



THE NEWS **BALANCE** REPORT

Study conducted for CBC by ERIN Research Inc.



The News Balance Report, 2010

Study conducted and report written for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

by

George Spears, PhD, CMRP

Kasia Seydegart, MSW, CMRP

Pat Zulinov, CMRP

ERIN Research Inc.

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Executive summary

Purpose

In fulfilling its mandate of accountability and transparency, the CBC has conducted periodic analyses of its news content, the first being commissioned in 1977. The current research is the most comprehensive and detailed examination to date.

Method

The News Balance Report by ERIN Research Inc. is based on a 25-week sample of television, radio and Internet news recorded between October 26, 2009 and May 2, 2010. While its focus is CBC news, both network and local/regional, it includes competing news outlets on each platform as a basis for comparison: the CTV National News, Global National, Canada.com, theglobeandmail.com, and five Corus and Rogers all-news stations. The study is, by any standard, comprehensive. It covers approximately 6,000 news stories on radio, 7,500 stories on television, and 2,400 stories on the Internet.

The information reported here derives from a content analysis of this sample – an objective description of the people and issues in the news that follows a pre-defined set of codes. Research methods are fully described in Appendix A, along with results of tests for the accuracy of coding. Reliability is high, giving assurance that the quantitative results are sound.

Panel of Advisors

Five international media experts were selected as a Panel of Advisors to the Project. Their role is to provide methodological and interpretative advice to ERIN Research Inc.'s Directors who retain the final say. The five represent a spectrum of broad expertise and experience in mass media:

Sarah Carter is CBS News Johannesburg Bureau Chief responsible for the network's coverage of Africa. She was a visiting professor at University of British Columbia.

Fred Fletcher is Professor Emeritus, Communication Studies and Political Science at York University, Toronto. He was the founding President of the Canadian Media Research Consortium (2001-2007) and now serves as Past President.

Hanson Hosein is Director of the Master of Communication in Digital Media at the University of Washington in Seattle.

Mark Jurkowitz is Associate Director, Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ).

Holli Semetko is Vice Provost for International Affairs and Director of Office of International Affairs (OIA), Emory University. From 1995-2003 Dr. Semetko was professor and chair of Audience and Public Opinion Research, Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Assessment of fairness and balance

In some instances, demographic data provide external yardsticks that are useful in assessing balance. One might expect that the amount of coverage for a province or territory would be roughly in proportion to its population (although major events such as the 2010 Olympic Games could skew this pattern to some extent). In other instances, numerical results do not, by themselves, indicate balance or lack thereof. How should the available time be divided among politics, social issues, business, crime and so on? In the end, fairness and balance are judgments: they are informed by the facts at hand, but they also rest on beliefs and values. Often, there are competing positions on how news might be presented, and different observers may legitimately disagree. This report presents factual information about news content and provides context for assessing fairness and balance, but the final determination as to whether the “right” balance has been achieved lies with the reader.

Numeric yardsticks

In several areas, population statistics serve as guidelines (not iron-clad criteria) for assessing balance.

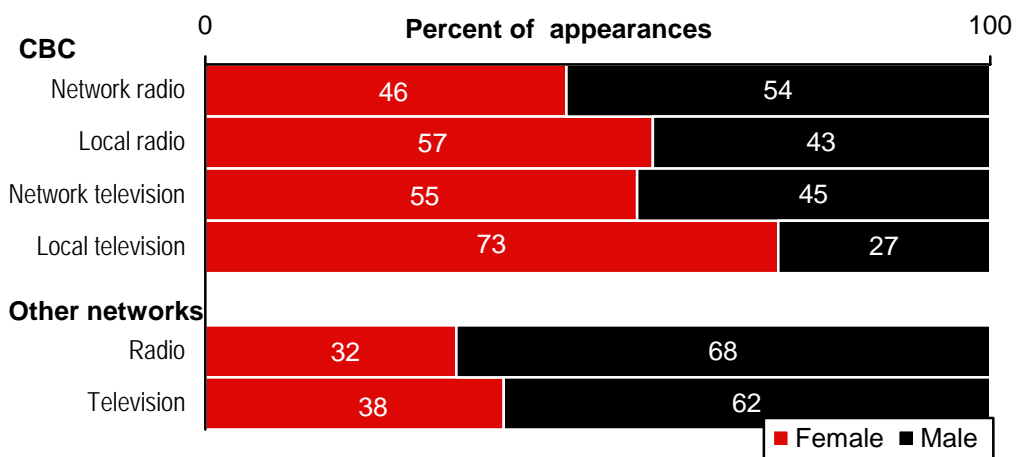
Gender of on-air staff

The CBC’s “Guidelines on Sex-Role Portrayal” call for a “realistic balance” in the presence of women and men in programming. In the past, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has allowed a split of up to 40:60 its standard.

