

## Foreign News: News Values and Ideologies

*Jörgen Westerståhl and Folke Johansson\**

This is an intermediate report from a study of foreign news in Swedish media as well as media in a number of other countries. We intend to discuss and test parts of a theoretical model designed to explain the selection of news. For this purpose we have used studies of news content covering the last seven decades. This material includes more than 50,000 news stories in newspapers, on radio and on television that have been manually categorized and coded. In addition, approximately 300,000 news items from different databases have been used (see Appendix).

### Introduction

We have published reports on domestic Swedish news (Westerståhl and Johansson, 1985, 1986). In those reports the primary emphasis was on the development over time of 'news ideologies'. In the mass media, the most fundamental change in the twentieth century took place in the late 1960s and strongly influenced both the selection and presentation of news: a traditional, more reflective journalism was replaced by a much more active and critical journalism. We regard this as a largely enduring consequence of an ideological change, symbolized by the year 1968, and experienced with some differences in time and degree all over the Western world.

The general purpose of our research is to explain, as far as possible, the selection of news items and the selection of perspectives with regard to news that takes place inside the media.<sup>1</sup> This selection process is probably as important or perhaps sometimes more important than what 'really happens'. Initially, a distinction is made between two types of motive or consideration which guide the media actors in this selection process. On the one hand there is the assumed taste or interests of the audience and, on the other hand, the actors' intention to inform and/or influence the audience.

Motives of the first kind can be found behind the observation of

\* Jörgen Westerståhl is Professor Emeritus and Folke Johansson Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Gothenburg.

so-called 'news values'. Motives of the second kind can be labelled as ideological. Further, we assume news values to be stable over a long period of time, whereas ideologies change. News values are based on relatively stable ground such as basic human psychological traits and the basic structure of society. In the selection process there is an interplay between the two kinds of motives. Sometimes they are in conflict, and at other times they reinforce one another.

#### News Values

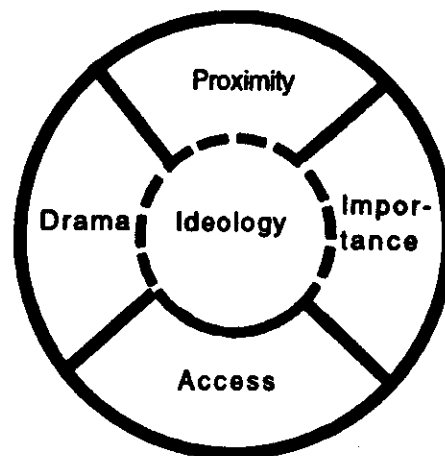
As soon as one starts to produce and present/sell news on a regular basis to a general audience, some selection criteria or standards must be applied. These are the criteria that determine which events are worthy of becoming news and which are not. This is fairly obvious, and has been so from the very beginning of newspaper production. News values are not a device of this century. They have been not only observed but also commented on as early as the late seventeenth century. Thus, the German author Kaspar Stieler writes about news values, employing several terms in his book *Zeitungs Lust und Nutz* (in a free translation, 'Uses and Gratifications of Newspapers') from 1695 (Stieler, 1695).<sup>2</sup> He particularly elaborates on two selection criteria, the importance and the proximity of events (Stieler, 1695: 31, 36). He is also aware of the special interest that goes with dramatic or negative events such as war (1695: 80) and crime (1695: 61).<sup>3</sup> However, Stieler's book is not a systematic exposé of news values, but rather a systematic guide for newspaper reading.

In modern American and European writings about news values, history usually begins with Walter Lippman (1922) and includes or finishes with a presentation of the twelve types of news values listed by Galtung and Ruge (1965) as the most comprehensive and consistent scheme. There is no need here to relate this story. Only a few observations on Galtung and Ruge's list will be made: their list consists of eight factors derived from the psychology of perception, and four other 'culture-bound' factors influencing the transition from events to news. It has been difficult to operationalize all these news factors. In an ambitious and large-scale enterprise of this kind (Schulz, 1976), the number is reduced to six. With regard to the previously mentioned news value of 'proximity', Galtung and Ruge only speak of cultural proximity, where Schultz adds, inter alia, the geographical dimension and commercial relations. 'Importance' appears as a cultural factor in

the shape of 'elite nations' and 'elite people', said to be 'of particular importance in the northwestern corner of the world'. This terminology does not seem to be very helpful. It introduces a value-loaded concept (cf. Galtung's distinction between top dogs and underdogs on the international arena [Galtung, 1964]) and implies a dichotomy between the elite and the rest.

