up about their colonial mother countries and Europe in general. French papers are intensely concerned with leftist movements in France and the backgrounds and developments of Euro-communism in Italy, Portugal and Spain. English papers zero in on the business and economic developments in Britain and devote a great deal of coverage to Idi Amin's activities in Africa. It would appear that Amin has a political significance for the English press he does not have for the Quebec press. Possibly English Canadian and United States papers use Amin to defuse the complexities of colonial revolution, while the Quebec press is too close to its own cultural revolution to necessitate such coverage.

IV. Subject Matter Covered

A third area of inquiry which has received some attention in different press groups are the types of subject matter covered. Earlier work has

Table Eight

Type of Subject Matter in Three Press Groups
(number of stories)

Subject Matter	French Canada Press		English Canada Press		U. S. Press	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Business/economics	50	8.9	391	16.5	98	8.2
Government/politics	83	14.7	192	8.1	139	11.6
Foreign relations	84	14.9	274	11.6	211	17.6
Defense	7	1.2	33	1.4	28	2.3
War	54	9.6	142	6.0	124	10.3
Sub-totals	278	49.3	1032	43.6	600	50.0
Human Interest	116	20.6	565	23.8	170	14.2
Crime	35	6.2	191	8.1	123	10.3
Disaster	39	7.0	140	5.9	98	8.2
Sub-totals	190	33.8	896	37.8	391	32.7
Social Measures	9	1.6	71	3.0	128	10.7
Culture	4	0.7	120	5.1	17	1.4
Education and Science	45	8.0	149	6.3	25	2.1
Judicial-legal	10	1.8	60	2.5	8	0.7
Religion	27	4.8	41	1.7	24	2.0
Sub-totals	95	16.9	441	18.6	202	16.9
TOTALS	563	100.0	2368	100.0	1193	99.6

indicated that foreign coverage is hard news oriented focusing on economic, political and foreign relations issues. To make our findings comparable to this work, International Press Institute categories were utilized (see Appendix A).

Table Eight confirms that the three North American newspaper groups are hard news oriented and share the same news values about the subject matters of world reporting. Nearly one-half of all Quebec, English Canadian and United States reporting deals with economics, government, foreign relations, defense and war. Soft news categories, including human interest, disasters and crime, constitute the second largest focus. They provide between 33% to 38% of all stories while cultural and social information are of least importance (17% - 19%). This finding fits in with the knowledge that national and international news agencies also skew their foreign coverage toward hard news in both media commercially or governmentally subsidized. The reason seems to be the high cost of foreign collection, which makes foreign news a scarce commodity in all information systems.

Within these larger categories, the three groups however show different selection foci. Top attention is gained in the Quebec press by government/politics, foreign relations and human interest stories, which provide about fifty percent of all stories. The same categories receive 43% of all U. S. reporting. English Canadian coverage in contrast is more frivolous. It thrives on human interest stories (23.8%), business reporting (16.5%) and foreign relations (11.6%) in descending order of importance. This business reporting, double the number of stories as in the Quebec press, is devoted to the United States, a topic the French papers leave virtually untouched. Their focus in contrast is on Ottawa where many provincial battles are presently being waged.

Table Nine

Subject Matter by Attention Score
in Three Press Groups

Subject Matter	Quebec Press		English Canadian Press		U. S. Press	
	Total	Aver. per Item	Total	Aver. per Item	Total	Aver. per Item
Business/economics	372	1.8	861	2.2	268	1.3
Government/politics	848	2.5	498	2.5	612	2.2
Foreign Relations	812	2.4	615	2.2	936	2.2
Defense	48	1.7	89	2.6	98	1.7
War	395	2.5	334	2.3	406	2.0
Human Interest	1072	2.3	1366	2.4	618	1.8
Crime	268	1.9	365	1.9	424	1.7
Disaster	569	2.5	335	2.3	406	2.0
Social Measures	92	2.5	163	2.2	574	1.8
Culture	28	1.7	288	2.4	82	2.4
Education and Science	352	1.9	258	1.7	115	2.3
Judicial-legal	92	2.3	117	1.9	26	1.6
Religion	284	2.6	115	2.8	136	2.8

Simple story counts though informative in sketching the general topics of foreign coverage, are inadequate for more detailed comparisons of possible audience impact. An attention score has been utilized to try to elaborate on the three press groups' differing foci. The score is adapted from Budd (1964, 259) and assigns points to page location, availability of photo and length of article. Care was taken to standardize the foreign newshole of all three types of newspapers, in order not to give an undue advantage to the English Canadian press system with the greatest amount of available space. French figures consequently were quadrupled and U. S. figures doubled to make them equal. Furthermore, an average attention score of the category item was also computed, to determine which categories of information received longer and more prominent play.

