

**An Exploratory Study of Bi-National News in Mexican
and American Border-Area Newspapers
1977-1988**

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International news reporting and its effect on the economies, cultures and politics of nations is a topic that has received increased amounts of attention in recent years. Comparing the foreign coverage by newspapers in the same country, or in two or more, has been done before. Oftentimes, these studies compare the "elite" press -- those newspapers with international reputations, which have an effect on the opinions and actions of world leaders. It is not as common to see smaller, regional newspapers compared, which is what was done in this exploratory study.

This paper is a comparative content analysis¹ of *El Imparcial*, a daily newspaper published in Hermosillo, the capital city of the state of Sonora, Mexico, and *The Arizona Daily Star*, published in Tucson, the second largest city in Arizona. Stated basically, this study attempted to quantify, in a general way, the extent to which an American border-area newspaper reported on Mexico, and how a border-area newspaper in Mexico reported on the United States. The papers were chosen for several reasons: both are important and respected publications with significant circulations in their respective states, and are the closest major newspapers to the international border separating Arizona and Mexico. The *Star's* daily circulation is 85,000;² *El Imparcial's* is 65,000.³ According to 1980 census estimates, Tucson's population is 385,970, and Hermosillo's 340,779,⁴ but the populations of both cities have increased dramatically during the past nine years. Hermosillo, at 150 miles to the south, is farther removed from the border than is Tucson, at 60 miles to the north, but both are what border expert Oscar Martinez calls "interior borderlands" -- situated "within a 2,000-mile-long, 400-mile-wide belt bisected by the boundary."⁵

El Imparcial and the *Star* are both broadsheets and have strikingly similar formats. Both are broken down by section, the "A" sections of each covering national, international, and general news. Other sections, like the *Star's* "Metro" (later "Metro-State"), and *El Imparcial's* "El Estado" (later "Estatal" and "Ciudad"), are quite similar. Both papers make use of advanced printing processes, which allow for color photos and art, and provide Sunday pullout sections titled, "Parade" in the *Star* and "Nosotros" ("Edición Dominical" in 1988) in *El Imparcial*. The *Star* is generally the thicker of the two papers, a fact which can be partially attributed to its classified advertising section, which is almost non-existent in the Mexican paper. A valid comparison can be made of the two dailies, since both have similar circulations, exist in comparable population centers, and have news presentation schemes that closely resemble one another.

These two news organizations are well aware of each other and both have correspondents based in the other's

city. Each provides office space and other mutual assistance to these visiting reporters.

The expectations of this research were that since the two papers are close to the border, the international news that is occurring such a short distance from each would be a relatively prominent feature in both publications, and that the large volume of trade between the two countries would be a good predictor of mutual news interest. Also, it was the author's perception that foreign news had become more abundant in the Tucson paper during the last several years. It was expected, however, that the Mexican paper would have more bi-national news than its American counterpart, since past studies have shown that news of the United States is reported far more often in the press of other countries than news of any specific nation is reported here.⁶

Daily newspapers are obviously prime sources of international news in Mexico and the United States. It is hoped that this study will provide useful information about the extent to which the *Arizona Daily Star* and *El Imparcial* present the bi-national and bi-cultural news that is so relevant near the international border.

This study falls under the general categories of foreign news and international communication, but views both from the perspective of a border area that is a conduit for a heavy flow of commerce, people and culture. The mass media in this rapidly developing area play an important role in shaping and reflecting public opinion. Concerning the importance of the borderlands region, Oscar Martinez writes:

Recent population growth, urbanization, industrialization, and other modernizing forces have transformed the once-isolated and sparsely inhabited borderlands into one of the most rapidly developing regions of the United States and Mexico.⁷

The following information should help illustrate the importance of the relationship between the two countries. Mexico has about one-fourth the population of and is roughly a quarter the size of the United States. It is America's third largest trading partner, after Canada and Japan, and is the major source of oil imported here. American investments in Mexico and vice versa run into billions of dollars. In 1986, 62.6 percent of Mexican exports went to the United States, and 68.5 percent of its imports came from here.⁸ By contrast, 5.7 percent of American exports went Mexico, with 4.5 percent of its total imports coming from that country.⁹

Although the United States dominates in size, economy and population, Mexico, with whom we share the longest undefended border in the world, is of major importance to American foreign affairs and trade.

A major issue in international communications concerns *news flow*. The term refers to where news originates and how it is disseminated throughout the world. This flow is dominated by the big American agencies such as

The Associated Press, and those of Western Europe: Agence Presse France, Reuters and others. It has been observed that news flows generally from powerful countries to ones that are less prominent, and that increased flow in the opposite direction is rare.¹⁰ Critics of this news flow dominance charge that it results in news reports that give biased, unrepresentative accounts of the developing world, and which often explain world affairs solely in terms of U.S. or Western European concerns.¹¹

Since the mid 1970s, there has been increasing dissatisfaction among many Third World, and developing countries, like Mexico, with both the content and the quantity of news about them in the Western press. This dissatisfaction stems from the fact that news organizations in the developed countries of Western Europe and North America have for the most part devoted a greater amount of their foreign news to other developed countries, while reporting on the Third World only in times of political crisis or when disaster strikes. These critics claim that countries such as the United States are heavily covered by newspapers in developing nations, but that the developing world is often "invisible" in the American daily press.¹² "Cultural Imperialism" is a term, now common, that critics of the West and its news organizations have used to describe this domination by the industrialized countries.