Figure 1 shows the gender of anchors and hosts in several areas of CBC programming. The proportion of female anchors/hosts on CBC radio (network and local together) is 49% and on CBC television is 63%. Combining radio and television platforms, 57% of CBC news anchors/program hosts are female. On the competing networks, the overall proportion of female anchors and hosts is 35%.

Approximately one-half of the stories on radio and television have a reporter. On CBC, 47% of reporters are female and on the competing networks 35% are female.

Figure 1. Gender of anchors and program hosts: CBC and other news sources



Gender of people in the news

Analyses of CBC's The National have been done periodically since 1977. At that time, 7% of those who were interviewed as news subjects were women. The proportion rose steadily to 25% in 1992. In the current study, 28% of those interviewed were women. The CTV National News and Global National are each within 1% of this figure – the differences are not statistically significant.

Combining the three CBC news platforms, 26% of news subjects are women¹. Considering just Canadian news stories, the proportion of women increases slightly, to 29% for all CBC news (and 27% on the competing programs).

Since one-half of the Canadian population is female, then all things being equal, one might expect that 50% of the people who appear in the news should be female. However, a large proportion of the news, nearly one-seventh, is stories about crimes, police investigations and trials. Ninety percent of those accused or convicted are male, and this gives a male skew to the overall proportion of news subjects.

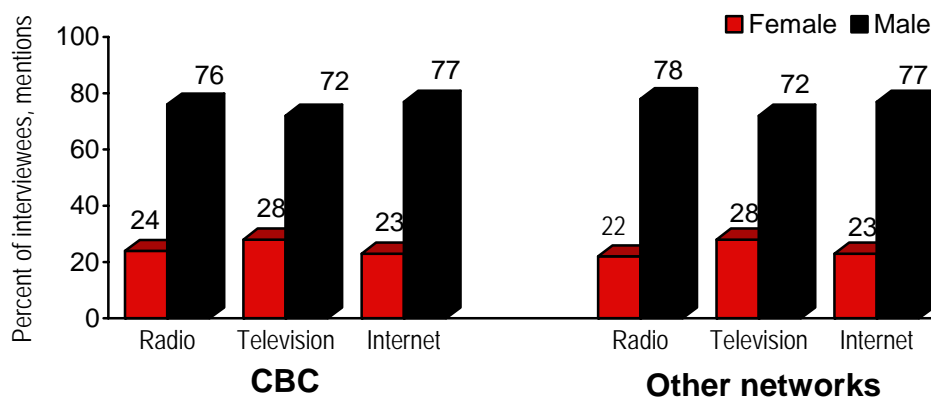
Likewise, most politicians are male, including the leaders of the four federal parties and all ten provincial premiers. Political news therefore features a large proportion of men: 83% in the results to date.

Analysts/experts is an important category of news subjects, and it has shown some growth, from around 15% female in the 1980s to 24% today.

In the business and professional sector, 23% of news subjects are female, and for individual citizens the figure is 44%.

Figure 2 shows the proportions of women and men who are either interviewed or mentioned in the news. Results are similar for CBC and the competing networks.

Figure 2. Gender of people in the news interviews and mentions: CBC and other sources