In our analysis of foreign news, we use a model containing only three kinds of basic news values: namely *importance*, *proximity* and *drama* (Figure 1). We have thus not found it necessary to move much beyond the original and earliest observations in the field. The first value is defined as national characteristics, and the second as a relation between the nations concerned. The reason is that nations play such a fundamental role in foreign news, as actors (subjects or objects), or merely as arenas, and that there exists an abundance of nation-based statistics.

FIGURE 1  
News Factors in Foreign News



Importance seems to be best measured by an index, containing population, GNP and military expenses. Importance is an absolute quality. Proximity is a relative one. We began with three dimensions of proximity, namely geographical, commercial and cultural. The importance of geographical distance, measured as the distance between capitals, is partly based on communication technology. With improved communication, the effect of geographical

distance should diminish, and the Swedish material supports this interpretation. In itself, geographical distance does not seem to have much effect at present. Commerce is important and easily verified, while cultural proximity has so far resisted our efforts to construct a coherent scale. With regard to the relationship between Sweden and other countries, a most useful measure is the number of Swedish diplomatic staff in foreign countries (comparable data from other countries have not been available). This measure also comprises to some extent the importance of the other country, a problem that we hope to handle in a multivariate analysis.<sup>4</sup>

The application of these statistical variables does not imply that we regard them as the direct and conscious determinants of news selection. They are rather seen as proxy variables, more or less effectively summarizing a complex journalistic judgement about news values. However, this judgement is based on the journalist's anticipation of what will interest the reader or viewer. This in turn is primarily material about countries which are important or where the reader/viewer feels some kind of connection (proximity). Especially, importance is a proxy variable in another sense. What we intend to measure is the position of a country in the international system; we are not necessarily interested in GNP or military capability per se: they are seen as characteristics of the more general position of the country.

The drama news value denotes events, rather than countries, directly, and comprehends a series of values combined both with the event as such and with the presentation of the event. Our coding does not permit us to go deeper into the journalistic qualities of the presented message (see, for many references, Ahern, 1984). In the first place we have used the category of 'negative' news as a blunt operationalization of the dramatic character of an event.

Besides the three kinds of basic news values, our model includes *access*, as conditional rather than causal factor in news reporting. It can have both a positive and a negative impact. Some countries or areas are, or have been, barred to reporters, while others are wide open. Recent political changes in Eastern Europe are obvious examples. The location of news agencies and correspondents has a positive impact on the volume of news available.

Importance, proximity and drama each have a causal effect on the selection of news. So has ideology, which we will discuss next.

Naturally these variables influence one another. There is room for interaction. However, we are not yet prepared to theorize about the exact extent of such an interaction in different combinations of variables.

#### **Ideology**

The ideological component in news reporting can hardly escape any careful observer of media content. However, there is very little systematic research in this area. A simple reason seems to be that for this kind of research, large-scale comparisons — over time, between political parties and/or between countries — must be performed. The complicated structure of ideologies constitutes another problem. If ideologies are regarded as permanent combinations comprising perception of society and a set of societal values, they appear on many levels and with different degrees of specification and there are often links between them. When international news reporting is studied, the national level might be the one to materialize first. National interests are supported by national ideologies, but internal party politics might also be involved. Political parties can express different views on foreign policy issues. Further, there seems to be an arena for international ideologies in this field. A typical example is the debate on the 'new information order' which became the more or less dominant issue for several years during the 1970s. The three levels mentioned are certainly not entirely isolated from each other.

Essentially, we will focus here on the national ideological level. There is reason to believe that this level dominates in the majority of countries most of the time. We have taken as a natural starting-point or hypothesis the fact that there exists a close correspondence in nations between foreign policy and the media's covering of foreign affairs. In earlier days it was likely that the policy-makers were also the only stage-managers. Nowadays, the media may play a more active role and influence the policy-makers. In some cases it might be possible to find out who takes the lead (Gilberg et al., 1980). An easily accessible form of annual foreign-policy statements for most nations is the general debate in the United Nations.