This state of affairs led many Third World countries to call for a "New World Information Order" in the 1970s. Among other things, this order would allow those nations to share and spread "good" news about themselves, while depending less upon news organizations of the West. Western critics have assailed this proposed order as a means by which less favorable reports can be censored by Third World governments. This debate is a continuing one.¹³

These issues are mentioned here to put this study, which provides some basic data, within its larger context. What follows is a brief survey of similar studies, several of which are comparisons of newspaper coverage by American and Canadian dailies, and the general literature on international news. The methodology section explains how the research was conducted, and the findings are presented mainly by use of tables (See Appendix) that give number counts and percentages of news items according to their classifications. The relevance of the findings, the limitations of the current study, and suggestions for further research make up the final section of the paper.

LITERATURE SURVEY

Books and articles comparing and analyzing press systems throughout the world, information flows, and other facets of foreign news coverage are bountiful. Comparative studies of newspapers near international borders, particularly the Mexican/American border, are virtually nonexistent. However, the general literature and the few specific studies relating to foreign news in border areas provided valuable insights and information.

The United States, as one of the most powerful nations on earth, is a dominant force in world affairs. In 1971, Hester's analysis of news flow from developed and developing nations revealed that there were approximately seven stories emphasizing developed nations to every three emphasizing developing nations on the AP wire.¹⁴ Works such as Hester's point to the fact that the United States and other developed Western countries constitute a "power center"¹⁵ that naturally creates a wide assortment of news that attracts world attention.

A 1979 article by Fernando Reyes Matta highlights the Latin American and Third World dependency on this power center:

The current status of the Latin American press manifests the continuing dominance of North American news values. . . . The transnational news agencies produce and process nearly 60 percent of the information published in Latin America. UPI and AP alone provide 39 and 21 percent of the information received by the principal Latin American dailies.¹⁶

Matta also wrote that news *about* Latin America in the Latin American press comes primarily from UPI and AP.¹⁷

The time-tested theory regarding the status of nations and news flow is that "a greater volume of information will flow from powerful nations to weaker nations than from weak to powerful."¹⁸ That this is true both as a general rule and in specific cases has been well established, as this study and the others mentioned here indicate.¹⁹

The studies bearing the most resemblance to this one compared bi-national news coverage in Canadian and American daily newspapers. In Jim A. Hart's 1963 study it was found that four large Canadian dailies devoted 55 percent of their foreign news to the United States, while four American dailies devoted 5.8 percent of their foreign news to Canada.²¹ These figures represented 13.6 percent of the Canadian papers' news space and 0.5 percent of it in the American papers.²²

Hart found that the American papers relied heavily upon their staffs for bi-national news, while those in Canada depended mostly on American and Canadian news wires and syndicates.²³ The papers Hart surveyed were well within the "interior borderlands" of America and Canada, although the closeness of a paper to the border did not necessarily mean that more bi-national news was printed in it.²⁴ However, the distances of all the dailies from

the border were quite similar. Subsequent studies by Hart, and by others, that compare American papers with those of other English-language countries have yielded like results.²⁵

A study done 15 years later by Vernone M. Sparkes replicated many of Hart's findings, and found proximity could be a factor having a positive effect on the volume of bi-national news coverage.²⁶ In a composite week's worth of issues in selected Canadian and American dailies, Sparkes found that Canadian papers carried an average of 273 column inches on American news, while American papers averaged less than two percent of that total.²⁷ Sparkes did not find this imbalance surprising in light of other factors such as trade flow, the size of each country's population and their respective GNPs.²⁸ It should be noted that Sparkes used a wide cross-section of American papers, many of which are published hundreds of miles from the Canadian border.

De Verneil sought to correlate patterns of international news reporting with patterns of other international dealings. In a summary of his 1976 dissertation he notes: "Contrary to expectations, these results seem to indicate that on the global level, international news reporting is not uniformly related to other international activities."²⁹ He found that trade and other factors can affect the amount and direction of news flows, but not in every case or situation.³⁰

In 1961, James W. Markham wrote: "It has become a truism that it takes a revolution to get Latin America into the news."³¹ Although no evidence of such a phenomenon was found in this study, similarities between it and Markham's were apparent. He found that South American papers routinely carried more than twice the volume of foreign news than their American counterparts.³² Markham's study, which included many relatively large newspapers, also found that the South American papers devoted 37.7 percent of their news space to the United States, but that papers here devoted just 4.3 percent of theirs to South America.³³ But Markham qualified his findings by noting: "a large proportion of the news that was foreign in South America was local for the United States and therefore was not reflected in the United States totals."³⁴