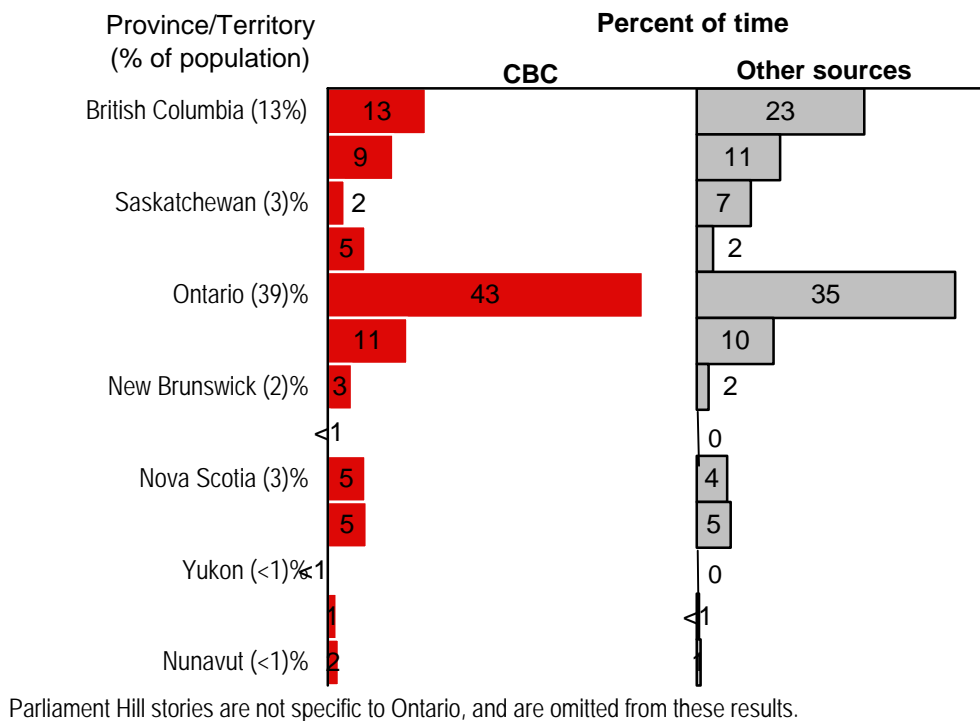
¹ The historical information on The National does not separate Canadian and foreign news. The current data does, and the overall numbers of women in Canadian news are slightly greater than in foreign news. The comparison of these two data sets is therefore not exact; the historical figures should be adjusted upward by approximately 2-3%.

Locations in Canadian news stories

The CBC's mandate is to represent all regions of the country. Local newscasts focus strongly on the region in which they are produced, so the relevant question concerns the level of regional representation in network newscasts. Put simply, is the proportion of Canadian news from each province/territory close to the population of that region? (Foreign coverage is omitted from this calculation.)

With one major exception, the proportion of news about each province/territory corresponds to the population of that region (Figure 3). Quebec goes against this rule, with 23% of the population but just 11% of CBC network news. (Competing English-language news sources are similar to CBC.) This is a long-standing pattern. Historically, CBC news has reflected the geography of English-speaking Canada, while Radio-Canada news has focused on Francophone Canada.

Figure 3. Canadian locations in network news on radio, television and Internet: CBC and the other sources (2010 Olympics are omitted)

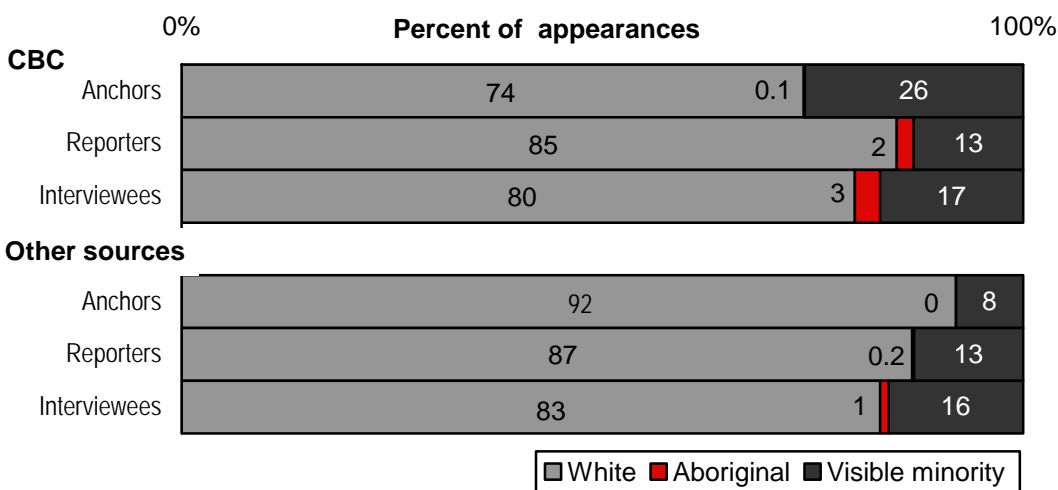


Note: For three weeks in February, the nation focused on the 2010 Olympics in BC. One-third of network news was about the Games. If coverage of the Games were added into Figure 3, the BC proportion would jump from the present 13% to 26%, and the proportion for each other province would decline slightly. Including the Olympics for the other sources increases the BC proportion from 23% to 34%.

Representation of visible minorities and Aboriginal people

Visible minorities constitute 17% of the population and Aboriginal people another 4%. The representation of these groups is only reported for television, as the race/ethnicity of most news subjects on radio and the Internet is often unknown.

