

CONTENT ANALYSIS OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS
STORIES IN THREE OKLAHOMA
NEWSPAPERS

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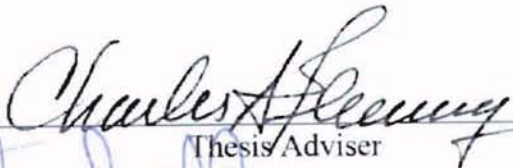
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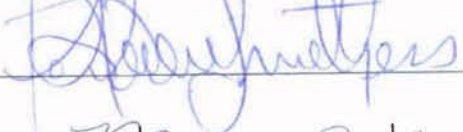
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Page

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

International news has been described as scarce and mostly crisis-oriented. Some researchers point out tendencies on the readers' part to make inaccurate judgments because of unrepresentative news stories:

By focusing upon unusual and extreme events, much news is by definition unrepresentative.

Perhaps newsmen should make a special effort to balance coverage of unusual events in developing countries about what is typical."¹

However, this is true not only concerning developing countries. If one looks at a typical newspaper, among the minimum international news items, a majority will deal with "sensational" topics: floods, earthquakes, wars, etc. As a result of this unrepresentativeness, readers might get an impression that nothing good is happening abroad.

Background

Overall, can one say the media provide their audiences with enough information about what is going on abroad? Some studies have been done on this problem; basically, the largest newspapers, magazines and TV networks have been analyzed in terms of the international coverage they provide.

As emphasized by Padgett,

In spite of a rapidly evolving intercultural society, American media continue largely to ignore the need to educate their audiences about the cultural complexities of the world. In the meantime, most Americans remain uneducated about issues concerning the masses of people who populate the world.²

Dan Ehrlich, an American journalist working abroad wrote that

The U.S. press seems to be locked into reverse gear with less space for foreign news and a continued obsession with local coverage. This was bad enough in the past but, in an age of "one world market" where we are basically all in the same boat, it is inevitable. This insular obsession and a lack of information about people in other lands accounts for most foreign criticism of our papers.³

Thus, international coverage does present a problem, the causes of which are complex. It was a problem in past decades, the effects of which are discussed in scholarly literature. However, even today international news is seen by editors as increasingly expensive and not of much value to their readers.

This study analyzed the amount of international news of the newspapers, *The Daily Oklahoman*, *Tulsa World* and *The Daily O'Collegian*, as compared to other news categories, and the type of news categorized by topic. The study examined the quantity and topics of foreign news items in the three newspapers in order to see the differences among them and changes over time, 1976, 1986 and 1996.

Theoretical Framework

The situation can be examined in the context of several communication theories, such as:

Agenda-setting. Agenda-setting is defined as the role of the mass media to force attention to certain issues. There may be a high level of correspondence between the

amount of attention given to a particular issue in the press (in this case, international news) and the level of importance assigned to this issue in the community.

Gatekeeping theory. Gatekeeping determines what information is finally published and how it is presented. Who decides what information should be published from among all the information available? Many stories -- including foreign news -- can be rejected for some reasons: not interesting to the audience; trivial; not too important; not worthy to print, etc.

Social responsibility theory. According to this theory, the media's freedom is not absolute. They should be responsible to society and should provide information and a basis for discussion and enlighten the public. This also includes the responsibility to provide audiences with international news as well.

Statement of the Problem

Thus, one may speak about lack of international news coverage, which is characterized as not always satisfactory for the audience to get an accurate picture of the world's events.

It is often said that the amount of international news coverage in American media is insufficient, and that in some cases it has a certain bias or prejudice. Taking into account growing globalization processes, this presents a problem.

As A.Semmel writes, the data in his study

offer some evidence that the distribution of foreign news in four U.S. newspapers is inequitably apportioned in a number of ways. Foreign news comes mostly from a very small number of elite countries which are the major political and economical powers.⁴

Purpose of the Study

As noted in the studies and discussions above, the media are accused of insufficient foreign news coverage. This coverage may be limited, and does not provide the readers with a complete picture of foreign news stories. It is also said that the topics of foreign stories are limited and only certain countries and nations get the newspapers' attention. Researchers have found newspapers "ignoring and distorting [the] image" of some countries, and an absence of "a balanced international news flow and a positive coverage of developing and underdeveloped nations."⁵

Thus, the main purpose of this study is to examine the three newspapers with regard to international news coverage by amount and content, to trace changes over time; to analyze how much attention is given to international news overall and by particular newspapers in 1976, 1986 and 1996 -- all within the context of various communication theories such as gatekeeping and agenda-setting.

Methodology

Comparative content analysis has been chosen as a research method to meet the purpose of this study. A random sample was selected from the three newspapers for 1976, 1986 and 1996 and international news items were analyzed through content analysis.

Actual articles were studied. To trace coverage of international news, a random

sample of 12 issues each year was drawn for each newspaper published in 1976, 1986 and 1996 to examine content changes over time.

Only general news pages were studied; photographs, advertisements, letters to the editor, sports pages and other supplements were not involved.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The main questions this research attempted to answer were:

What is the amount/proportion of international news -- in square inches and in percentages of the total newsholes? What are the topics, what news is typical? Are certain countries/nations covered more extensively or more frequently?

What are the changes over time?

Thus, for this study, the following null hypotheses were studied:

- There is no difference in the proportion of international news among the newspapers
- There is no change in the proportion of international news coverage by these newspapers over time
- There is no change in sources of foreign news
- There is no change in the topics of international news of these newspapers over time.
- There is no difference in foreign news “geographic distribution” (by country) or changes over time.

Research Objectives

The objectives of the research included examining the relationship between newspaper type and proportion of international news. The goal was to see whether this proportion has changed over time -- increased, decreased or remained the same; and whether the proportion of various topics in international news differs among the newspapers or has changed over time.

It was expected that the proportion of international news would significantly increase over time and that certain news topics (hard news, war or crisis-oriented) would prevail in international coverage.

Significance of the Study

This study examined the quantity and topics of international news in the three newspapers in order to see the differences and changes over time.

Similar studies were done before; however, basically the researchers compared international coverage of major U.S. magazines (like *Time*, *Newsweek*, *U.S. News & World Report*) and newspapers. However, *The Daily Oklahoman*, *Tulsa World* and *The Daily O'Collegian* were not examined with regard to international news items, even though these newspapers are the most available and readable in the area.

According to Philip Gaunt, very few studies analyze foreign coverage in regional or local newspapers.⁶ As for the research on international news in major U.S. newspapers, much of it is similar to the results of Daniel Riffe's work, stating that "*The New York Times* has fewer, but longer international stories than it did two decades ago,

and the front page contains a higher proportion of international items.”⁷

Obviously, a newspaper should not be a geography or history lesson, but it should not avoid international reporting either.

While some percentage of the readers might not be actually interested in foreign news, there is a definite part of the population that is interested. And the media should fulfill their educational tasks and should pay attention to the quantity and quality of both national and international news.

This particular study shows the “distribution” of foreign news in the three newspapers on the basis of which certain inferences can be drawn.

Limitations of the Research

This study is not without its limitations. It covers only certain media; it analyzes foreign coverage in these three newspapers only, not in other print or broadcast media. Certain time frames are determined: 1976, 1986, and 1996, and certain sample population -- 12 issues from these years is drawn.

Also, a random sample is not perfectly representative and may prompt bias in making conclusions about the whole population.

Thus, this study covers a definite media type and time and the findings cannot be generalized/ extended as applicable to other media or to other time periods.

Also, only general news pages were studied. Photographs, advertisements, letters to the editor, sports pages or other supplements were disregarded.

Organization of the Study

This thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter I is an introduction to the study. Chapter II is the literature review and discusses the research that has been done on this topic. Chapter III explains the methodology of this research. Chapter IV presents the findings and analysis, and Chapter V summarizes the findings, gives conclusions and recommendations.