In our model (Figure 1) ideology is placed in the centre. A dotted borderline adjacent to the three kinds of news values signifies that ideology might influence the application of news values. A new ideology can give more significance to a certain

country or affect the relations between countries. A most obvious effect of ideology on foreign news can be found in the presentation of actors as good or bad. We will not deal directly with individual actors in this report, and although this is a limitation it is perhaps not such a serious one because countries are often actors or actors are identified with countries.

What kind of ideologies are of interest on the national level? To most people, an association of nation-based ideology with foreign-news reporting will mean a reporting coloured by national interest. This might generally be true, but at least during certain periods — perhaps it has always been so to some extent — a dimension of international engagement and universal ideals has entered the scene. This has been particularly apparent in Sweden.

With respect to foreign news, the attention paid to foreign conflicts all over the world is of special interest. What are the reasons or motives for involvement in these remote conflicts, and what are the selection principles in situations where there is practically always a choice? An immediate general answer is that involvement in these conflicts is rooted in an identification with the parties concerned. Involvement can assume a positive character, expressing solidarity, but also a negative character, a feeling of disgust. A possible example of the last kind is the sentiments aroused by the Vietnam war. The weak interest in Vietnam after the war supports the interpretation that negative, anti-American feelings constituted the dominating element.

The war in Afghanistan was a parallel in the sense that the amount of killing and human suffering seemed to be, in general terms, of the same magnitude. But the involvement and media coverage in the West was much lower. The 'access' factor certainly explained a part of the difference; however, weaker identification with the Russians might have produced weaker reactions. Let us add some other observations on killing, both between states and within. The Iran-Iraq war represented a case where the readiness in the Western world to identify with either side was at its lowest level. This means that in terms of news coverage, the death of, let us say, one Israeli soldier counted as much as the death of hundreds of Iranian or Iraqi soldiers. In the Kuwait war, access was partly limited on both sides. However, identification with the UN forces resulted in a similar pattern of casualty reporting.

Examples of the same incongruity can be found when killing occurs within one state. Killing between Israelis and Arabs in the

Middle East and between blacks and whites in South Africa was scrupulously reported, while killing between Arabs in the Middle East and between blacks in South Africa has barely been noticed. The fact that reporting has been concentrated on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on apartheid can be seen as a result of identification, even in the form of repudiation. In the case of South Africa, it seems that a change has occurred. Killing between black citizens appears to be reported more extensively. Such a change could be based to some extent on changes in reality, but it seems rather likely that it is a sign of a weakening ideological standpoint in a situation where the government has made some concessions.

In our view ideologies are the main source of deviations in news reporting from a standard based on more or less objectified news values. When the explanatory power of news values is analysed, these deviations appear in the form of unexplained residuals, positive or negative. A central aim of our research is to find common denominators for the ideologies behind these residuals. As the earlier reference to casualties indicated, it might also be possible to occasionally use so-called 'extra media data' – in this case actual death tolls – as a base for identifying deviations in reporting.<sup>5</sup>

#### **Some Empirical Results**

How effective are news values, by our definition, as predictors of the news coverage in different kinds of media, and how do we deal with and interpret the residuals that news values do not explain? In the following passage we concentrate on these two questions when presenting and discussing some empirical findings.

The greater part of the media that we study are from Sweden, although additional media from eight other countries are included. All newspaper, radio and CBS material has been manually coded. For the study of the Swedish news agency (TT), the American news agency AP, the Swedish TV2 channel for some periods (marked 'TV2 stat') and for Italian TV (RAI) we have used databases produced by these media. TV1 and TV2 from Sweden have also been manually coded. Some periods partly overlap those where a database is used. For the period 1980–81 we examined videotapes. For the later periods, registration has been based on printed summaries. Some technical matters will be discussed later.

In the historical material on the Swedish press from 1912–72, we have for each country calculated the amount of space in the

newspaper where the country was the arena. Four different operationalizations of news values have been tested. As can be seen in Table 1, geographical distance is a weak contributor, particularly at a later stage. Trade yields better results, although the number of staff employed at Swedish embassies and consulates abroad stands out as the very best predictor. It can be assumed that foreign representation also partly accounts for the 'importance' factor.