Figure 4. Overall representation of visible minorities and Aboriginal people on television: CBC and the other sources



Areas without numeric yardsticks

In many areas population-based yardsticks are not relevant. The question of balance becomes more open to interpretation. Comparisons across platforms, or between the CBC and other news sources become the primary means of assessing balance.

Topics in the news

A radio or television newscast has a finite length. Deciding what stories are included and excluded is a central dimension of balance, and it relies on professional judgments about the importance of the story, and newsworthiness.

Crime and trials make up 11% of CBC network news and 21% of local/regional news. Foreign stories (dateline outside Canada) make up almost half of CBC network newscasts. Major events have large short-term impacts: in the five days following the Haiti earthquake, 60% of CBC news, both network and local, dealt with the event in some way. On the other hand, Africa and South America together account for just 3% of network news.

In general, the topics covered by CBC and competing sources show similar profiles. Differences in emphasis that occur across platforms and within certain major stories are discussed in the report.

Tone

The news is, to a large extent, about tensions and conflicts that exist in the world. People and groups in the news can be described in positive or negative terms, reflecting their role in these conflicts and their success or failure. In this study, tone is measured only for the intro and extro to each story. Each intro and extro is scored as having a positive, neutral or negative tone with respect to the person or group being described.

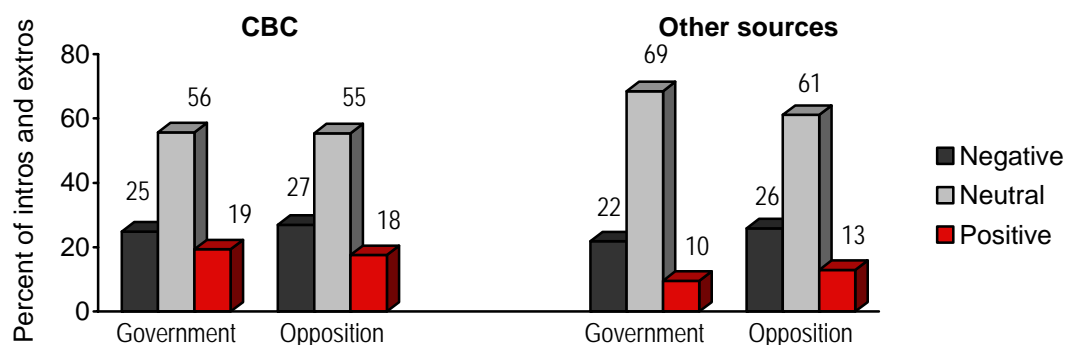
Overall, tone is similar on CBC and on the competing sources. Across all CBC programming, intros and extros are 19% negative and 15% positive. For the competing programs, the figures are 19% negative and 16% positive – not a statistically significant difference. The similarity extends to the level of individual programs. On The National, for example, intros and extros are 18% positive and 18% negative. The corresponding figures for the CTV National News are 17% positive and 17% negative, while Global’s National News comes in at 18% positive and 17% negative. These differences are not statistically significant. The close comparison among networks also holds up at the level of individual stories such as Haiti, Afghanistan and Swine flu.

“Why is the tone of political news so negative?”

It is a common observation that coverage of politics has a negative cast, and Figure 5 shows that this is true of federal politics. Further analysis shows that the negative coverage centres on a few highly charged topics. Three stories account for less than half the total coverage but two-thirds of the negative tone. These are the Afghanistan story, dominated by the detainee issue; climate change, where the government was criticized by groups both within Canada and abroad; and the Ottawa political process, including political maneuvering, opinions polls and by-elections. Tone in CBC coverage of these stories, was 33% negative and 10% positive.

The many other substantive topics in which federal politicians were involved generated a very different balance: 14% negative and 25% positive on CBC. These topics include H1N1, business and the economy, Haiti, justice issues, relations with other countries, and others.