ENDNOTES

¹David Perry, "The Image Gap," *Journalism Quarterly*, August 1987, 418.

²George Padgett, "Americans Lag Behind in International-Intercultural Coverage," *Editor & Publisher*, 11 July 1990, 48.

³Dan Ehrlich, "A U.S. Journalist Abroad Looks at Journalism Here," *Editor & Publisher*, 31 March 1990, 80.

⁴Andrew Semmel, "Foreign News in Four U.S. Elite Dailies," *Journalism Quarterly*, 53, 1976, 736.

⁵Tsan-Kuo, Pamela Shoemaker and Nancy Brendlinger, "Determinants of International News Coverage in the U.S. Media," *Communication Research*, August 1987, 396.

⁶Philip Gaunt, *Choosing the News*, New York: Greenwood Press, 1990, 6

⁷Daniel Riffe, "The Shrinking Foreign Newshole of *The New York Times*," *Newspaper Research Journal*, summer 1994, 74.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

It is often said that American audiences are provided with only brief descriptions about events from around the world. Is there value in receiving news stories from countries that some have never heard of and cannot locate on the map? How useful are they to the general public? Will such reports increase prejudices and reinforce stereotypes of foreign events? What types of foreign events are more likely to be accepted by the news media? Will these stories be processed and edited by news professionals to make them more interesting and attractive to mass audiences?

Some research findings have suggested that Americans are selective in their use of news and tend to misunderstand foreign stories. Public knowledge of foreign events is typically lower than knowledge of domestic events. It also has been argued that the news which reaches Americans is biased by professional values -- this results in the selection of crisis or disaster stories, while news about economic development is ignored. Foreign news is "Americanized" by writing about the importance of foreign events for Americans. Stories are more likely to be reported if interesting and attractive pictures can be obtained.

This chapter presents a review of the literature on the topic and the problem is

discussed from the viewpoint of the agenda-setting, gatekeeping, and social responsibility theories.

The chapter is organized in chronological order: along with theoretical frameworks, it discusses the studies of three periods: 1970-1980, 1980-1990, 1990-1996, which are summarized in the final part of this literature review.

Theoretical Framework

Agenda-setting. According to the agenda-setting theory, defined as the role of mass media to force attention to certain issues, there may be a high level of correspondence between the amount of attention given to a particular issue in the press and the level of importance assigned to this issue in the community.

According to Cohen, the news media “may not be successful much of the time in telling people what to think, but it is stunningly successful in telling its readers what to think about.”¹ However, in the case of international news, the studies indicate that foreign news items were not always on the agenda.

Moreover, with regard to the international news, the audience is heavily dependent on media: it has to rely on media sources to get the information about foreign events. And in this case “... if we don’t see a story in the newspaper (or catch it on radio or television), it effectively has not happened so far as we are concerned.”²

Also, a lack of interest toward international news from the general public’s part was presented as justification for not emphasizing foreign news in the media’s agenda.

However, the researchers still argue whether the lack of interest by the general public causes scarceness and unrepresentativeness of foreign news in media, or whether it is the media that do not give much attention to the news from around the world.

Social Responsibility. In accordance with this theory, the media should be responsible to society. The concept of social responsibility implies that

...the media have clear obligations of public service that transcend moneymaking. Public service implies professional standards for journalists as well as for reliable and objective reporting. The media are obligated, in addition, to ensure that all the voices and views in the community are heard.³

The theory also suggests that “media should exist primarily for their audiences and not for media organizations, professionals, or clients of media.”⁴

Thus, the media should provide information and a basis for discussion, and this includes their responsibility to provide the audience with international news as well. How is a person supposed to learn what is happening overseas? The media’s tasks should include enlightening the public.

A newspaper should be not only an opinion-maker, a chronologist of current events, but also an educator in the largest sense of this word. Learning about each other, weighing the facts of national priorities against alliance requirements, listening to the other side’s argument, especially among friends and allies, are all parts of that process.⁵

Nevertheless, the problem is that in practice it is not an easy task for a newspaper to meet high standards and still serve the average reader, not to mention survival as a business.

In the light of the social responsibility theory, this becomes a problem. In this perspective, one may come up with critical approach while evaluating the media performance. As it was stated by the Hutchins Commission, it is “the duty of the press to

provide a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the say's events,"⁶ which nowadays can hardly be possible without a truthful presentation of global events as well.

Gatekeeping. While examining foreign news coverage, one may also apply gatekeeping theory. Gatekeepers determine what information is finally printed and how it is presented. The process includes many aspects of message encoding, not just selection but also withholding, transmission, shaping, displaying, repetition, and timing of information as it goes from the sender to the receiver.

This gatekeeping perspective was originally suggested by Lewin, and then was developed by White, Cutlip, McNelly, and others. The term "gatekeeping" was coined by Lewin in *Human Relations* to describe "the process by which a news item, traveling through channels, gains clearance at certain checkpoints (gates) along the way."⁷

Gatekeepers of foreign news reaching an American newspaper reader include the overseas bureau chiefs, central desk staffers, trunk wire editors, and state wire editors of one or more news services; the newspaper wire editor; and finally the reader. Through their decisions to cover, relay, or attend to some events and to reject others, each member of the channel has the ability to alter the quantity and compositions of news flow.⁸

The gatekeepers' function is to evaluate media content in order to determine its relevance and value to the audiences.

They are not usually the originators of content but function as creative evaluators more often than censors. They can delete, insert, emphasize or deemphasize messages in the mass media. The gatekeepers can simply stop the message by refusing to "open the gate," they can alter the message by deleting some portion of it.⁹

These functions are usually accomplished through three means: economic control, individual taste or bias, or an ideology or value system.

In the face of today's tremendous news output, every news medium must be selective. Studies indicate that a typical large-city daily newspaper can carry as

little as one-tenth of the news that comes into the newsroom on any given day. The same is true for news magazines because much more material is available to their editors than space limitation permit to use.¹⁰

Thus, editors determine which stories should reach the public. From this it follows that in gatekeeping, understanding the selection criteria is the most important. These criteria usually include intrinsic factors -- such as event duration, magnitude, unambiguity/ simplification, unexpectedness, sensationalism, or human interest; and extrinsic factors -- gatekeeper socialization; personal political views; media constraints, space available, timeliness, geographic proximity, meaningfulness of the event: cultural proximity, relevance, or cultural affinity.

Tsan-Kuo Chang's, Jae-Won Lee's and Stephen Hess' studies are discussed below and are the examples of gatekeeping studies focusing on foreign news selection.

Studies of International News

1970-1980

The studies done during this decade concentrated on the old and new information orders, especially from the point of cultural dependence and news imperialism. Thus, for example, the new information order is the main theme of Smith's study. Also, he points out that after World War II the "East and West" problem has become less important than the newly emerged "North" and "South" problem. According to Smith,

News agencies provide a diet of news that they believe their client newspapers and magazines will publish and they, in turn, provide that information which they believe their audiences will relish. Famine, disorder, corruption, disruption are the common topics.¹¹

Many studies also examine the role of international news agencies, like Reuters, AP, and UPI. Boyd-Barrett wrote about the "Big Four" as the paramount news sources and the role that they play. He discusses the 1970-1980 decade and stresses that "some of the Third World criticism of the 'Big Four' agency operations needs to be carefully reconsidered."¹²

In 1976 Semmel conducted a foreign news content analysis of four prestige U.S. dailies -- *The New York Times* (East), *The Miami Herald* (South), *The Chicago Tribune* (Mid-West), and *The Los Angeles Times* (West). The foreign news "attention patterns" of these four dailies were compared. The main purpose of the study was to look at the variation of foreign coverage among the papers -- how much attention is given to other countries and regions. Semmel's conclusions were:

The data in this study offer convincing evidence that the distribution of foreign news in four elite U.S. newspapers is inequitably apportioned in a number of ways. Foreign news comes mostly from a very small number of elite countries which are the major political and economic powers. Some variation among the four dailies exist but it pertains mostly to differences in the amount and volume of foreign news reported.¹³

England, the Soviet Union, France, Japan, Italy and, to a lesser degree, West Germany and Israel, dominated the news. At the same time, countries in Central Africa, Northern Africa, parts of Latin America, Micronesia and Scandinavia were largely neglected.¹⁴

However, the relative attention given to foreign news reporting on subject matter categories, country targets, and regions was fairly consistent. *The Miami Herald*, whose readership includes a large Latin population, deviated most from the other newspapers

because of its greater attention to Latin America. For the most part, however, the discrepancies among the four newspapers were reported as not significant.