In "Patterns of Foreign News" Stevenson and Cole found that the Mexican media (their sample consisted of two dailies and a TV station) devoted 23 percent of their foreign coverage to North America, mainly the United States. By contrast, the American media (six dailies and a TV station) devoted only seven percent of their foreign coverage to all of Latin America.³⁵ But they remark that in virtually all of 17 countries studied "more attention is given to the local region than to any other part of the world."³⁶ In other words, the Mexican media gives more attention to Mexico, the American to America and so on. In summary, the authors list the similarities of foreign coverage by many of the world's press systems. For instance, foreign coverage of other parts of the world by both

Mexican and American media is equal for three of eight major geographic areas, and American media cover three others more fully. Stevenson and Cole claim that "no one media system or world region has a monopoly on evenhandedness."³⁷

Robert D. Haynes, Jr., in an analysis of global news flow, found that Mexico "shows a pattern of news coinciding with trade flows." Concerning all international news, proximity appeared to be the most significant determinant of coverage, according to his results.³⁸ His findings on news sources for Mexican and American papers are similar to those reported here in Table 4. In view of the information already cited, it is not surprising that Haynes should write: "There is indeed an imbalance in the coverage between (the developed nations of the) North and (the developing) South as claimed by Third World states."³⁹

Results of a 1987 content analysis of Mexico City newspapers indicated that North America and Western Europe were given a total of 55 percent of available foreign news space.⁴⁰ The authors, Joseph and Gilda S. Rota, wrote that "fully 90 percent of all international news published in our sample is supplied by news organizations based in the United States and Western Europe."⁴¹

It is clear from the literature cited here that the United States is both a major focus and source of the world's foreign news. It is also true that the American press does not cover most nations, even those with whom we share borders, a fraction as fully as theirs cover the United States.

METHODOLOGY

The original idea for this study was to compare how papers right on the border--in places like Nogales, Sonora, and its smaller twin, Nogales, Arizona--report on "the other side." It was thought that a study of "border journalism" would be a good way to find out how the two cultures view one another at their point of contact. It soon became obvious, however, that the small, local papers in these areas concentrate their energies on truly local news. Eventually, the study was narrowed to the two best dailies that were closest to the Arizona-Mexico border.

Originally, a random sample of 20 dates was selected for the years 1977, 1980, 1983, 1986, and 1988. This period was chosen in order to note bi-national news coverage trends in both papers. Time limitations in Mexico eventually reduced the number of dates to 19 for 1977, and 15 for the succeeding years. Dates were selected by use of a random numbers table;⁴² each year had 20 random numbers assigned to it, which were matched with their corresponding dates on the calendar. For example, February 14 is the forty-fifth day of any year, etc.

Each date selected was assigned a case number, and the editions of both papers published on these dates were analyzed for all news stories, features, news briefs, editorials, and photographs relevant to this study. *El Imparcial* was analyzed between October 3 and October 7, 1988, at the offices of the paper in Hermosillo, where copies of the paper are kept in hard-bound volumes. *The Arizona Daily Star* was analyzed during the last week of October 1988 at the main library of the University of Arizona, where copies of the paper are stored on microfilm. The use of a microfilm reader caused a very slight reduction in the overall size of the *Star*. Coding definitions and recording sheets were prepared beforehand and were used for both papers.

Only items and stories that were specifically and manifestly about Mexico or the United States were analyzed. All items of this nature were recorded, including "teasers," which merely refer readers to items on the inside pages, and news summaries, like the one on page two of the current *Star*, that also refer to longer items within the paper. It was decided that shorter items, especially when appearing in conjunction with a referent item, indicated strong editorial interest. Items appearing in Sunday pullout sections and other supplements were also counted.

Sports news was excluded from the study because the amount of such news generated in the United States is formidable, and would have unfairly inflated *El Imparcial's* news coverage percentage in comparison to the *Star's*. New York Stock Exchange listings and other information of this type were not studied.

This research sought not only to count the number of articles and photographs about the United States in *El Imparcial* and of Mexico in *The Arizona Daily Star*, but to classify each item in terms of the type of news

it represented, its subject, and origin. This information can be useful in assessing how each publication obtains, presents and views bi-national news.

Type of News was classified as "National/International," "Local," and "Editorial." Subject was split into three areas: "Politics/Foreign Affairs," "Business," and "Culture"--the last including everything from entertainment features to hard news stories about plane crashes and murders. Subjects were cross-listed, so that one article might be considered as coming under two definitions. For instance, an editorial in *El Imparcial* on June 28, 1977, concerning Mexican migration to the United States, its effect on both governments and economies was classified as being both "Political" and "Business" in type. This cross-listing was common for items from both papers.

Origin refers to whether a news item came from the papers' staffs, an outside source such as a wire service, news syndicate or another newspaper, or whether it was not indicated in the copy. A high percentage of staff reports may indicate a commitment of money and manpower toward bi-national news.