Figure 5. Tone of intros and extros for federal government and opposition: CBC and other sources

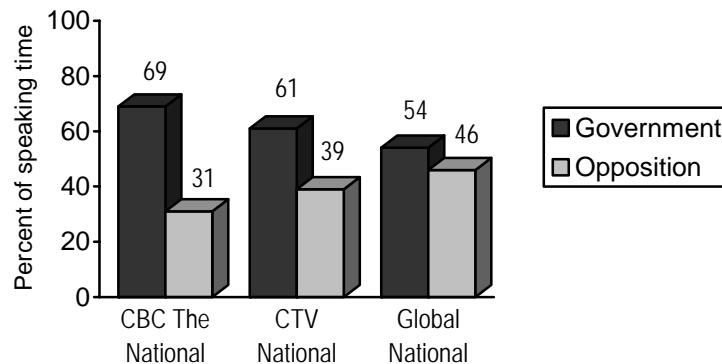


Interview time

Politicians value the opportunity to speak directly to citizens on the national airwaves, and the balance of time that government and opposition politicians receive is therefore a critical measure. The government side often gets the greater share of time as it drives the agenda, represents the country abroad and so on. Considering all CBC network news on radio and television, the Conservatives had 63% of the interview time and the opposition parties 37%.

Focusing on the flagship television newscasts, Figure 6, the Conservatives had 69% of federal interview time on *The National*, 61% on the *CTV National News*, and 54% on *Global National*.

Figure 6. Proportion of speaking time for members of the federal government and opposition: Three national television newscasts



Case studies

The report also discusses how CBC and other news sources approach major stories such as the H1N1 flu, the Haiti earthquake, and climate change through case studies of these topics.

1 Introduction

Background

The concepts of fairness and balance have a long history within the CBC and for the Canadian broadcasting industry at large.

For this project the terms “fairness and balance” arise in the CBC’s *Journalistic Standards and Practices* (JSP). In the JSP, the terms are stated as general principles².

In order to measure whether news really *is* fair and balanced, specific criteria must be defined. A content analysis begins this process by providing quantitative information on specific dimensions of balance. Once the research is done, it becomes a matter of judgment whether the results indicate balance or a lack thereof. The present content analysis contributes significantly to this discussion, but the final assessment rests with those who study the results.

The CBC has conducted periodic research on fairness and balance in its news and other programming over a period of more than 30 years. Much of this work has been proactive – initiated by CBC in order to understand its representation of Canadian society and so to better fulfill its mandate. On several occasions, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) has required CBC to conduct such research.

The current project carries this agenda forward, with a comprehensive analysis of news programming by ERIN Research Inc.

CBC's mandate

The Broadcasting Act (S.C. 1991, c. 11) establishes the characteristics of the Canadian broadcasting system.

The Act also sets distinctive programming objectives for CBC/Radio-Canada. The Act states that the programming provided by the Corporation should:

- (i) be predominantly and distinctively Canadian,
- (ii) reflect Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences, while serving the special needs of those regions,
- (iii) actively contribute to the flow and exchange of cultural expression,
- (iv) be in English and in French, reflecting the different needs and circumstances of each official language community, including the particular needs and circumstances of English and French linguistic minorities,
- (v) strive to be of equivalent quality in English and in French,

² <http://cbc.radio-canada.ca/accountability/journalistic/index.shtml>

(vi) contribute to shared national consciousness and identity,

(vii) be made available throughout Canada by the most appropriate and efficient means and as resources become available for the purpose, and

(viii) reflect the multicultural and multiracial nature of Canada.

Objectives of study

CBC's overarching objective is to evaluate its English News services for its fairness and balance in portraying the diversity of views in Canada's collective, social, economic and political life.

CBC is committed to assessing and fine-tuning its news coverage in order to build on its track record of transparency, impartiality and accountability in the practice of journalism.

Fairness and balance are general principles. The aim of this project is to add an objective, quantitative dimension to these concepts.

The measures derived from the ERIN Research Inc. study will enable CBC News staff and management to understand their current position, and to make adjustments if needed.

In addition this research will equip CBC Management with practical tools to monitor news coverage on a continuing basis.

2 Method

Overview of Method

The analysis samples news programming beginning October 26, 2009 and ending May 2, 2010. A two-week period from December 21, 2009 to January 3, 2010 was excluded, giving 25 weeks of analyzed news content in all.

The database encompasses three platforms: radio, television and Internet. It includes both network and local newscasts on CBC Radio 1, CBC Television, the CBC News Network and CBC.ca. For comparative purposes, material is also sampled from the CTV National News, Global National News, five private all-news radio stations, theglobeandmail.com and canada.com. The total amount of material analyzed, on a weekly basis, is:

- **275** minutes of radio news;
- **450** minutes of television news; and
- **100** Internet news stories (the textual equivalent of approximately 275 minutes of broadcast content).

The sample draws on material from all parts of the country and from each day of the week. All material was recorded and analyzed by experienced researchers using well-defined procedures.

The method is described in detail in Appendix A.