**TABLE 1**  
Volume of Foreign News in the Swedish Press 1912-72 in Terms of Geographical, Economic and Cultural Proximity, and of Importance ( $\beta$ -coefficients and total explained variance,  $R^2$ )

	1912	1924	1936	1948	1960	1972
All news						
Distance	(-0.11)	(-0.09)	(0.07)	-0.15	(-0.06)	—
Trade	(0.53)	0.29	—	(0.25)	0.36	(0.19)
Representation abroad	(0.10)	0.66	0.90	0.60	0.50	0.67
Inhabitants	x	x	x	0.19	0.15	0.22
$R^2$	0.45	0.86	0.67	0.74	0.67	0.71
Positive and neutral news ( $R^2$ )	0.87	0.88	0.82	0.69	0.76	0.61
Negative news ( $R^2$ )	0.26	0.79	0.31	0.65	0.37	0.72

x=data are missing.

—=no significant value.

Figures within () = not significant, but systematic.

Nevertheless, the total explained variance is rather high with the exception of the first year. If we also try to observe the 'drama' factor, by eliminating the negative news, the explained variance for the remaining positive or neutral news is higher than for the negative ones. The exception is 1972, when 20 percent of the news dealt with Vietnam, where the US was deeply involved.

Subject-matter categories differ with regard to explained variance. There is a rather strong correlation between the subject-matter category and whether the character of news is negative or not. This means that if we divide the news accordingly, the variance explained will be different. For news in Swedish TV2 during September 1980 to March 1981, the variance ( $R^2$ ) explained by importance and proximity concerning energy questions was 71

percent. The coverage of elections could be explained to 49 percent and social-security matters to 47 percent. Of the variance in reporting military matters in general (except military activities) 43 percent could be explained. It was not possible to explain the news flow on military activities and terrorism at all. The difference between these explained variances can be accounted for by the drama component in our model.

On the whole the figures, particularly the most stable one for positive and neutral news, seem to indicate that the degree of explained variance is decreasing over time. We have comparable data for the front page in the press covering six months in the 1980-81 period: only 34 percent of the variance at the time is explained. A possible interpretation could be that the news on the front page is more highly concentrated upon a few major events than the news in the rest of the paper. However, a check on the earlier years studied does not show any large difference between the first and the other pages. It seems that we have to further test the supposition that the 'importance' and 'proximity' factors explain far less of the variance in the Swedish press today than before. A possible explanation could be that the press nowadays is becoming less dependant on international news agencies than earlier and is perhaps more influenced by TV. The decrease cannot be explained by any corresponding change in the amount of negative news; there is no change in the percentage of negative news.

A look at the international press and Italian TV confirms the impression of the great impact of the kinds of news values studied. Primarily, Table 2 shows the striking effect of the treatment of news from Poland, by far the largest volume at that time (the activities of the Solidarity movement, etc.). Without the news from Poland the  $R^2$  figures all increase to a conspicuous degree with one exception, *Pravda*, and with only a minor change on the more left-wing Channel 2 in Italy. The news coverage of Poland at this time, and for a long period thereafter, represents in our terms the strongest possible residual by far, which means that the coverage of Poland was much greater than it should be if measured by the importance and proximity of Poland. We have interpreted the intense reporting on Poland as an expression of an interest with strong roots in a common Western ideology. The figures from *Pravda*, where very little was reported about Poland, support this interpretation (cf. Wang, 1992).

TABLE 2  
 Volume of Foreign News in Six Newspapers and Two Italian TV  
 Channels (Oct.-Dec. 1980) (total explained variance [ $R^2$ ] by  
 importance and economic proximity [trade])

	News from all countries	News from all countries except Poland
<i>Aftenposten</i>	0.50	0.73
<i>Helsingen Sanomat</i>	0.65	0.85
<i>Guardian</i>	0.41	0.53
<i>Figaro</i>	0.04	0.36
<i>Frankf. Allg. Zeitung</i>	0.17	0.66
<i>Pravda</i>	0.39	0.40
RAI Channel 1	0.55	0.73
RAI Channel 2	0.67	0.73

With regard to the broadcasting media we will first take a look at the question of measurement. In Table 3 we have employed three different measures of the explained variance in foreign coverage. The results are unequivocal. In all media studied, the simple number of news items alone produces the lowest values. When we apply the time measure, the explained variance increases by about 10 percent. The last measure, the number of weeks when news from a certain country was reported, is intended to account for regularity in reporting. The employment of this measure results in another increase of the  $R^2$  figures by approximately 10 percent. This illustrates that when news is selected there is a willingness to mention briefly something that has taken place in countries which are of lesser interest. When it comes to the allotment of time for longer stories and especially for regular coverage, there is a tendency to concentrate on those countries that are deemed important or are in some way close to the viewers' interests.