Overall, the foreign news attention pattern of each daily was found to be similar. Each daily had more coverage of those countries that were economically affluent, politically powerful and culturally similar to the United States. In other words, the image of the global system presented by the U.S. press was basically Euro-centric, big-power dominant, and western-oriented.

In this news map of the world, only a few countries are important or deemed to be of interest; those societies outside the mainstream of the prevailing American world perspective, receive minimal attention or no attention at all. Indeed, if an attentive reader were to read each sampled daily, he would not obtain anything approaching a panoramic view of the world society; the four papers, in fact, offer very little geographic variation or subject-matter differentiation, despite their quantitative differences.¹⁵

Another study done by Gans (1980) distinguished three types of foreign news:

- 1) America's closest or most powerful political allies, especially in Europe;
- 2) the Communist countries and their major allies;
- 3) the rest of the world, which is reported on only sporadically.¹⁶

According to his observations, most foreign news has been about England, France, West Germany, Italy, Japan, Israel, Egypt, the Soviet Union, and mainland China, although not always in that order. Other countries typically make the news "only when they are the site of unusually dramatic events, such as wars, coups d'etat, or major disasters."¹⁷

However, whether countries appear in the news frequently or not, most foreign news stories fall into seven categories:

1. American activities in a foreign country;

2. Foreign activities that affect Americans and American policy;
3. Communist-bloc country activities;
 - a) activities perceived to involve their relationship to the United States;
 - b) internal problems or difficulties that reduce their military, economic or political power vis-a-vis the United States;
4. Elections and other peaceful changes in government personnel;
5. Political conflicts and protests;
6. Disasters; and,
7. The excess of dictatorship.¹⁸

1980 - 1990

During this decade, many studies were published. One can note a variety of topics analyzed and more than several problems were touched upon, such as unrepresentativeness, scareness, distortion and bias of international news. Here is an overview of some of these studies.

Atwood focuses on journalism practitioners' and educators' role to enhance international understanding by the public. His point is that American journalists reach millions of readers.

They select items for coverage and decide on methods and angles of treatment, based on their understanding (or lack of it) of their own and other cultures. They are responsible in many ways for what their publics understand or do not understand about other countries, their cultures, and value systems.¹⁹

This "gatekeeping" function is influenced by what individual journalists, as well as the larger media systems within which they operate, consider important, fitting, interesting, and permissible.

Also, Atwood believes that American communication media, as is much of the country, are insulated from multicultural, even other-cultural, contact.

News editors and their staffs often lack understanding of and sensitivity to the cultural chauvinism of American media. Though they are not intentionally myopic, American journalists work within forms and patterns which all-too-often

inhibit the kind of reporting, writing and editing that would more completely inform the American public.²⁰

Thus, according to Atwood, for many journalists and media critics, there is genuine need for greater understanding of international issues and their implications. It is important to be more aware of the ways people from other cultures view world events; to realize that international news is often reported from a Western perspective that is limited.

Mustapha Masmoudi, whose work "The New World Information Order" is often cited, also writes about imbalances of information that can be in many forms, such as a quantitative imbalance between North and South.

According to his data, about 80 percent of the world news flow emanates from the major transnational agencies. However, only 20 to 30 percent of news coverage is devoted to developing countries, despite the fact "that the latter account for almost three-quarters of mankind. This results in a veritable *de facto* monopoly on the part of the developed countries."²¹

Further, Masmoudi writes about the lack of information on developing countries.

News stories are filtered, cut, and distorted, the transnational media impose their own way of seeing the world upon the developing countries. Moreover, they often present these communities -- when indeed they do show interest in them -- in very unfavorable light, stressing crises, strikes, street demonstrations, putsches, etc., or even holding them up to ridicule.... No achievements and aspirations in an objective light.²²

Thus, a certain bias is present. Another factor which may contribute to this bias is unrepresentativeness, as David Perry states in his studies of the informational effects of world news on audiences.

Unrepresentative news about developing countries reduces accuracy. The news media may influence people's judgments by covering unusual events and ignoring

less newsworthy, typical events. Exposure to sufficiently unrepresentative news might reduce the accuracy of inferences.²³

This unrepresentativeness is often criticized. Debra Gersh wrote in her article about Roger Wallis, a Swedish journalist invited to teach at San Jose (Calif.) University. Wallis did research to find out if the differences in foreign news coverage were real or simply his own perception. He organized a three-week study that monitored newscasts in the United States, Sweden and Britain in November 1986. Wallis and his students found “a totally different way of selecting the news.”²⁴

While all broadcasts studied relied heavily on domestic news, the American programs showed substantially less coverage of foreign events, ranging from 8.6 percent to 26 percent, compared with 30 to 40 percent in the European stations. Even “the coverage of organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank was virtually ignored by the broadcast media in the United States.”²⁵

However, the main concern of many studies is the coverage of Third World countries. As emphasized by Hachten and some other authors, news from the Third World is often negative and distorted, and one may speak about “cultural imperialism.”

Inevitably much of what happens in the world will go unnoted. Wherever he or she may be, the average person obviously does not have the time or interest to follow all the news from everywhere. As one editor asked, “Who wants to read about Zaire if there is nothing going on there?” Gerald Long of Reuters explained more fully: “The prevalent school of journalism throughout the world is a ‘journalism of exception.’ In other words, you don’t report that everything is fine in Pakistan. You report that there has been an air crash.” This approach contributes to an inevitable imbalance and distortion of reality.²⁶

According to Hachten, research shows that most Americans get most of their news from the 22-minute evening broadcast of the major television networks. In the limited time available, television provides a summary of the major foreign stories.

Further, television tends to concentrate for days running the “big story,” such as the hijacking of a TWA airplane and taking of American hostages in Beirut, while ignoring significant events elsewhere in the world. Foreign news is characterized as “a giant searchlight that highlights one big event while keeping the rest of the world in the dark.”²⁷

Only about a dozen of the major metropolitan dailies make a serious effort to report world news. The majority of the 1,611 dailies rely entirely on AP or UPI for world news. Hachten asks, is it enough to provide “a clear and coherent view” of what is going on in the rest of the world?

In spite of projections of the world’s population, which will be over 10.4 billion by the year 2100, 3.4 billion people expected to be added to the whole population, 3.1 billion of them will be in Africa, Asia and Latin America. But even without this omnibus development, the very nature of the problems of the late twentieth century -- transnational in scope and beyond the ability of this or any single nation to solve by itself -- may be changing America’s traditional provincialism. In the U.S. education is not moving rapidly enough in the right directions to produce the knowledge about the outside world and the attitudes toward other peoples that may be essential for human survival within a generation or two. This is a much greater international problem than the military balance of power that absorbs so much of our attention today.²⁸

However, some studies go beyond describing media content, as, for example, “Determinants of International News Coverage in the U.S. Media” by Tsan-Kuo Chang, Pamela Shoemaker and Nancy Brendlinger.²⁹

The researchers’ goal was to identify the factors that best differentiate those international events that are covered in the American media from events that are not. The dependent variable was media coverage of international events, and the departure point was the assumption that media coverage, regardless of the content per se, is a dependent variable that can be predicted by certain independent variables.