Other characteristics were also recorded. The length (in inches) of each story and editorial was measured because length is a prime indicator of a newspaper's interest in a story. The measurements are basic, and do not take into account column widths, which were quite variable, particularly in the first two years surveyed -- 1977 and 1980. They do provide, however, a rough means of comparing the two papers. Photographs were not measured, but it was noted when photos or art appeared with stories and editorials and when they stood alone. Presumably, a photo with an article indicates greater editorial interest and commitment than a photo by itself, since the former usually takes up more page space and offers more information to readers. Cutlines were not measured or categorized, and are not included in this study, but the sources and datelines of photographs were noted. Headlines were not included in the column inch counts.

Locations of items were noted both in regard to page and section and to positions on the pages where they appeared. The second type of location was broken into five areas: Upper Left, Upper Right, Middle, Lower Left and Lower Right. Location, as well as length and inclusion of photos or art, is a good indication of the importance of a story in the eyes of editors. News appearing in the upper portion of a page, especially that which is on the first page of a section, is obviously considered more newsworthy or interesting by the individuals who make decisions on news placement. Generally, items on the left also have a higher value concerning editorial interest. These ratings are based on readership studies that editors and layout people on both sides of the border are well aware of.

Datelines were listed as "In Country," "Foreign," and "None." This information was deemed useful because

it can indicate what kind of news reports a paper tends to rely on. News with datelines from the foreign country can be considered as being "closer to the source." This is especially true for staff items.

Days with no coverage in the papers were extracted from the data, and are summarized and totaled by year and for the entire period studied.

FINDINGS

In total, 101 items were found in *The Arizona Daily Star*, and 463 in *El Imparcial*. Table 1 gives the breakdown of items by dateline. The important designations here are the "In Country" and "Foreign" categories. The "None" designation can be somewhat misleading since "teasers" and news briefs often have no datelines.

Twenty-five percent of the *Star's* datelines were from the United States, while 39 percent were foreign. The percentage of foreign datelines, except for 1986, rose during the 11-year period. In *El Imparcial*, 78.4 percent of items had foreign datelines; 9.3 percent carried ones from within Mexico. The Mexican paper's percentage of foreign datelines reached a high of 84.6 in 1988.

In only one of 79 editions of *El Imparcial* was no item noted. Almost 99 percent of the time, then, a reader of that paper could expect to see news of the United States. A reader of the *Star* could expect to see news of Mexico in 67 percent of the editions. The percent of days with no coverage in the *Star*, however, declined consistently after 1980, from 46.7 percent to 13.3 percent in 1988. (See Table 2.) The *Star* had no coverage of Mexico in 26 of the 79 editions surveyed.

Considering only days with coverage, a reader could expect on average to see 1.9 items about Mexico in one of these editions of the *Star* and six items in *El Imparcial*. When non-coverage dates are included, the *Star's* average drops to 1.3 items per edition; *El Imparcial's* is not appreciably affected.

Table 3 lists article lengths in five-inch increments, the shortest being less than five inches, the longest comprising those longer than twenty. It is evident from this information that *El Imparcial* carries a significantly greater percentage of very short items than does the *Star*. More than 55 percent of the Mexican paper's written items were less than five inches long, while 32.3 percent of the *Star's* were in this range. About 34 percent of the total number of articles in the *Star* were more than ten inches long; *El Imparcial* had 9.7 percent in this category. Fully 90.4 percent of *El Imparcial's* written items were less than ten inches long. The American paper had a total of 18.2 percent (N=18) of its articles in the two longest ranges; *El Imparcial* 3.6 percent (N=14).

During the entire study period, the *Star* had 25 items (24.8 percent) appearing on the first pages of sections, ten of which were front-page items. *El Imparcial* had 65 items (14 percent) on the first pages of sections, 61 of these being front-page news.

The breakdown of articles by origin in Table 4 shows that in *El Imparcial*, 18.8 percent (N=87) were by the paper's staff, 79.3 percent (N=367) by an outside source and 1.9 percent (N=9) were not attributable. In the *Star*, 42.6 percent (N=43) were by the staff, 53.5 percent (N=54) by an outside source and four percent (N=4) gave

no indication of origin.

The *Star's* high percentage of staff items as compared to *El Imparcial's* is similar to the findings of researchers who have compared American and Canadian papers. Hart, for example, found that the Canadian papers in his study relied on their staffs for 13.4 percent of their American news, and that American papers used their staffs for 40.8 percent of their Canadian news. Information on some of the salient features of staff articles is presented in Table 5. Although the *Star* generally had a greater ratio of staff to outside source items, and its staff articles were usually longer than those in the Mexican paper, it should be kept in mind that *El Imparcial* had roughly twice as many staff reports, 87, to 43 for the *Star*, during the 11-year study period.

The Mexican paper had 20 staff articles with foreign datelines, the *Star* seven. These numbers represent 23 percent of the staff items in *El Imparcial*, and 16 percent of the *Star's*. Also, *El Imparcial's* staff was more likely to write on "Political/Foreign Affairs" and "Business" concerns relating to the United States than was the *Star's* about Mexico. No definite trends are indicated here, except that both staffs concentrated less on "Cultural" items over the years. The "Political/Foreign Affairs" items were prominent in 1988, a presidential election year in both countries. This was true for *El Imparcial* also in the United States election year of 1980. None were noted in the *Star* in 1980, that paper's lowest item total year.