Measurement of fairness and balance

The purpose of this research is to create a quantitative record of the issues and individuals that appear in the news and to formulate questions that are relevant to the assessment of balance. This report describes how CBC and others sources present the news and outlines alternative perspectives on fairness and balance. Often, there are competing positions on how news might be presented. But balance is ultimately a matter of judgment and different observers may legitimately disagree. It is not within the mandate of ERIN Research Inc. to make a final determination.

The analysis is divided into two parts:

- **Part I: The Overall Picture:** Chapters 4 to 8 consider news coverage as a whole; and
- **Part II: Three Case studies:** Chapters 9 to 11 present case studies of three stories that were prominent over the period of study: the H1N1 Flu, Climate Change, and the Haiti Earthquake.

Both parts of the study describe news content that bears on the subject of balance in the news.

Criteria for determining fairness and balance

In some areas, there are few quantitative standards by which balance can be assessed. For example, 50:50 is a “natural” balance point to apply to the gender of on-air staff or interviewees. Absolute numerical yardsticks are less clear for other questions of news content: is there an appropriate balance among politics, crime stories and science reporting, or between Canadian and foreign stories? These are clearly matters of judgment; moreover the appropriate balance will shift from day to day and month to month with events in the world.

Comparative yardsticks can be found in some areas. CBC coverage can be compared at a fine level of detail to other Canadian networks, since all involved are dealing with the same universe of national and global events. This research considers network newscasts on CTV and Global, as well as Internet news from canada.com, theglobeandmail.com, and several all- or mainly-news radio stations.

CBC coverage can also be compared to US coverage on stories that cross national boundaries. The war in Afghanistan, climate change, and the Haiti earthquake are examples. The Pew Research Centre’s Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ) compiles two indices of news content in the US media, the News Coverage Index of mainstream news sources and the New Media Index of the blogosphere and social media (see www.journalism.org). This information is used where appropriate.

These yardsticks, whether absolute or comparative, provide a context for examining balance in CBC coverage. They do not, however, eliminate the need for informed judgment. Balance cannot be reduced to any mathematical formula.

Panel of Advisors

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3 Key events over study period

Milestone events in study period

This project takes in a number of important events in Canada and abroad. These include:

- H1N1 flu epidemic;
- Afghanistan: e.g., detainee issue, US troop build-up;
- Copenhagen Climate Conference;
- Prorogation of Canadian Parliament;
- Christmas Day airline Bomber, Detroit;
- Haiti earthquake;
- 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games;
- Sovereign debt crisis, centred in Greece;
- Volcanic ash cloud from Iceland; and
- Deepwater Horizon oil spill in Gulf of Mexico.

Each is a major event or series of events that invites coverage from various perspectives.

Figure 7 shows the time line of major events during the study period. It identifies the top story across all CBC platforms combined, for stories that reached 10% of the total news volume for the week. The Haiti earthquake was the most dominant event by a good margin, commanding 60% of all CBC news in the days following the January 12 quake. By contrast, in March and early April, no single story reached the 10% level.

Table 1, following, lists the top stories in each week of the study.

Figure 7. Major events: CBC news

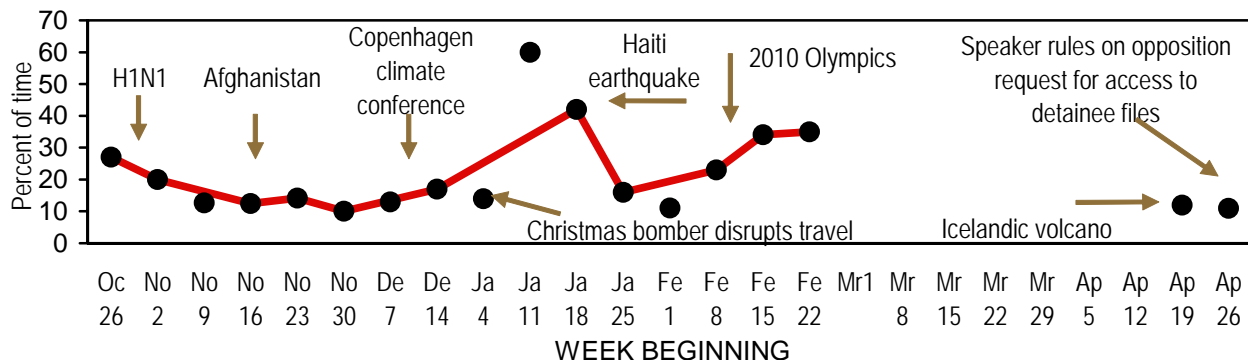


Table 1. Summary of major stories

Week

October 2009

- 1** Oct 26–Nov 1 Anxiety over swine flu and the availability of vaccine
Young hockey player dies from H1N1