Seven independent variables -- selected on the basis of previous studies -- included: potential for social change, normative deviance, relevance to the United States, geographical distance, language affinity, press freedom, and economic system.

The New York Times and the United States television network (CBS, ABC and NBC) news were examined. *The New York Times* covered 48.8 percent of the 168 events coded, whereas the three television networks together covered only 17.3 percent of the events.

Discriminant analysis was used to distinguish between covered and non-covered events. The most powerful discriminators were found to be normative deviance of an event, relevance to the United States, potential for social change, and geographical distance.

1990 - 1996

The literature of this time frame is remarkable for a considerable number of studies on international coverage in major newspapers (especially *The New York Times*) and broadcast media. In general, it still admits the lack of interest toward foreign news.

Berry examined *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, concentrating on recognizing ethnocentric bias. His hypothesis was that the press accepts the administration's assumptions about foreign threats and opportunities and the U.S. role, and accepts the administration's determination of national interest, goals, and strategies.³⁰

Once again it was emphasized that the value of international news is questioned. Newspapers, radio and television stations "show profound skepticism about the relevance of foreign news." With a few exceptions, they are not seeking possibilities for deeper, wider international coverage.

Better reporting of foreign policy is not only essential to educate the public generally, it is also essential for government policy makers, who don't fully understand how foreign events play out in manifold ways across the country or the extent to which average citizens make foreign policy. Without good local reporting of these trends, it is unlikely that official national policy makers, let alone average citizens, will be prepared to deal effectively with the rest of the world.³¹

However, besides the fact that the average reader is not interested in foreign news, the authors point at another problem -- limited resources and financing.

Thus, Hoge writes that

Broadcast and print are both afflicted with diminished resources and reduced coverage of international affairs. The Associated Press, reacting to trends in the newspaper business, is ordering up from its correspondents shorter stories for smaller newsholes. The drought is most evident in local and regional newspapers

It is hardly new, but too much of today's coverage of international affairs focuses on the flashpoints of conflict rather than the evolution or trends.³²

Other authors, such as Sheena McDonald, also speak about the constraints of foreign news. In spite of the audience's wide interests, foreign news may not be their first priority. And, total available time/space in the mainstream media that serve this audience will depend on perceptions of the relative importance of the domestic agenda, and then on the editorial policy of the bulletin or editor or broadcaster, which may change as being "subject to other influences -- commercial, government, or whatever."

Foreign news began in the form of reports on the state of the markets in the colonies to merchants, investors and speculators in the imperial citadels. Gold and zinc, pork-bellies and coffee -- there were the stories, and the interest was too human.

At the dawn of the 21st-century, despite the committed labors of the brightest and best journalists, not so much has changed, and is unlikely to change, notwithstanding the ambitions of individual news -- editors and broadcasters.³³

As has been mentioned, many studies focus on the analysis of the foreign press corps. Thus, Cohen³⁴ examined the geographic distribution of the foreign press corps around the world as a means of measuring the newsworthiness of foreign countries and as an indicator of international news interest. He examined the relationship between the distribution of American foreign correspondents around the world and the foreign news content and priorities.

Cohen considers elitism to be a major determinant of foreign news reporting. The media of all regions of the world have their largest contingents of foreign correspondents in the United States and Western Europe, and geographical, political, economic or cultural “proximity” as another (secondary) determinant.

According to Cohen’s work, foreign news content is dominated by a relatively small number of countries, with the result that the news flow reflects political and economic eliteness and dominance. A correlation between reader interest and the physical distance between countries is discussed and conceptualized in terms of cultural distance. His findings support the hypothesis that news organizations are inclined to have foreign correspondents in elitist countries.

The New York Times Studies.

A number of studies were done analyzing *The New York Times*, among which is one done by Daniel Riffe “The Shrinking Newshole of *The New York Times*.” This is an examination of *The New York Times*’ coverage of international news for 1969-1990. The

results show that this newspaper has fewer, but longer, international stories than it did two decades ago, and more of them are on the front page.

Ironically, the alleged shrinkage in foreign coverage comes at a time when, according to some experts, the total newshole is expanding. Leo Bogart reports that weekday newspapers now average 55% greater bulk than a decade ago, and 98% greater bulk on Sundays; the daily *New York Times* grew from a 1971 average of 71 pages to 113 pages in 1987. The impact? Because the newshole has grown even faster than advertising, there are more pages for editors to fill.³⁵

Overall, the researcher stresses “the plight of foreign news, which continues to decline at an alarming rate.” However, the existing data do not allow confirmation of this. For example,

- In 1953 the International Press Institute reported that foreign news constitutes 8 percent of American newspapers;
- George Gerbner and others estimated foreign news content of 9 American dailies at 11.1 percent during May, 1970.
- In 1973 an American Newspaper Publishers Association Report found 10.2 percent of American news was international news.
- Newspaper Advertising Bureau studies characterized foreign news as 6.3 percent of the total in 1977
- Lester Markel and Andrey March in 1976 reported international news at 10 percent in 20 of the largest American newspapers over two years.
- Michael Emery found only 2.6 percent of non-advertising space to be international news in 10 major newspapers for the November 1987-January 1988 period and described international news as “an endangered species.”³⁶

However, it should be noted that these researchers used different time periods, different sampling, and different measurement techniques.

Riffe's longitudinal research was concerned with the topics and countries of the news, rather than inches. Riffe's study examined *The New York Times* coverage of international news across 22 years, from 1969 to 1990 and, besides examining trends in quantity of world news coverage, also examined other changes over time.

The results showed that *The New York Times*' "window on the world" got smaller between 1969 and 1990 in number of items, but the *Times*' view of the world changed in other ways over the 22-year period. International news stories became longer, important ones continued to be displayed on the first page, and a larger proportion dealt with Third World topics.

However, the proportion that dealt with the so-called "bad news" -- coups and earthquakes -- continued to dominate and remained fairly constant. These changes in coverage were interpreted purely in terms of economic pressures of the decade.

Riffe and his colleagues continued the research of *New York Times* foreign coverage with the analysis of news sources. They analyzed "second-hand" or "borrowed" news, which is considered risky as correspondents have no means of verifying its content.

. . . coverage of the Third World, long a target of criticism, seems to have reached a quantitative -- if not qualitative -- balance with First World coverage. Yet a fifth of Third World news is borrowed news, and that proportion increases annually as those nations continue to control access and information release within their borders, and as Western reporters continue to borrow from those nations' news media and organizations.³⁷

The most significant finding was the reduction in second-hand news in Second World news. But almost a third of the items from Second World countries contain

borrowed news, typically from state-controlled media.

However, the obvious limitation to this study is that only *The New York Times* was studied. Smaller newspapers may not have experienced the same trends over the past two decades.

But, along with *The New York Times*, there was a comparative case study of other countries' media -- newspapers published in Germany, Great Britain, France, such as *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, *London Times*, and *Le Monde*. The objective was to look at how these newspapers treated the same subject, U.S.-European relations.

The findings showed that *The New York Times* had less coverage of Western Europe and alliance affairs. But, compared with the rest of the U.S. press, *The New York Times* did a better job. As a comparison, *Le Monde* was held up as an example of a newspaper that managed to prosper while still providing comprehensive world affairs coverage.³⁸

Joachim Fest, a publisher of *FAZ*, commented,

Whenever I come to the United States, I find it extremely difficult to get some information about what's going on in the world outside the United States, and if I leave the East Coast, I'm entirely lost. I wonder how the American administration gets its information about Europe, about the other parts of the world -- I don't mean the very top people, but the average [numbers] of the administration. I ask myself from time to time if some of the shortcomings of American politics stem from this lack of information.³⁹

Tsan-Kuo Chang's and Jae-Won Lee's study examined the gatekeeping of international news selection. Chang and Lee conducted a national survey of newspaper editors to find out how editors view the importance of different criteria in selecting foreign news.