Although specific news sources were not analyzed, a general observation is that *El Imparcial* used many sources for its news--American, Mexican, Latin American and European--and that the *Star* relied almost exclusively on sources from the United States.

In Table 6, where all items are separated by subject, it can be seen that *El Imparcial's* percentages in the three categories remained fairly constant from 1977 to 1988, with "Politics/Foreign Affairs" and "Cultural" items comprising the bulk of its coverage. The *Star* devoted a greater percentage of its coverage to "Business" subjects (29.7 percent) than did *El Imparcial* (16.2 percent). In total, the papers had virtually equal ratios of "Cultural" news, and similar ones in the "Political/Foreign Affairs" category.

According to the information in Table 7, the *Star* is far more likely to have editorial and local news items relating to bi-national news than is *El Imparcial*. The Tucson paper had about the same number of "Local" and "Editorial" items as the Mexican paper, even though it had fewer than one fourth the total number of items. This fact may indicate a strong staff commitment to bi-national issues, since staff members are often responsible for local news and editorials. *El Imparcial's* coverage in the "National/International" category far exceeds the *Star's*, 95 (N=440) to 80 (N=80) percent. This type of news, generally appearing in the front sections, or in designated

sections, especially international news, is often the province of news and wire services in both papers.

There was a similarity regarding placement of items on the pages of each paper, as is evident in Table 8. By collapsing the figures for the two most important locations, Upper Left and Upper Right, it can be seen that 51.5 percent of the *Star's* items were placed there to 48.2 percent of *El Imparcial's*. Percentages for the other areas of item placement are also quite similar. The Mexican paper, as was noted earlier, was far more likely to put an item on the front page, the most important in the paper.

The papers were each as likely to run a photo or include art with an article. As the totals for the study period show, the *Star* ran a photo with an article 20.8 percent of the time. *El Imparcial's* percentage in this area was 19.9.

In the *Star*, photos and art stood alone rarely, while in *El Imparcial* they made up 15.3 percent of the items listed. However, the percentages of photos and art with articles consistently increased in the Mexican paper, while stand-alone photo/art generally decreased.

CONCLUSIONS

The most general and obvious conclusions to be drawn from this study are that *El Imparcial* covers America far more fully than *The Arizona Daily Star* covers Mexico, and that the *Star's* coverage of Mexico has increased and become more consistent since 1980. Both conclusions are consistent with the research expectations, and with the findings of similar studies. According to the information gathered, one can expect *El Imparcial* to have more than four times the bi-national news coverage of the *Star*.

Also expected beforehand was the finding that the *Star* would have more days without coverage than *El Imparcial*. It was a surprise, in fact, that there was one day without coverage of the United States in the Mexican paper, given *El Imparcial's* overall totals.

The most interesting finding in this regard is the apparent trend towards more consistent coverage of Mexico by the *Star*. From having no news of Mexico in almost 50 percent of its editions in 1980, the paper decreased the number of no-coverage days in each subsequent year to one fourth of the 1980 figure by 1988.

El Imparcial had a far greater percentage of U.S. datelines than the *Star* had from Mexico, a fact that indicates the American paper relies on American sources for its news about Mexico and that the Mexican paper relies on American sources for its American news. This finding, which is consistent with those of earlier studies, might be a good starting point for research on specific sources of American-Mexican news -- the news organizations who produce it, and the original sources who are quoted.

The high percentage of staff items in the *Star* may indicate that it has a greater commitment to bi-national news than does the Mexican paper, but no definite conclusion can be made here since *El Imparcial* had twice the actual number of staff items.

El Imparcial is much more likely to use short items or spot news than is the *Star*, which relies heavily on longer pieces. A good guess here is that article lengths reflect the styles developed by the papers, as the editor of the American paper pointed out during an interview. But the greater article lengths in the *Star*, when combined with its high ratio of staff articles and editorials, would seem to indicate a commitment to Mexican issues.

Regarding news subjects, the American paper is more likely to contain items on business topics than its Mexican counterpart. This finding, like some others, is similar to those of earlier studies of Canadian and American papers. Further research into the topics of news items in the American and Mexican presses would provide valuable information on how the two cultures view one another, assuming the daily press is a good indicator of a country's culture and values.

The fact that the United States is so often front-page news in *El Imparcial*, and that Mexican news is so rarely found there in the *Star* is a strong indication that the "power center" theory noted earlier is indeed functioning. The *Star* does put a good number of its Mexican news items on the lead pages of sections devoted to international news, a tendency that shows commitment to bi-national news. But the front-page, where many types of news appear, is the most important one in any paper. Placement of an item there is one of the strongest signs of interest by a newspaper and its customers.