The news issued by international agencies and broadcasting media is studied and compared over a long period of time in Table 4. We still focus on the variance in foreign coverage explained by the two factors of 'importance' and 'proximity'. It should be observed that 'proximity' is measured in a more effective way in the Swedish media because here we have access to the foreign representation variable. The  $R^2$  figures for Italy and the US will

TABLE 3  
 Swedish Broadcasting Media Evening News (total variance explained by 'importance' and 'proximity' for different measures of foreign coverage in media [ $R^2$ ] (Oct. 1980–April 1981))

	Number of Items	Time (seconds)	Number of weeks with news
TV1	0.27	0.37	0.45
TV2	0.22	0.33	0.48
Radio	0.22	0.28	0.44

therefore be underestimated in comparison with the Swedish figures.

The national Swedish news agency TT, where foreign news is received principally from Reuters, presents a long and most impressive series of figures with, on average, 81 percent of the variance explained. It should be noted that 'drama', the third kind of news value, has not been studied in this case. We know that items like war, terrorism and *coups d'état* have a news value in themselves, which to a great extent is independent of the 'importance' and 'proximity' of the countries. If we could add the 'drama' news value to the other two kinds, there would not be much more left to explain.

However, we are unable to do this without knowledge of the hundreds of thousands of news stories behind these figures. We know only the number of stories during a certain period in which a certain country has been mentioned (theoretically, of course, all the news stories could be printed in full!). It should be noted that with regard to TT we use only the *number* of news stories; if we had counted the *length* of these stories we would expect the figures to be somewhat higher.

$R^2$  values for the two summer quarters in 1982 are markedly lower than the rest. In the beginning of April, Argentinian troops invaded the Falklands, capitulating in the middle of June. The Israeli invasion of Lebanon was reported on 6 June and at the end of September there were still huge demonstrations in Tel Aviv against Begin and the refugee-camp massacres in Beirut. The effects of these events, well timed to fit our quarterly division,

**TABLE 4**  
**Foreign Coverage in the National Swedish News Agency and in the Evening News Programmes of Four Channels (variance explained [ $R^2$ ] by 'importance' and 'proximity')**

Year	Quarter	TT	TV2 stat	TV2 arena	TV2 actor	RAI		CBS
						Chan. 1	Chan. 2	
1980	4	0.81			0.38	0.55	0.67	
1981	1	0.84		0.33	0.57	0.63	0.62	0.01
	2	0.84		0.35	0.51	0.52	0.63	0.09
	3	0.82		0.38	0.47			
	4	0.76		0.10	0.43			
1982	1	0.83		0.14	0.42			
	2 <sup>+</sup>	0.55		0.06	0.32	0.10	0.16	—
	3 <sup>++</sup>	0.59		0.01	0.25			
	4	0.83		0.53	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.36
1983	1	0.88		0.64	0.68			
	2	0.85		0.35	0.63			
	3	0.84	0.51	0.30	0.59	0.55	0.60	0.29
	4	0.84	0.54	0.32	0.69	0.33	0.47	0.09
1984	1	0.80	0.62	0.48				
	2	0.88	0.76		0.73			
	3	0.85	0.73		0.69			
	4	0.90	0.64		0.47			
1985	1		0.66					
	2		0.63					
	3		0.39					
	4		0.62					
1986	1		0.72					
	2		0.53					
	3		0.46					
	4		0.62	0.61	0.76			
1987	1		0.54	0.50	0.72			
	2		0.81					
	3		0.59					
	4		0.68					
1988	1		0.43					
	2		0.59					
	3		0.52					

seem to have been rather exceptional in the whole media world, with TT least affected.