November 2009

- 2** Nov 2–8 Number of swine flu cases increases
Clinics offer vaccine to priority patients only
Army doctor goes on shooting spree at Fort Hood Texas
UN headquarters in Kabul attacked
- 3** Nov 9–15 APEC summit in Singapore: Climate change is the main issue
20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall
Prince Charles and Camilla visit Canada
- 4** Nov 16–22 Swine flu clinics are now open to all
Harper visits India
Karzai begins second term, promising to end corruption
Richard Colvin testifies to Commons committee: Who knew what?
“Climategate”: Emails leaked from University of East Anglia
Flooding from heavy rains in southern BC
- 5** Nov 23–29 Reports that Colvin's warnings reached Minister's office
CRTC approves Al Jazeera application
UN’s Ban Ki-moon calls for Canada to be more serious about greenhouse gas emissions
Tiger Woods’s accident: Things begin to unravel

December 2009

- 6** Nov 30–Dec 6 US Afghan buildup announced
Harper visits China; Premier Wen Jiabao wonders why it took him so long
Climategate reported on The National, World at Six
- 7** Dec 7–13 Natynczyk learns of earlier evidence of torture
Copenhagen climate change conference begins Dec 7
Demand for flu shots drops
- 8** Dec 14–20 Copenhagen climate change conference ends Dec 18
Colvin releases 16 page rebuttal of charges made by the government
Rumours circulate that Tories may prorogue Parliament

- * Dec 21–27 Afghan detainees remain a major topic
Christmas suicide bomber is arrested in Detroit (Dec 25)
(Analysis not conducted on this week's news)
- * Dec 28–Jan 3 Harper prorogues Parliament, Dec 30
Travel chaos as new airline security procedures are implemented
(Analysis not conducted on this week's news)

January 2010

- 9 Jan 4–10 Full body scanners will be used in Canadian airports
Yemen is singled out as the new terrorist hot spot
Wiebo Ludwig questioned re: BC pipeline bombings, then released
- 10 Jan 11–17 Earthquake in Haiti (Tuesday, Jan 12)
Tories slip in polls, in a statistical tie with Liberals (Strategic Counsel)
Budget watchdog Kevin Page counters Flaherty's optimistic vision of recovery
- 11 Jan 18–24 Major upset in Massachusetts: Republican Scott Brown wins seat formerly held by late Sen. Ted Kennedy
Telethons in both the US and Canada are held to raise money for Haitian relief effort
Feud between Google and China: Google says it will pull out of China unless it can operate without restrictions
- 12 Jan 25–31 Haiti: They came from around the world (to Montreal Conference) with one common goal; how to move beyond the rubble in Haiti
Bad news tonight for Toyota: They are suspending the manufacture of several models in both the US and Canada
France made a controversial move towards banning veils worn by Muslim women

February 2010

- 13 Feb 1–7 Toyota finally announces its plan to repair faulty gas pedals: A fix for the cars but not the company
Danny Williams will have heart surgery in the US
Lack of winter weather in BC means Olympic organizers plan to keep on trucking in snow
- 14 Feb 8–14 Col. Williams faces first degree murder charges: Shock and disbelief in Tweed
US officials are reviewing another potential safety issue on the Toyota Corolla
Adam Giambone drops out of the Toronto mayoralty race after a sex scandal
The first full day of Olympic competition begins with delays on the slopes and protest in the streets
- 15 Feb 15–21 There are organizational problems in Vancouver, as well as problems with the weather
Tiger Woods makes either a full public apology or a finely crafted, fully controlled, media statement
This rescue off the coast of Brazil was not the first dangerous incident for the tall ship *SV Concordia*

- 16** Feb 22–28 Update on status of Canadians in Haiti at time of the earthquake: 50 missing
Earl Jones appears to show remorse in a video released: His clients lost \$50 million
Karzai takes control of the election complaints commission, alarming the Canadian government
For the second time this month a massive strike has virtually cut Greece off from the rest of the world