The great discrepancy in the total amount of bi-national news presented by the papers might lead one to the conclusion that the forces of cultural domination are indeed at work on the Arizona-Sonora border. But some would and do argue that increasing the amounts of international information "does not seem likely to bring about an increase in knowledge or understanding of other parts of the world."⁴³ Americans, it seems, have a tendency to be oblivious to things happening outside their borders, but the fact is there are more sources of foreign news and information available in the United States than anywhere else on earth. Many other sources -- books, journals, magazines, cable TV, etc., can be consulted for information about Mexico and the rest of the world. It could be that the papers are providing the types and amounts of news their readers want and expect. If other factors, such as the countries' populations, trading relationships, size, and world standing do have an effect on news flow and can act as predictors of coverage, perhaps it is not surprising to find such a huge difference in coverage.

To find more definite answers concerning the press of the United States-Mexican borderlands, more research is clearly needed. Future studies might include:

- Comparing all the major border-area dailies in Mexico and the United States in order to get a broader picture of how bi-national news is covered at the frontiers of each country.
- Using major newspapers noted for foreign news coverage such as *Excelsior* and *The New York Times* as "yardsticks" by which the regional papers could be judged.
- Studying all foreign news in border-area papers to find out how they compare in covering the rest of the world.
- Finding out how much actual news space each publication has to work with and the percentage of this space it devotes to bi-national and international news.
- Concentrating research on a current year's bi-national news items, instead of conducting a longitudinal study as was done in this paper.

These types of news studies, in combination with research on other topics like cross-cultural communication, trade flows, and foreign affairs, could go a long way in helping to define the "cultural symbiosis" that exists at the

border.

As the title of this paper makes clear, it is an exploratory study. For this reason the conclusions contained herein must be of a very general nature. A major limitation of the present study involves the unspecific nature of the information presented in Tables 6 and 7. It became apparent after tabulating this data that it should have been divided into more detailed news and news type designations. Useful information was lost by lumping items into the "Culture" category listed in Table 6, and into the "International/National" category in Table 7.

Also, in noting the origin of items as presented in Table 4, it would have been preferable to list the actual sources used, instead of grouping them simply as "Staff," "Outside Source," and "None." More available time to study the past issues of *El Imparcial* would have been useful too, but a one-week stay in Mexico was all that was possible.

These limitations aside, the current research provides useful information on how border-area Mexican and American daily papers are reporting and presenting cross-border news to their readers.

NOTES

1. Content analysis is "a method of analyzing communication in a systematic, objective and quantitative manner for the purpose of measuring variables." This definition, by F. Kerlinger (1973) appears in Wimmer and Dominick, p. 166.
2. *Bacon's Publicity Checker*, 1989 ed.
3. *Editor & Publisher International Yearbook*, 1988 ed.
4. *Martinez*, p. 125.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 126.
6. See, for example, Markham, "Foreign News in the United States and South American Press," and Stevenson and Cole, "Patterns of Foreign News."
7. *Martinez*, p. 124.
8. "Mexico: foreign trade," *Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year*, 1988 ed.
9. United States: foreign trade," *Encyclopedia Britannica Book of the Year*, 1988, ed.
10. Hester, "International Information Flow," p. 245.
11. See "Flaws in Communication Flows," in *Many Voices, One World*, pp. 145-148.
12. Consoli, p. 16.
13. See *Many Voices, One World*, and Stevenson and Cole for a comprehensive presentation of news-flow issues.
14. Hester, "An Analysis of News Flow," p. 32.
15. Legum and Cornwell, p. 7.
16. Reyes Matta, p. 165.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
18. Hester, "International Information Flow," p. 245.
19. For a detailed analysis of news appearing in the media of 17 countries, including the United States and Mexico, see Stevenson and Cole.
20. Sean MacBride, an Irish statesman, was chairman of a 16-member international commission that studied communication problems. The 312-page report, published by UNESCO, is titled *Many Voices, One World*.
21. Hart, "The Flow of News," p. 71.
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*, Pp. 72-73.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

25. See Hart, "Foreign News," and Budd, "U.S. News in the Press Down Under."
26. Sparkes, Pp. 267-268.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 264.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 267.
29. De Verneil, p. 162.
30. *Ibid.*
31. Markham, p. 249.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 255.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 258.
35. Stevenson and Cole, p. 39.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
37. *Ibid.*, p.42.
38. Haynes, p. 210.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 211.
40. Rota and Rota, p. 172.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 171.
42. Table used can be found in Blalock, Pp. 554-557.
43. Stevenson and Cole, p. 58.

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Appendix: Tables

TABLE 1
Datelines

The Arizona Daily Star

Year		None	In Country	Foreign	Total
1977	N	12	7	6	25
	%	48	28	24	
1980	N	3	3	4	10
	%	30	30	40	
1983	N	6	2	9	17
	%	35.3	11.7	53	
1986	N	6	6	7	19
	%	31.6	31.6	36.8	
1988	N	10	7	13	30
	%	33.3	23.3	43.3	
Total		37	25	39	101
Total		36.6	24.8	38.6	100

El Imparcial

Year		None	In Country	Foreign	Total
1977	N	11	9	73	93
	%	11.8	9.7	78.5	
1980	N	13	7	59	79
	%	16.5	8.8	74.6	
1983	N	10	16	71	97
	%	10.3	16.5	73.2	
1986	N	10	8	72	90
	%	11.1	8.9	80	
1988	N	13	3	88	104
	%	12.5	2.9	84.6	
Total		57	43	363	463
Total		12.3	9.3	78.4	100

Note: Percentages may not always total exactly 100 because of rounding.