The results showed that in making their choices, the editors considered these factors to be important: threats to the United States and world peace, anticipated reader interest, timeliness, and extent of U.S. involvement. Most editors focused more on factors having significant impact or consequences, especially when American security and national interests were involved.

Correlation analysis indicated that editors' perceptions of foreign news factors were determined by individual differences and organizational constraints in the newsroom (political ideology, professional experience, availability of newshole and wire services, etc.)

In the world of foreign affairs, editors as gatekeepers in the long chain of news flows undoubtedly hold a central and crucial position in providing news and information to the audiences. Studies on gatekeeping have indicated that the way editors view various news factors has an impact on the selection of stories they receive daily. In foreign news reporting, this means the perception of foreign events could help an editor organize and classify information coming from different parts of the world, reduce the amount and volume of foreign news flow in the newsroom and decrease uncertainty concerning the potential newsworthiness of foreign events.⁴⁰

They found that editors do not consider physical distance to be a factor in foreign news selection (only 3.3% did), and U.S. trade relations and economic development of a country were not very important, either.

The fact that "a country's economic development didn't matter much suggests that the level of a country's economic progress, and by inference, news about its development, is simply irrelevant to whether a story was covered."

Those editors with more of an international perspective (e.g., liberal with foreign language training) tended to consider factors inherent in the events more important in their selection of foreign news. In contrast, editors with a conservative bent and more professional journalism training were likely to view foreign events from the American perspective, focusing more on the elements important to the United States.⁴¹

Thus, the gatekeeping issue is obvious; the question is whether this gatekeeping is justified or not. According to some sources, it is unjustified.

Stephen Hess, along with describing a lack of foreign correspondents on individual papers (news operations rely on the AP, which services 97 percent of dailies), presents the debate over whether American consumers want more international news in their news media.

Hess examined the stories that appeared in the front section of 20 newspapers across the country on September 28, 1994, and discovered that the newspapers used an average of 4.5 foreign dateline stories for the day. In addition, Hess discovered the sameness of story selection. Just five subjects accounted for 79 percent of the coverage, and two-thirds of the stories came from Associated Press stories or were based on them. "The AP is thus what de facto determines most of the international news that appears in the U.S. press."⁴² This was even more remarkable because -- according to Hess' data -- all 20 papers subscribed to at least one supplemental wire service, and more than half received two.

Yet it is inescapably obvious that, although newsrooms around the country are receiving a great many foreign dateline stories, they are using very few. And unlike the television networks, which are criticized for being unwilling to pay the expense of necessary foreign coverage, the vast majority of U.S. newspapers are ignoring international reporting they have already paid for. A study of three newspapers and the television networks' evening news programs for January 1995 concluded, "Today's midsize American daily is not necessarily outperforming the network newscasts on many important national and international stories."⁴³

The conclusion is that the reason for the lack of international news in the papers is indifference, not economics. Hess concluded that many gatekeepers, the editors receiving the wire services transmissions, obviously view foreign news as filler.

After they have chosen the stories about U.S. involvement overseas and threats to world peace, their news selection principle appears to be to shove stories at hand into space available. This practice, described by Don Oberdorfer as “give me twelve inches of foreign news,” rarely shows a discernible design or apparent rationale.

Another reason for the lack of diversity or design in the presentation of international stories is that gatekeepers have a one-size-fits-all definition of news. News is a cyclone, a fire, an election, someone shooting someone else.⁴⁴

Hess does not deny that international coverage is expensive and increasingly hard to justify given declining overall interest. However, he says that the “failures” of American international coverage have less to do with journalism’s problems with “accelerated information dissemination than they do with those who allow consumer apathy or inattention to become an excuse for journalistic inadequacies.”⁴⁵

Evaluation

One can say that there might not be enough international coverage in American media, but there is definitely much research and scientific literature about the media’s international coverage. The problem has been recognized and much attention has been given to it. Broadcast and print media have been analyzed extensively with regard to the international coverage they provide.

Also, it can be said that in spite of different objectives, research questions, hypothesis and methodologies, the research findings are not very different. Many studies emphasized the insufficiency of international news, and the overwhelming majority of

them concluded that international news is somehow “limited” in terms of countries and topics.

But it is clear that this kind of study has increased. The topic of international news in American media has become more frequent in mass communication books and scholarly publications.

However, the researchers were preoccupied mostly with the analysis of major newspapers and major broadcast networks, leaving behind smaller, local or regional, media. But some suggestions for more studies have been made, and better local reporting of foreign topics has been touched upon.

ENDNOTES

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

General

This study analyzed the amount of international news of particular newspapers, *The Daily Oklahoman*, *Tulsa World* and *The Daily O'Collegian*. It examined the quantity and topics of foreign news items in the three newspapers in order to see the changes over time.

Content analyses were conducted and null hypotheses were tested in the study. This chapter presents the methodology of the research. It discusses the purpose of this study, research approach, research questions and hypotheses, research objectives, sampling procedures, data analyses, and limitations.

Purpose of the study

Lack of international news coverage is the subject matter of many studies discussed in the literature review. This issue is also emphasized in Chapter I, in the statement of the problem section.

Thus, the main purpose of this study was to examine the three newspapers with regard to international news coverage by amount and content, to trace changes over

time; to analyze how much attention was given to international news overall by the three newspapers in 1976, 1986 and 1996.

The newspapers studied were *The Daily Oklahoman*, *Tulsa World* and *The Daily O'Collegian* for these years correspondingly. These newspapers were chosen as the most representative local print media in the area.

The Daily O'Collegian, currently with a circulation of 10,000 was first published in 1895, four years after the founding of Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma, and was the fifth college newspaper in the United States to join the Associated Press.

The Daily Oklahoman (published in Oklahoma City) and *Tulsa World* (published in Tulsa, Oklahoma) were founded in the early 1900s, and since that time reached a daily circulation of 221,131 and 173,398; plus 318,439 and 237,145 Sunday circulations respectively.¹

Comparative content analysis has been chosen as a research method to meet the purpose of this study. A random sample was selected from the three newspapers and international news was analyzed.

The sample excluded Sunday editions. Altogether, the sample included 108 newspapers. In the issues selected for study, the foreign news content of every newspaper was analyzed.

Each newspaper was carefully scanned for its foreign news stories (the primary unit). Actual articles were studied; and only general news pages were involved. Editorials, letters to the editor; pictures/photographs, advertisements, sports pages and

other supplements were not coded. Specialized sections such as sports sections, business and financial sections, women's and children's sections were excluded from the analysis.

Any story with foreign references -- countries and leaders, etc., and with foreign news content in a title and its lead -- was identified as a foreign news story.

Research Approach

The methodology in this study was a comparative content analysis.

For the primary data collection, it was necessary to analyze the content of the foreign news coverage in the three newspapers. Thus, this procedure has been chosen as the most appropriate for determining the differences in international news coverage of the newspapers.

According to Lasswell,

Content analysis aims at a classification of content in more precise, numerical terms than is provided by the impressionistic. It provides a precise means of describing the contents of any sort of communications -- newspapers, radio programs, films, everyday conversations, verbalized free associations, etc. The operations of content analysis consist of classifying the signs occurring in a communication into a set of appropriate categories. The results state the frequency of occurrence of signs for each category in the classification scheme.²

In the process of content analysis, criteria for selection of articles were established and the notion "foreign news" was defined .

The methodology determined how much attention was given to foreign news, and analyzed the nature of this coverage and the differences in 1976, 1986 and 1996, using statistical procedures such as the chi-square test and ANOVA.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

General

The main questions this research attempted to answer were:

What is the amount of international news (square inches and percentages)?

What are the changes in this news over time?

What are the sources of international news?

What are the topics of foreign news? What news is typical?

How much space/square inches is devoted to the coverage of the events from particular countries; what is the geographic distribution?