Table Nine summarizes these findings and indicates that though soft news may be good business, hard news categories receive top play in total attention scores. The Quebec press stresses government and foreign relations issues, the English Canadian papers have a business/economics bias and the U. S. press seems to be heavily preoccupied with foreign relations matters. In the soft news sector human interest is by far the most prominent category, amassing the highest attention scores in both Canadian groups. Strangely enough the same is not the case in the United States press, which devotes only half as much (around 618 points) to this category and gives considerably more play to social measures.

Average per item attention scores generally corroborate the biases already indicated by the totals. It is however worth noting that in the hard news categories, the English Canadian press accords more equal treatment to these five categories, than the other two groups. Business, government, foreign relations and war receive

average scores of above 2.0. The Quebec and U. S. papers on the other hand downplay business and defense stories. In the soft news categories it is interesting to note that crime is given less prominent play in all three groups (1.9) than human interest and disasters, which receive average scores between 2.0 and 2.5. All three groups show a tendency to give religious content prominent play, even though this category only includes a small number of long stories prominently displayed.

V. Summary and Conclusions

What kinds of news priorities emerge from these cumulative data for the three press groups? As previously noted, the North American advertising press differs from governmentally or party sponsored newspapers by devoting the majority of its space to local and national, rather than international event reporting. It thus tends to foster an insular outlook in its readers. This is most pronounced in the Quebec press with its small average foreign newshole of only 7.2%. Insularity may however also be expressed in the geographic selections a press makes for its readers. Here it appears that the English Canadian papers with a newshole the size of Western Europe's, have abrogated their responsibility. They utilize nearly half this space (41.4%) for U. S. reporting. The rest of the world remains virtually unreported.

These insularities of the English and French Canadian papers have a foundation in contrary audience traditions. It is well known that English Canadians prefer U. S. produced entertainment and have become used to U.S. political and economic interpretations through a policy of open communications borders. French Canadians, on the other hand, have always been inward-looking and preoccupied with their province's relationship to Ottawa. It was only after the invention of tele-

vision, as a young reporter that the present Premier Mr. Levesque opened Quebecers eyes to the rest of the world.

The analysis of sources of foreign news illuminates a second important difference between Quebec and the two other groups. The French Canadian press in contrast to the English speaking papers, favors a balanced utilization of international news agency copy both with respects to total stories and regional or country coverage. Quebec's papers, contrary to expectations, do not make any more use of Agence France Presse than they do of the other two globals. The English Canadian and U. S. groups alike do not follow such a policy. They strongly prefer U. S. sources for world coverage. This is a reasonable stance to take for U. S. papers who want to present stories from an American perspective. It makes considerably less sense however for the English Canadian press, which tends to present the world through U. S. eyes. The high cost of information gathering has been the traditional defense for this kind of a policy. Such an explanation however loses some of its validity in the light of the more responsible and variegated approach followed by Quebec papers, in spite of the same economic stringencies.

A third difference emerges from the unique geographic selections made by the three newspaper groups. Though all foreign reporting is known to emphasize certain world regions more than others, previous research indicates that elite nations make different selections from non-elite nations. English Canadian and Quebec papers following this assumption, are expected to be preoccupied with their important southern neighbor. The United States in contrast, is not expected to be much interested in North or Latin American countries, which tend to provide supporting casts for world diplomacy. These assumptions are indeed borne

out, but with a difference. Once again the Quebec press is unique, concentrating the majority of its coverage on two world areas: North America and Western Europe. The latter is the most important geographical focus for U. S. papers as well, who however give their audiences the widest coverage of the three groups by including four additional regions: Arab countries, Israeli relations in the mid-east, Indian and Chinese bids for power and Eastern European developments. This larger geographic spread is clearly a by-product of the United States' elite role in international relations not matched by Canadian politics.

Differences in subject matter selection provide the fourth and final means of comparison between the three press groups. Commercial sponsorship suggests that even foreign news which is known to be hard news oriented, will carry a substantial component of soft-news stories. Human interest, disasters and crimes are after all the staples with which most papers in North America lure their readers. This is corroborated in the high total attention scores this category achieves. In news systems with governmental or mixed sponsorship, soft news categories on the other hand, these do not play as prominent a role (Robinson, 1977, 159). This entertainment bias in commercial foreign news selection is however somewhat tempered by the fact that government and foreign relations receive high average attention scores. Woefully under represented in all groups is the third category, socio-cultural reporting both in terms of numbers of stories and in terms of attention scores. This was considered a drastic flaw twenty-five years ago when the Hutchison Commission made its report. It has still not been ameliorated and may cause serious problems as the political arena becomes peopled with new actors proclaiming unknown political values and outlooks.