In order to find out if TT and Reuters are unique in their strict application of news values, we made a corresponding test with AP's European databank using the two winter quarters of 1983-84 (about 50,000 news stories). The correlation (Pearson's  $r$ ) between AP and TT is as high as 0.88 and the 'importance' variable - the only one that is directly comparable - has an  $r$  of 0.80 with foreign coverage for AP and 0.78 for TT. This seems to indicate quite clearly that, on the whole, the international news agencies apply the same selection rules. Thus, it is evident as a fact of fundamental significance that the international news agencies provide an output of news based on general news values to an extent which leaves very little room for other influences.

In relation to the extensive menu that the international news agencies offer, the selection that TV news programmes exhibit is not only smaller but also guided to a much lesser extent by predictable rules. There is much more room for discretion when the two fundamental kinds of news value 'importance' and 'proximity', are weakened.

We have measured the news on the Swedish TV2 channel in three different ways (Table 5). The first (TV2 stat) registers incidences where a country is mentioned regardless of subject matter. These data are comparable to TT. Italian TV (RAI Channel 1 and Channel 2) is registered in a similar manner in the

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TT = National Swedish news agency.

TV2 stat = Swedish TV channel 2 based on statistics in database.

TV2 arena = Swedish TV2 channel, the country where the news events take place is registered

TV2 actor = Swedish TV2 channel, the main actor (country) is registered

RAI = Italian TV, Channels 1 and 2

CBS = Columbia Broadcasting System, USA

+ = The Falklands war

++ = The Israeli invasion of Lebanon

*Note:* TT's values and TV2 stat are based on the number of news stories concerning each country, the other media on time devoted to each country  
'Proximity' measures include only trade, except for Sweden where representation is also used

**TABLE 5**  
**Foreign Coverage According to Table 4 ( $R^2$  averages)**

	All foreign news occurrences	Country as actor	Country as arena
TT	0.81		
TV2	0.60	0.54	0.34
RAI Channel 1	0.46		
RAI Channel 2	0.52		
CBS			0.13

databases that we have used. The difference in explained variance when we compare TV stat and RAI with TT can probably, at least to some extent, be interpreted as ideologically based. In the next measure of Swedish TV2 (TV2 arena), and also for CBS, the registration is based on where the event takes place. Here we find the lowest explained variance. It is the lowest for CBS, a factor caused mostly by the fact that a better operationalization of the concept of proximity exists for Sweden. A test has shown that the correlations between CBS and Swedish TV2 are relatively high. In both cases there are substantial differences between quarters. The arena measure has some 'face validity' with regard to news coverage. To register where it all really takes place seems intuitively reasonable. Nonetheless, the alternative method of measurement (TV2 actor) produces a much higher explained variance and less difference between quarters. Here we register not where the event takes place, but which country is active, or is an actor. It is evident that the selection of news is determined more by which country is involved and active than by where the event takes place.

#### **Concluding Remarks**

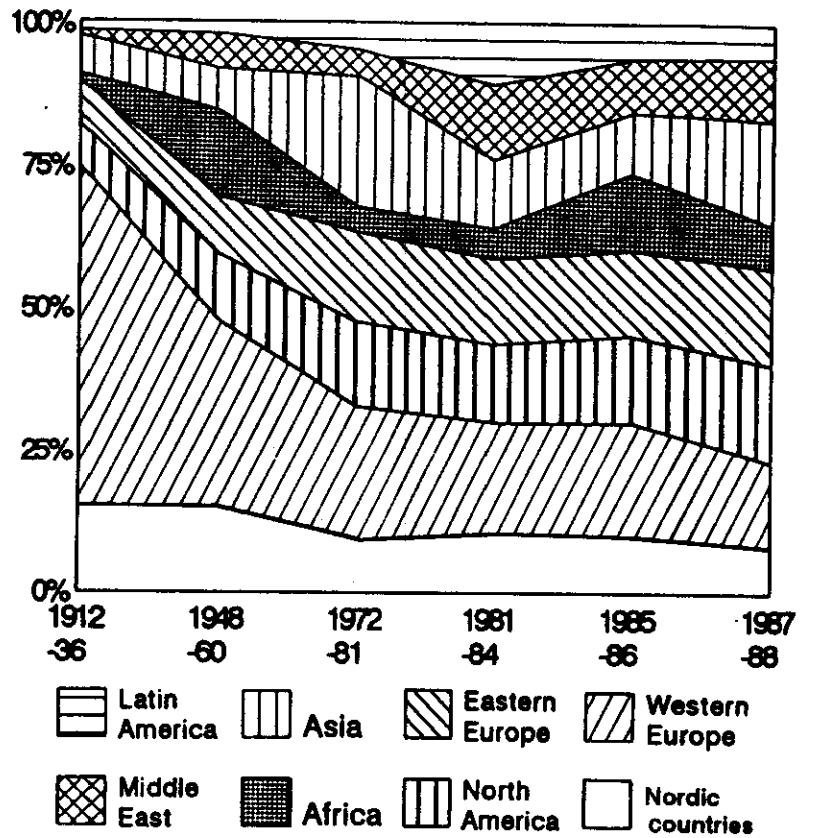
It is impossible to report all events in all parts of the world; a ruthless selection process must therefore take place. As we have found, the two news values of 'importance' and 'proximity' play a central role in this process. Their application might be disputed in many special cases, but it seems difficult to find more reasonable selection rules than these two if audience interest is to