Thus, for this study the following null hypotheses were tested:

- There is no difference in the proportion of international news among the newspapers.
- There is no change in the proportion of international news coverage by these newspapers over time.
- There is no change in the sources of international news of these newspapers over time.
- There is no change in the topics of international news of these newspapers over time.
- There is no difference in foreign news “geographic distribution” (by country) or changes over time.

However, though the null hypotheses were tested in this study, it was expected that they would not be supported. It was assumed that certain topics were covered more, and that there were some differences among the newspapers for each year.

Variables and Definitions

Unit of analysis was the news item. Criteria for selection of articles were the following: only those news stories with foreign news content in a title and the lead were identified as foreign news stories. This included:

1. International events or situations that occurred outside the United States (international news abroad).
2. Events or situations that occurred outside the United States involving domestic affairs, so-called "home news abroad."

Events in the United States in which internationals took part, and stories with occasional foreign references, were not coded as foreign news. This was done in order to limit the scope, and because of the consideration that such news can be classified as domestic news. _

The length of coverage of foreign news items was measured in square inches. Also, other variables were topics of foreign news, geographical distribution/ location (countries), and the sources of foreign news (AP, UPI, Reuter, own correspondents, other).

Research Objectives

The objectives of the research included examining international news in the three newspapers. The goal was to see whether it has changed over time -- decreased, increased or remained the same -- and whether the topics in international news differed or changed over time.

It was expected that international news items and square inches coverage would increase over time and that certain news topics (wars, disasters, etc.) would prevail in international coverage. It was assumed that some countries had received significantly more coverage in terms of square inches and topic variety.

It was expected that in 1996 international news would be more prevalent than 10 or 20 years earlier. Significant differences in terms of news sources and square inches of foreign news were also expected to be found..

Thus, the actual distribution of foreign news had to be analyzed.

Sampling Plan

Since it is impractical to analyze the content of all the newspapers' issues for three years, sampling procedures were applied.

Stempel determined that a sample of 12 issues a year, randomly selected, does an adequate job of representing a newspaper's yearly content of a particular subject category: "Our results indicate that for a single category all five of the sample sizes tested do an adequate job and that increasing the sample size beyond 12 does not produce marked differences in the results."³

Jones and Carter also state that a 12 issue sample is comparable to the entire yearly universe.⁴

So, for each of the three newspapers 12 issues from 1976, 12 from 1986 and 12 from 1996 were selected. Thus, a randomly drawn sample comprised a total of 108 newspapers. The sample excluded Sunday editions.

The sample-day dates were:

January 30	August 26
February 5	August 31
March 25	September 16
April 2	October 1
April 29	November 19
May 6	December 3

The dates were selected randomly (if a chosen date was Sunday, it was replaced with the following or previous date). For each day, an issue of each of the three newspapers was selected, for all three years -- 1976, 1986 and 1996.

Also, the news stories were categorized as follows:

- Politics -- articles dealing with relations between states, elections, campaigns, political appointments, governmental changes
- Military/war -- articles dealing with armed conflicts or threats, negotiations, weapons, etc.
- Economy -- articles on trade, tariffs, capital investments, stock issues, economic performance, industrial projects, agricultural matters, industrial/labor relations, monetary issues
- Social issues
- Crime -- articles on non-political crime, political crime, non-criminal legal and court proceedings
- Culture, art, entertainment
- Religion
- Science, technology, medicine
- Human interest
- Disasters -- floods, earthquakes, droughts, etc.
- Other.

The topic categories selected are similar to those used by the IAMCR/UNESCO researchers. These categories have undergone extensive pre-testing by UNESCO.⁵

The geographic distribution -- geographic origin of international news -- was also considered. However, the classification of First, Second and Third World was rejected as not up-to-date. Classification by regions could have been too generalized, not precise. Thus, the geographic distribution was coded by countries.

The sources of foreign news were marked as AP; UPI; major newspaper (such as *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, etc.); own staff; other.

All the international news items were measured in square inches.

Data Analysis

The data were collected from microfilmed copies of the three newspapers. The stories were measured in actual square inches with the format ruler provided on the microfilm. The data gathered were analyzed according to the quantity of international news. International news items were measured in square inches and the articles were coded according to the topics and geographic distribution. Also, the story source was coded.

The Daily O'Collegian, a college paper, has fewer pages than the other two, and overall the newspapers are not equal in terms of their formats and number of pages. Thus, in order to avoid bias, the study did not focus on the differences among the newspapers but mainly examined changes over time within all three newspapers.

The null hypotheses were tested with chi-square, a statistical tool designed to ascertain relationships between categories of frequencies. This technique compares observed frequencies with those theoretically expected to determine if there are any significant differences.

Under a null hypothesis, the assumption is made that there is no statistically significant difference and/or relationship among the observed and expected frequencies. If a difference is found, and if it did not occur by chance, the null hypothesis should be rejected and appropriate inferences should be made. For this study, the 0.05 level of significance was used (the observed frequencies occurred by chance no more than five times out of 100).

Assumptions and Limitations

This study is not without its limitations. It covered only certain media. The study analyzed foreign coverage in these three newspapers only, not in other print or broadcast media. Certain time frames were determined: 1976, 1986 and 1996, and a limited sample population -- 12 issues from each of these three years was drawn. Also, a random sample cannot be perfectly representative and may prompt bias in making conclusions about the whole population of the three newspapers.

Thus, this study covered a definite media type and time and the findings cannot be generalized as applicable to other media, other daily newspapers, or to other time frames.

Also, only general news pages were studied while photographs, cartoons, advertisements, letters to the editor, sports pages or other supplements were disregarded.

There was a possibility of some coding errors. Also, the definition of international news has been narrowed, and only those stories were selected if the whole content dealt with international news.

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CHAPTER IV
FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

The study presented a content analysis of international news items in three Oklahoma newspapers, *The Daily Oklahoman*, *Tulsa World* and *The Daily O'Collegian*. A total of 108 issues of the newspapers was examined, and 476 articles from a randomly selected sample were coded as international news stories.

The dependent variables included frequency counts of sources of foreign news, topics, and geographic distribution of news (by country).

The objectives of the research included examining the differences and changes over time with regard to the proportion of international news stories and their sources, topics, and countries of origin.

This chapter presents the findings of the study. It discusses and summarizes the research results in the form of tables. This includes: total square inches of foreign stories, number of countries reported on, sources of international news, frequencies of topics reported on, and foreign news coverage (in square inches) by country for all three newspapers for 1976, 1986 and 1996.

Analysis of Newspaper Content.

Four hundred and seventy-six news stories were coded as foreign news stories.

Table I presents total square inches of international coverage reported by the three newspapers in 1976, 1986 and 1996, and the proportion of international news stories calculated in a percentage of the newspapers' newsholes.

TABLE I
TOTAL SQUARE INCHES AND PERCENTAGES OF INTERNATIONAL
NEWS ITEMS IN 1976, 1986 AND 1996

	Daily Oklahoman	Tulsa World	Daily O'Collegian	Overall
1976	817 (5.2%)	1070 (6.8%)	172 (1.8%)	2059 (100%)
1986	1212 (7.7%)	974 (6.2%)	495 (5.4%)	2681 (100%)
1996	1010 (6.5%)	928 (5.9%)	514 (5.5%)	2452 (100%)
Total	3039 (6.4%)	2972 (6.3%)	1181 (4.2%)	7192

No significant statistical differences were found among the three newspapers with regard to the proportions (percentages of total newshole) of international news in 1976, 1986 and 1996.

It was found that the newspapers' differences in percentages of international news stories were not significant. The calculated chi-square was 1.86 which is less than the table value of 9.5 at .05 and $df=4$. ANOVA did not show any statistical significance in differences, either (probabilities 0.1 and 0.4 for newspaper type and year).

Thus, it cannot be concluded that the newspapers devoted significantly more space to international news in any time period.

