
NEWS FACTORS IN INTERNATIONAL NEWS FLOW

AN ANALYSIS OF THE GLOBAL FOREIGN PRESS COVERAGE

Submitted by

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SUMMARY

This thesis contributes updated results to two key areas of international comparative journalism research: First, the analysis focuses on the *geography of foreign news coverage* based on a sample of newspapers from 126 countries. Second, the *selection criteria* that underlie this global news reporting structure are examined. The news value theory by Galtung & Ruge (1965) forms the theoretical basis for this examination. Since countries are the key reference points in international reporting, the analysis focuses on the impact of news factors that reflect the characteristics of the respective event country, i.e. so-called “context-oriented” news factors. Thus the investigation sheds light on the extent to which international power structures between countries influence the representation of countries on the front pages of international newspapers.

The results show that the news geography during the survey week in September 2004 is strongly shaped by the conflict and war zones following the 9/11 attacks in New York in 2001. Despite an obvious shift of the international reporting towards countries in the Middle East, most notably on Iraq and Afghanistan, the basic structure of international foreign reporting is remarkably constant in comparison to the results of previous studies. The U.S. continues to dominate the foreign news coverage in all parts of the world. Next to the U.S. and the crisis areas in the Middle East countries of Western Europe are being focussed on by the international foreign news reporting.

The analysis underlines the assumption that news value theory has not lost its topicality and still explains a significant part of the news selection of international newspapers. Primarily the geographical and political proximity to another country as well as business related news factors, especially the economic power of a country and the trade relations with the country of origin of the newspaper, are decisive criteria that define the extent to which a country is present in the global press. In contrast to Galtung & Ruge’s original assumption, both context-oriented news factors, i.e. status- and proximity-related news factors, seem to play a significant role in the global news selection worldwide.

STATEMENT OF CANDIDATE

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled “News Factors in International News Flow – An Analysis of the Global Foreign Press Coverage! has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University and University of Music, Drama and Media Hanover under a cotutelle agreement

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself have been appropriately acknowledged.

In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

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