TABLE 2
Days With No Coverage

The Arizona Daily Star

1977: March 14, June 28, July 9, August 13, November 15, November 28 and December 2.
Seven out of 19 days with no coverage or 36.8%

1980: March 5, April 25, July 8, July 20, Sept. 4, November 8 and November 10.
Seven out of 15 days or 46.7%

1983: February 1, April 4, April 25, May 3, August 31 and November 10.
Six out of 15 days or 40%

1986: April 11, May 27, October 14 and November 30.
Four out of 15 days or 26.7%

1988: March 24 and November 3.
Two out of 15 days or 13.3%

Total (1977-1988) = 26 of 79 days or 33%

El Imparcial

1977: November 15
One out of 19 days or 5.3%

1980: 0

1983: 0

1986: 0

1988: 0

Total (1977-1988) = 1 of 79 days or 1.3%

TABLE 3
Length of Articles (in inches)

The Arizona Daily Star

Year		< 5	5+ - 10	10+ - 15	15+ - 20	20+	T o t a l
1977	N	9	7	5	1	1	23
	%	39.1	30.4	21.7	4.3	4.3	
1980	N	3	3	2	1	1	10
	%	30	30	20	10	10	
1983	N	7	6	1	2	1	17
	%	41.2	35.3	5.9	11.8	5.9	
1986	N	4	5	5	3	2	19
	%	21	26.3	26.3	15.8	10.5	
1988	N	9	12	3	1	5	30
	%	30	40	10	3.3	16.7	
Total	N	32	33	16	8	10	99
Total	%	32.3	33.3	16.2	8.1	10.1	100

El Imparcial

Year		< 5	5+ - 10	10+ - 15	15+ - 20	20 +	Total
1977	N	48	20	5	1	1	75
	%	64	26.6	6.6	1.3	1.3	
1980	N	37	25	4	1	0	67
	%	55.2	37.3	6	1.5	-	
1983	N	46	24	0	1	5	76
	%	60	32	-	1.3	6.6	
1986	N	40	30	7	2	0	79
	%	50.6	38	8.9	2.5	-	
1988	N	46	38	8	2	1	95
	%	48.4	40	8.4	2.1	1.6	
Total	N	217	137	24	7	7	392
Total	%	55.4	35	6.1	1.8	1.8	100

Note: Photo/Art not included.

TABLE 4
Origin of Items

The Arizona Daily Star

		Staff	Outside Source	Not Indicated
1977	N	16	7	2
	%	64	28	8.0
1980	N	2	8	0
	%	20	80	-
1983	N	5	12	0
	%	29.4	70.6	-
1986	N	8	10	1
	%	42.1	52.6	5.3
1988	N	12	17	1
	%	40	56.6	3.3
Total	N	43	54	4
	%	42.6	53.5	4.0

El Imparcial

		Staff	Outside Source	Not Indicated
1977	N	16	75	2
	%	17.2	80.6	2.2
1980	N	20	55	4
	%	25.3	69.6	5.1
1983	N	14	81	2
	%	14.4	83.5	2.1
1986	N	17	73	0
	%	18.9	81.1	-
1988	N	20	83	1
	%	19.2	79.8	0.96
Total	N	87	367	9
	%	18.8	79.3	1.9

TABLE 5
Information on Staff Items

The Arizona Daily Star

Year	By Staff	Avg. Length	Subject		
			Pol/For Af	Bus	Culture
1977	64% (N=16)	9.72	6.3%	25%	81.3%
1980	20% (N=2)	8.5	--	100%	--
1983	29.4% (N=5)	16.95	--	60%	40%
1986	42.1% (N=8)	13.9	12.5%	37.5%	62.5%
1988	40% (N=12)	14.8	41.7%	16.7%	58.3%

El Imparcial

Year	By Staff	Avg. Length	Pol/For Af	Subject	
				Bus	Culture
1977	17.2% (N=16)	16	37.5%	31.3%	68.8%
1980	25.3% (N=20)	8.7	55%	10%	45%
1983	14.4% (N=14)	7.6	21.4%	71.4%	28.6%
1986	18.9% (N=17)	7.4	11.8%	52.9%	41.1%
1988	19.2% (N=20)	10	30%	25%	50%

Note: Subject percentages add across, and far exceed 100 because some staff items were cross-listed in the Subject category. Photos and art were not measured and were not used in averaging article lengths.