APPENDIX A

Categories of News Covered as Defined in IPI News Flow Study

Fourteen categories of foreign news subjects were used in this study. Every such system of classification is arbitrary, and the one developed for this study appeared best suited to our needs. It was used uniformly throughout. Abbreviated definitions of the fourteen categories follow:

War includes all stories about the Korean, Indochinese and Malayan wars as military operations and not as issues in foreign relations. It includes stories of guerrilla actions elsewhere.

Politics is news having primary emphasis on the domestic politics of the country from which the news originates.

Foreign relations includes all political stories involving the relations of the country from which the news originates with one or more other countries.

Defense news is news from a foreign country about its defense forces and the efforts required to sustain them, including occupation forces abroad which are not engaged in war.

Economic news is news from a country about that country's economic life and the economic life of its citizens: stories which deal with the management of the affairs of a government or community, private industry or company, with reference to its sources of income, expenditures and so on.

Cultural news is news of the fine arts, and news of entertainment (the film, popular music) except trivia about the entertainers and their

productions classified as human interest.

Under education, science and technical developments falls all news of scientific developments and discoveries in any field and news of education.

Judicial and legal news deals with interpretations by courts, civil suits and laws not political or economic in character.

News of social measures concerns stories of welfare and other measures not primary political in content (relief, rehabilitation, social security and so on.)

Human interest news, in this study, includes a wide variety of feature material on oddities in nature and human temperament, personalities and celebrities, sex, beauty contests, amusement and so on.

The scope of the categories crime, disaster, sports and religion is self-evident from their names and from the traditional operations of the press.

REFERENCES

- Budd, Richard W. Attention Score: A Device for Measuring Play, *Journalism Quarterly*, 1964, 41 (2), 259.
- Budd, Richard W. U.S. News in the Press Down Under, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1964, 28, 39 - 56.
- Chaney, David. *Processes of Mass Communication*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1972.
- Deutsch, Karl. *Nationalism and Social Communication: An Inquiry into the Foundations of Nationality* Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 1966. Second Edition.
- Galtung, John and Mari Holmboe Ruge, The Structure of Foreign News: The Presentation of the Congo, Cuba, and Cyprus Crises in Four Newspapers, *Journal of Peace Research*, 1965, II, 64 - 91.
- Gerbner, George and George Marvanyi, The Many Worlds of the World's Press, *Journal of Communication*, 1977, 27 (1), 55.
- Halloran, James, Philip Elliott and Graham Murdoch. *Demonstrations and Communication: A Case Study*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970.
- International Press Institute. *The Flow of News*. Zurich, IPI, 1953.
- Lippman, Walter. *Public Opinion*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1922.
- McCombs, Max. *The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Communication*, unpublished paper, Syracuse University, 1976.

- Ostgaard, Einar, Factors Influencing the Flow of News, **Journal of Peace Research**, 1965, II, 30 - 63.
- Robinson, Gertrude Joch. **Tito's Maverick Media: The politics of Mass Communication in Yugoslavia**. Urbana, Ill: University of Illinois Press, 1977.
- Robinson, Gertrude Joch and Vernone Sparkes, International News in the Canadian and American Press: A Comparative News Flow Study, **Gazette**, 1976, 22 (4), 203 - 218.
- Rosengren, Karl, International News: Methods, Data and Theory, unpublished paper, University of Lund, 1973.
- Rosengren, Karl. International News: Four Types of Tables, **Journal of Communication**, 1977, 27 (1), 70 - 71.
- Rosengren, Karl and Gunnel Rikardson, Middle East News In Sweden, **Gazette**, 1975, 20 (2), 101.
- Royal Commission Report on the Mass Media. **The Uncertain Mirror**. Volume I. Ottawa: Queen's Press, 1970.
- Scanlon, Joseph, Canada Sees the World Through U. S. Eyes: A Case Study in Cultural Domination, unpublished paper, Carleton University, 1973.
- Siebert, Fred, Theodore Peterson, and Wilbur Schramm. **Four Theories of The Press**. Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1956.
- Thoren, S. An American Election Campaign in Swedish Dailies, **Psykologiski forsvar**, 1970, 50, 8.

UNESCO. **News Agencies: Their Structure and Operation.** Paris: UNESCO Publication Center, 1953.

Worthington, Peter. **Foreign Affairs: The Irrelevant Beat,** in Walt McDayter (Ed.) **A Media Mosaic.** Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971, 54 - 83.

Gertrude Joch Robinson (Ph.D. University of Illinois, Urbana, 1968) is Professor and Director of the Graduate Program in Communications at McGill University. Her research interests are Television News Analysis: English and French Canadian media comparisons and communication theory.