However, as noted in Table II, *The Daily Oklahoman* published more stories overall than *Tulsa World* (the calculated chi-square 6.16; it is larger than the table value of 6.00 at $df=2$ and .05 -- this indicates significant statistical difference).

Sources of international news. Table II presents the distribution of sources of international stories.

TABLE II
SOURCES OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS STORIES
(Numbers represents stories and percentages)

	AP	UPI	Reuters	Major Own staff News-paper	Unknown	Total number of stories
Daily Oklahoman						
1976	55 (96%)	1 (2%)	-	1 (2%)	-	57 (100%)
1986	37 (39%)	-	-	-	57 (61%)	94 (100%)
1996	19 (30%)	-	13 (20%)	-	32 (50%)	64 (100%)
Total	111 (52%)	1 (0.5%)	13 (6%)	1 (0.5%)	89 (41%)	215
Tulsa World						
1976	40 (68%)	11 (18%)	-	2 (4%)	6 (10%)	59 (100%)
1986	45 (83%)	-	2 (4%)	5 (9%)	2 (4%)	54 (100%)
1996	55 (95%)	-	-	2 (3%)	1 (2%)	58 (100%)
Total	140 (82%)	11 (7%)	2 (1%)	9 (5%)	9 (5%)	171
Daily O'Collegian						
1976	5 (62%)	-	-	-	2 (25%)	8 (100%)
1986	17 (100%)	-	-	-	-	17 (100%)
1996	35 (100%)	-	-	-	-	35 (100%)
Total	57 (95%)	-	-	-	2 (3%)	60
Overall	308 (69%)	12 (2.8%)	15 (3.4%)	10 (2.3%)	2 (0.5%)	99 (22%)

With regard to the sources of foreign news, the majority of the international news published came from the Associated Press. However, in 1986 and 1996 *The Daily Oklahoman* often omitted any indication of the news agency originating the story. It might be assumed, however, that some part of this “unknown” category includes AP.

So, overall the AP source represents 69 percent of all the foreign stories published. The maximums are 96 percent for *The Daily Oklahoman* in 1976; 95 percent for *Tulsa World* in 1996; and 100 percent for *The Daily O’Collegian* in 1986 and 1996.

Topic frequencies. Table III reports the frequencies of topics and Table VI presents these frequencies in a ranked form.

TABLE III
FREQUENCY OF TOPICS REPORTED ON IN 1976, 1986 AND 1996
Numbers represent news stories

Topics	1976	1986	1996	Total
Politics	31	30	41	102
Military/war	22	31	42	95
Economy	5	8	4	17
Social issues	6	6	11	23
Crime	8	29	18	55
Culture, art, entertainment	6	4	1	11
Religion	4	6	7	17
Science, technology, medicine	8	4	3	15
Human interest	23	12	9	44
Disasters	7	37	22	66
Other	2	4	0	6

TABLE IV
COMPARISON OF TOPIC FREQUENCIES BY RANK
Higher numbers indicate more frequent reporting on that topic

Topics	1976	1986	1996	Overall
Politics	11	9	10	11
Military	9	10	11	10
Economy	3	6	4	4.5
Social issues	4.5	4.5	7	6
Crime	7.5	8	8	8
Culture, art, entertainment	4.5	2	2	2
Religion	2	4.5	5	4.5
Science, technology, medicine	7.5	2	3	3
Human interest	10	7	6	7
Disasters	6	11	9	9
Other	1	2	1	1

Eleven topic categories of topics were examined. The newspapers showed much similarity with respect to topic distribution; thus, the table of topic frequencies by particular newspapers is not given.

Overall the so-called “hard news” prevailed during all the decades, and such topics as “politics,” “military,” “crime” and “disasters” were reported more frequently than were other topics. In comparison with 1976, “human interest” and other “soft news” became less typical for the newspapers in 1986 and 1996.

Geographic distribution.

Table V presents information on square inches of foreign news coverage by country. Those countries that did not receive any coverage in the three newspapers were excluded from the tables.

TABLE V
 SQUARE INCHES OF FOREIGN COVERAGE BY EACH NATION/COUNTRY
 IN 1976, 1986 AND 1996

Country	1976	1986	1996	Total
Afghanistan	0	44	53	97
Albania	10	0.1	0	10.1
Argentina	130	0	0	130
Australia	33	0	82	115
Bahrain	0	0	70	70
Bangladesh	0	12	4	16
Belgium	14	0	6	20
Bolivia	0	49	0	49
Brazil	0	3	14	17
Britain	152	90	40	282
Burma	2	0	0	2
Cambodia	0	0	16	16
Cameroon	0	103	0	103
Canada	0	53	14	67
China	55	46	52	153
Colombia	22	4	21	47
Cuba	0	4	49	53
Cyprus	2	8	8	18
Djibouti	32	0	0	32
Dominican Rep.	0	3	0	3
Ecuador	2	0	0	2
Egypt	0	3	39	42
El Salvador	0	24	0	24
Ethiopia	81	0	8	89
France	55	73	26	154
Germany	3	46	27	76
Greece	0	28	9	37
Guatemala	126	0	9	135
Guinea	0	0	10	10
Haiti	0	31	39	70
Hong Kong	0	0	6	6
India	29	142	95	266
Indonesia	0	3	0	3
Iran	0	12	0	12
Iraq	0	0	11	11
Ireland	10	39	12	61
Israel	69	182	218	469
Italy	18	31	17	66

TABLE V (Continued)

Country	1976	1986	1996	Total
Japan	34	143	105	282
Kenya	57	0	9	66
N.Korea	62	0	0	62
S.Korea	18	52	87	157
Lebanon	324	173	59	556
Liberia	0	0	68	68
Libya	0	218	24	242
Mexico	30	146	113	289
Morocco	23	0	0	23
Netherlands	15	0	0	15
Nicaragua	0	12	0	12
Nigeria	2	0	0	2
Norway	0	0	89	89
Pakistan	0	25	18	43
Palestine	0	0	26	26
Paraguay	0	0	17	17
Peru	0	32	0	32
Philippines	15	220	6	226
Poland	0	15	46	61
Portugal	2	4	14	20
Romania	0	0	12	12
Rwanda	0	0	180	180
Somalia	0	0	6	6
South Africa	50	141	15	206
Spain	30	0	12	42
Sudan	0	12	0	12
Sweden	5	0	0	5
Taiwan	0	0	3	3
Tanzania	0	2	0	2
Thailand	25	0	32	57
Turkey	0	32	7	39
former USSR	254	413	360	1027
UAE	42	0	0	42
Vatican City	57	0	14	71
former Yugoslavia	60	0	221	281
Zaire	21	0	0	21
Zambia	15	0	0	15
Zimbabwe	110	0	0	110
Total number of countries	41	41	52	

While certain nations were covered extensively, others were reported on only sporadically or not covered at all. Countries not reported on included certain African countries, Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Chile, Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Saudi Arabia, Oman. Overall, 96 countries were unreported.

This supported the assumption stated previously in the literature review that certain nations received more coverage than others, and that some nations are unreported.

Comparison of square inches of coverage based on geography showed that such countries as the former USSR, Israel and Lebanon received significantly more coverage than did other nations.

Also, in 1996 the newspapers reported on more nations than they did in 1976 and 1986.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

General

This chapter presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations. It summarizes the study, its methodology and findings and analyzes the results obtained by the research in more depth.

Summary

Methodology. The amount, type and sources of international news published in *The Daily Oklahoman*, *Tulsa World* and *The Daily O'Collegian* in 1976, 1986 and 1996 were examined by means of content analysis.

The data were obtained from all three newspapers, with specific issues selected randomly. The total sample included 108 issues of the newspapers, and 476 articles were coded as international news. Events in the United States in which internationals took part, and stories with occasional foreign references were not coded as foreign news.

The research questions were: how many international news items were published in 1976, 1986 and 1996 by these newspapers; what is the foreign news coverage -- in square inches; what are the sources of this news; what are the topics; what is the geographic distribution of total of square inches coverage?