TABLE 6
Subject of Articles

*The Arizona Daily Star**

		Politics/For Afrs	Business	Culture
1977	N	4	7	19
	%	16	28	76
1980	N	3	7	3
	%	30	70	30
1983	N	7	5	5
	%	41.2	29.4	29.4
1986	N	9	7	8
	%	45	35	40
1988	N	10	4	20
	%	33.3	13.3	66.6
Total	N	33	30	55
Total	%	32.7	29.7	54.5

El Imparcial

		Politics/For Afrs	Business	Culture
1977	N	36	11	56
	%	38.7	11.8	60.2
1980	N	40	9	36
	%	50.6	11.4	45.6
1983	N	29	18	58
	%	29.9	18.6	59.8
1986	N	39	20	39
	%	43.3	22.2	43.3
1988	N	33	17	62
	%	31.7	16.3	59.6
Total	N	177	75	251
Total	%	38.2	16.2	54.2

*News items were cross-listed, so totals obtained by adding across will exceed the actual number of articles and photographs counted in the study. Percentages were obtained by dividing the number of items in each category by the *actual* yearly article totals. Hence, these will be greater than 100 when added.

TABLE 7
Type of News

The Arizona Daily Star

		National/Int'l	Local	Editorial
1977	N	16	4	5
	%	64	16	20
1980	N	8	0	2
	%	80	-	20
1983	N	16	1	0
	%	94.1	5.9	-
1986	N	15	1	3
	%	79	5.3	15.7
1988	N	25	3	2
	%	83.3	10	6.7
Total	N	80	9	12
Total	%	79.2	8.9	11.9

El Imparcial

		National/Int'l	Local	Editorial
1977	N	92	0	2
	%	97.9	-	2.1
1980	N	70	3	6
	%	88.6	3.8	7.6
1983	N	92	1	3
	%	96	1	3.1
1986	N	86	2	2
	%	96	2.2	2.2
1988	N	100	2	2
	%	96.2	1.9	1.9
TOTAL	N	440	8	15
TOTAL	%	95	1.7	3.2

TABLE 8
Location of Items on Page

The Arizona Daily Star

		Upper L	Upper R	Middle	Lower L	Lower R
1977	N	8	4	6	3	4
	%	32	16	24	12	16
1980	N	3	4	2	0	1
	%	30	40	20	-	10
1983	N	4	0	9	3	1
	%	23.5	-	52.9	17.6	5.8
1986	N	13	1	0	4	1
	%	68.4	5.3	-	21	5.3
1988	N	10	5	7	2	6
	%	33.3	16.6	23.3	6.6	20
Total	N	38	14	24	12	13
Total	%	37.6	13.9	23.8	11.9	12.9

El Imparcial

		Upper L	Upper R	Middle	Lower L	Lower R
1977	N	28	12	28	12	13
	%	30.1	12.9	30.1	12.9	14
1980	N	20	17	20	13	9
	%	25.3	21.5	25.3	16.5	11.4
1983	N	34	21	26	10	6
	%	35.1	21.6	26.8	10.3	6.2
1986	N	18	20	29	12	11
	%	20	22.2	32.2	13.3	12.2
1988	N	36	17	36	5	10
	%	34.6	16.5	34.6	4.8	9.7
Total	N	136	87	139	52	49
Total	%	29.4	18.8	30	11.2	10.6

TABLE 9
Photographs and Art

The Arizona Daily Star

		With Article	Photo/Art Only
1977	N	2	2
	%	8.0	8.0
1980	N	3	0
	%	33	-
1983	N	1	0
	%	5.9	-
1986	N	5	0
	%	26.3	-
1988	N	10	0
	%	33	-
Total	N	21	2
	%	20.8	2.0

El Imparcial

		With Article	Photo/Art Only
1977	N	11	18
	%	11.8	19.4
1980	N	10	12
	%	12.7	15.2
1983	N	17	21
	%	17.5	21.6
1986	N	21	11
	%	23.3	12.2
1988	N	33	9
	%	31.7	8.7
Total	N	92	71
	%	19.9	15.3

DATES ANALYZED

1977	1980	1983	1986	1988
JAN 8	JAN 9	JAN 19	JAN 1	JAN 7
JAN 10	JAN 19	FEB 1	JAN 19	JAN 10
FEB 6	MAR 5	FEB 14	JAN 20	FEB 8
MAR 14	MAR 17	MAR 10	FEB 5	MAR 1
MAR 22	APR 25	APR 4	MAR 28	MAR 24
APR 30	MAY 17	APR 25	APR 11	JUN 1
MAY 6	JUL 8	MAY 3	MAY 27	JUN 5
JUN 28	JUL 20	JUN 5	JUN 24	JUN 12
JUL 9	SEP 4	JUL 5	SEP 17	JUL 1
AUG 13	SEP 7	AUG 31	OCT 1	JUL 4
AUG 21	SEP 30	SEP 8	OCT 14	AUG 17
SEP 5	NOV 8	OCT 17	NOV 1	AUG 29*
OCT 16	NOV 10	NOV 10	NOV 11	SEP 3
NOV 13	NOV 25	NOV 15	NOV 30	SEP 9
NOV 15	NOV 28	DEC 16	DEC 10	SEP 12
NOV 28				
DEC 2				
DEC 11				
DEC 23				

* The August 29, 1988 edition of the *Star* was not available on microfilm or in its normal form. The August 31st edition was used instead.

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