be maintained. They are both 'natural' in a psychological sense. Even if the principles of 'importance' and 'proximity' seem more or less eternal, their application is not. World structure is changing all the time, and relations between states and peoples are dependent on deliberate decisions. Wherever one lives, the media world is obviously growing, as is clearly shown by historical studies of newspapers spanning centuries (Wilke, 1984). Our own data about the development of Swedish newspapers in the nineteenth century supplement the picture. As can be seen in Figure 2, about 75 percent of foreign news before the last world war emanated from Western Europe and the Nordic countries. In recent years, this figure has decreased to 25 percent.

We are not only interested in the explanatory power of the news values, but also in what is left unexplained, the residuals, where we expect to find the impact of ideology. In Table 2, we have given an example of a strong positive residual, the reporting about Poland, which can be interpreted in ideological terms. A more general approach to the question of ideological influence will be outlined here. Our problem is that even when we have noted the effects of 'importance' and 'proximity', there might be other news values — the 'drama' values — at work. How can their impact also be eliminated? One way is to perform a detailed inspection of all residuals, which would not only be time consuming, but would also introduce an arbitrary element. An alternative might be to separate the negative news, assuming that it contains the 'drama' values in question. We have tried this with some success, but one problem is that ideologically inspired reporting may often include many items of negative news. A third possibility is that we draw more on the news agency reports, assuming that these have already taken dramatic news values into consideration. Having used the news-agency distributions as independent variables, the residuals that remain in the media would not be regarded as a result of special dramatic events and accidental occurrences, but of deliberate choice.

Let us illustrate this way of thinking with a concrete example. In the period from October 1983 to April 1984, 'importance' and 'proximity' explained 39 percent of the selection of news on the Swedish TV2. If the news agency TT is introduced as an additional independent variable, as much as 61 percent of the TV2 news is explained. What remains after that — observe that 'importance' and 'proximity' explain no less than 83 percent of TT's output —

**FIGURE 2**  
**Geography of International News**  
**Regions in Swedish Media 1912-88**



can be regarded as the specific contribution of TV2 to the selection process. The residuals, reduced in this way, might harbour the ideology of TV2. Our goal is to characterize the general structures of such ideologies and to compare them with official foreign-policy declarations.



During this study we have invested a lot of energy in developing and testing techniques for measuring news. Some measuring techniques have been compared in this article. It is obvious that the way one registers news content is important not only from a technical point of view but also from a theoretical one. We have found that different measures register different aspects of news and news selection. Separating these aspects makes it possible to gain new insights into the selection process.

#### Notes

This paper was prepared in an earlier version for presentation at the XIVth World Congress of the International Political Science Association, 28 August-1 September 1988. We thank Professor Denis McQuail and an anonymous referee for comments.

1. For a useful survey of the literature on news content see Shoemaker, 1987.
2. For a more penetrating analysis of Stieler, see Wilke, 1984.
3. In the last case Stieler also deplores the tendency of newspapers to go into so much detail that a possible future offender can learn how to commit a crime (cf. the 'violence on TV' debate).
4. Cf. Rosengren, 1974.
5. This has in fact been done, one example is Adams, 1986.

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