The hypotheses constructed were tested with the chi-square test and other common statistical procedures such as the ANOVA test.

Findings. Hypothesis 1 stated there was no difference in the proportion of foreign news among the newspapers. Both frequencies of international articles (number of foreign stories) and news space devoted to these items in square inches and proportions of the total newsholes were measured. The difference in proportion of foreign news items was not statistically significant. Thus, this part of null hypothesis was supported

However, that part of Hypothesis 1 -- stating no difference in the number of stories -- was not supported. The individual newspapers differed in the number of items published. *The Daily Oklahoman* published significantly more international news articles than did *Tulsa World*.

Overall, as it was expected, the newspapers had similar patterns of international news published. The analysis showed they were not much different with regard to this coverage.

Hypothesis 2 -- there is no change in the proportion of international news coverage by these newspapers over time -- was supported. No change was found in the proportion of international news in the newspapers over time. According to the statistical analysis, the differences in proportions were not significant. Thus, the newspapers were

fairly constant in terms of proportion of international news stories reported during 1976, 1986 and 1996.

The assumption that the newspapers would have more international news with each decade was not supported.

Hypothesis 3 -- there is no change in the sources of international news of these newspapers over time -- was supported. The main source of international news was the Associated Press. Other agencies and other sources were not significant providers of information. The AP stories accounted for the majority of international news published, overall, 70%.

Hypothesis 4 -- there is no change in the topics of international news of these newspapers over time -- was not supported. As was expected, topics frequencies were not similar during 1976, 1986 and 1996. It was found that only in 1976 did the newspapers publish more so-called "soft news" articles -- culture, arts, human interest -- as compared with 1986 and 1996.

However, overall articles on politics, military (wars, conflicts, etc.), crime and disasters were the most frequent during all time periods. This may indicate the peculiarities of "agenda-setting" editorial policy and a certain type of gatekeeping by the newspapers.

Hypothesis 5 -- there is no difference in foreign news "geographic distribution (by country) or changes over time -- was not supported. Geographic distribution of the news varied. Content analysis showed that 96 countries were unreported; some countries were reported on only sporadically, and certain countries received frequent and rather

extensive coverage. However, the number of nations/countries reported on increased in 1996 -- as compared with 1976 and 1986.

Overall, all the newspapers showed similarity in their "country preferences." The most frequently and extensively covered were the former USSR and Israel. Less, but still popular were Lebanon (especially in 1976 and 1986), Mexico, the former Yugoslavia, Japan, the Great Britain, India, Libya, Phillipines, South Africa (in particular, in 1986) and Rwanda (in 1996).

Overall, there were an obvious tendency to publish more about "hot spots," which was also connected with topical preferences as well.

Conclusions

While one cannot say that the international news was ignored by local newspapers, the proportion of it had not increased over time. Also, there were certain processes of gatekeeping and agenda-setting that shaped the editorial policy about foreign news.

Politics, war conflicts, disasters -- both nature and man-made -- earthquakes, floods, terrorism, bombing, plane crashes, explosions, etc. were still the major topics of foreign news. The attention was mainly drawn to "hot spots" which varied from time to time.

No great attention was paid to economic news or culture. These issues were not highlighted, and the newspapers did not focus on soft news topics. Most of the foreign countries were presented to the reader through crime and disasters.

Since the news media are important arbiters of reality, not only at the mass level but also amongst decision-makers, distorted images of the international scene could be a major obstacle for those trying to solve the problems at issue between North and South.¹

Thus, a truthful representation of global events is indispensable. However, can one justify much emphasis on this kind of news -- many items on crime, disasters, wars? Shall a newspaper report on country X only if something really serious is happening there? The analysis showed that often a newspaper stopped reporting on a country as soon as the military conflict/disaster/etc. was over, and started covering some other country (e.g., the former Yugoslavia) if some conflict was emerging.

These issues deal with the social responsibility of the media. As the Hutchins Commission reported, it is the duty of the press to provide

.... a truthful, comprehensive, and intelligent account of the day's events in a context that gives them meaning. It should serve as a forum for the exchange of comment and criticism, give a representative picture of the constituent groups in the society, help in the presentation and clarification of the goals and values of the society and provide full access to the day's intelligence.²

It is obvious that without international news and without a balanced discussion of foreign events the picture will not be complete. Also, it is the media's responsibility to educate their audiences, to promote international understanding rather than some misconceptions and stereotypes.

Today the farmer in the grain belt, the young professional or businessperson, the shopper, the steel-worker, the voter -- all of us find our lives closely entwined in countless strands of interdependence and our sense of security menaced by conflict and upheaval in many parts of the world.

Today's young people are woefully underprepared for life in the emerging global society. Most of us come to voting age, middle age, and old age ignorant of many of the simplest facts of international reality.... One of the key survival skills in the twenty-first century will be the ability to recognize, accept, and deal with the various elements of such diversity in other nations.³

Many factors determine a newspaper's editorial policy regarding international news. Mainly, it is

... gatekeeping functions of selecting, interpreting and processing news from external sources.

It could also be argued, however, that the selection is restricted, as it is taken from an already limited agenda -- an agenda which is influenced, if not entirely provided, by the major news agencies.⁴

As was found, the overwhelming majority of international news published by all three newspapers came from the Associated Press. On the one hand, this says something about the importance and trustworthiness of this source. On the other hand, the role of the AP can be defined as obviously dominant and monopolizing. One can even argue that having the news from one source only is contradictory to the principles of journalism itself.

Also, though this study was not intended to analyze the determinants of international news coverage, on the basis of the findings one may possibly explain the amount of attention paid to this or that particular country. In most cases, geographic proximity was not a factor. For example, Canada received almost no coverage.

However, this can be explained by the "unusualness" definition of news. A country where some extraordinary events happened -- Israeli conflicts, fighting in former Yugoslavia, the Chernobyl disaster in the former USSR, etc. -- received significantly more coverage. However, overall the most attention by the newspapers was given to local, domestic issues or, in case of *The Daily O'Collegian*, to college life issues.

Recommendations

One can recommend that the newspapers/journalists pay more attention to international news. This is an important issue due to the complexity of many economic and cultural factors. Much criticism of the American media is due to the scarceness of international coverage.

“We must draw attention to the areas of invisibility: those parts of the developing world where, according to the media, nothing much seems to be happening “⁵

Also, “negative attention” still prevails, and the media should report on a wider and more positive range of topics, with greater focus on cultural and scientific events.

However, the objectives of the study did not include analyzing the reasons for this “uneven distribution” of international news or the determinant factors in foreign coverage. This can be recommended for further research. Also, some qualitative analysis of foreign news content would be desirable. A qualitative interpretation would allow a deeper analysis of media content.

Future research might examine editorial content of editorials, Sunday editions of the newspapers, the business sections. There were almost no articles on economy. The majority of economics articles were in the business sections which were not studied.

Some longitudinal studies might produce more accurate results, using other time periods. Other research might use larger samples, other newspapers, broadcast, or a new medium -- the Internet.

Also,

It has been suggested that the cultural significance in terms of transferring cultural values of international news is not as decisive as the influence that is exerted through advertising, educational publishing, children's comics, or women's magazines. This hypothesis should be further investigated.⁶

However, international news has had and still has an impact on globalization and international understanding, and these processes are becoming more important.

ENDNOTES

¹William L. Rivers, *Responsibility in Mass Communication*, New York: Harper & Row, 1980, 45.

²John Richardson, Jr. and David C. King, "U.S. Images of Other Cultures: The Need for Education," *World Communications*, New York: Longman, 1984, 174-175.

³*Foreign News in the Media: International Reporting in 29 Countries*, UNESCO, 1985, 7.

⁴*Ibid.*, 53.

⁵*Ibid.*, 54.

⁶*Ibid.*, 52.

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