March 2010

- 17** Mar 1–7 The earthquake that hit Chile is much stronger than the one that devastated Haiti
Radovan Karadzic begins his defence against charges of genocide
Toyota's sales are dipping: Congress finds the problems existed for a long time
Federal budget: The government offers a cautious, stay-the-course budget that should not provoke the opposition
- 18** Mar 8–14 Michaëlle Jean makes an emotional visit to Jacmel, Haiti
Still many questions about what a judge called Rahim Jaffer's "lucky break"
Greece: The economy is in crisis; tens of thousands of protesters take to the streets
What is Iacobucci to do with reams of documents dealing with Afghan detainees?
- 19** Mar 15–21 In Ottawa, top executives from Toyota Canada answer to a parliamentary committee
Opposition members join forces to limit PM's ability to prorogue Parliament
A date with parity? The Canadian dollar rises above \$0.99 US
Pope Benedict signs a letter that promises to punish priests who abuse children
- 20** Mar 22–28 The Liberals want abortion and contraception included in the government's initiative to help the world's poorest women
Obama signs a landmark bill bringing near universal health care coverage to Americans
France and Germany strike a deal to help Greece tackle its debt crisis; the Euro falls to new lows
A growing sexual abuse scandal is wearing on the pope: The Vatican denies a cover-up

April 2010

- 21** Mar 29–Apr 4 Suicide bombers strike once again at the heart of Moscow's subway system
Can the Speaker's decision on the Afghan detainee documents trigger a spring election?
Suggestions that Helena Guergis should resign over letter writing scandal
- 22** Apr 5–11 Tiger Woods made news today simply by showing up at the Masters
Karzai has threatened to join the Taliban if the west doesn't stop pressuring him
A memo has been released in which a Toyota executive urges colleagues to come clean on problems with the accelerator pedal
Stephen Harper calls in the Mounties on one of his own cabinet ministers, Helena Guergis
An increasingly violent stalemate in Thailand shows no signs of letting up

- 23** Apr 12–18 More alarming documents are released on the Afghan prisoner file
Questions swirled in the House of Commons as to why Helena Guergis is being investigated
Jean Charest denies allegations by an old friend and colleague, Marc Bellemare, that Liberals accepted illegal contributions
Eyjafjallajökull volcano in Iceland erupts, halting air traffic
Strong Canadian dollar means many Canadians are buying American online
- 24** Apr 19–25 A new ash cloud threatens Europe, just as officials had begun easing restrictions
New details about Jaffer and Guergis: RCMP to interview private detective
Goldman Sachs announces staggering profits, all while under investigation for fraud
GM announces that it has paid back all of its loans from the Canadian government, but the government still owns \$8 billion in stock
It was one of the worst days for riots in Thailand today, but the government said it would not launch an offensive
A drilling platform that blew up in the gulf of Mexico has sunk: 11 workers are missing (Apr 22)

May 2010

- 25** Apr 26–May 2 Harper affirms that abortion will not be part of Canada's international maternal health strategy
The Speaker rules that the Conservatives must release documents on detainees to Parliament
Businessman Nazim Gillani says he did have a contract with Jaffer to work together
Gordon Brown ignores the cardinal rule of politics: Before you speak, check for microphones
Bangkok: tensions between anti-government Red Shirts and police reach the boiling point
Greece accepts bail-out terms
US officials are predicting the very worst from the Gulf oil spill



CBCnews

PART I:

THE OVERALL PICTURE

Chapters 4 to 8 describe large aggregates of news stories. They contrast CBC and competing sources, presentation on different platforms, the relative prominence of people in government, business, citizens and other roles, domestic and foreign news, and other dimensions of interest.

These chapters also introduce the measures employed in the research.

In Part II, Chapters 9 to 11 each isolates one of the major stories that played out over the study period.

4 Issues in the news

This chapter presents an overview of issues in the news. Issues are defined in three ways, which are, moving from the detailed to the general:

1. **Topics:** All stories fall within 30 defined topics such as business, the economy, crime, political coverage, and health/medicine.
2. **Major stories:** Afghanistan, climate change, and the Haiti earthquake are examples of major stories. Major stories generally include several topics. Climate change, for example, has stories on the environment, politics, economics and other topics.
3. **Politics and government:** This is the broadest perspective. Politics and government can enter into all of the major stories and all of the individual topic areas. Some sections of this report examine stories that focus on municipal, provincial/territorial, federal and foreign governments. Approximately one-third of stories fall under this umbrella.

Figure 8 combines the first two perspectives. It shows the time devoted to six major stories (marked **) and the remaining time for individual topic areas. Thus, the Haiti major story includes items from the disaster topic, the health/medicine topic and so on. The bar for disaster coverage represents disasters *outside of* Haiti and the other major stories (it includes, for example, flooding in BC in November 2009). Likewise, the entry for politics excludes the significant political element in coverage of Afghanistan, H1N1, climate change, and the other major stories.

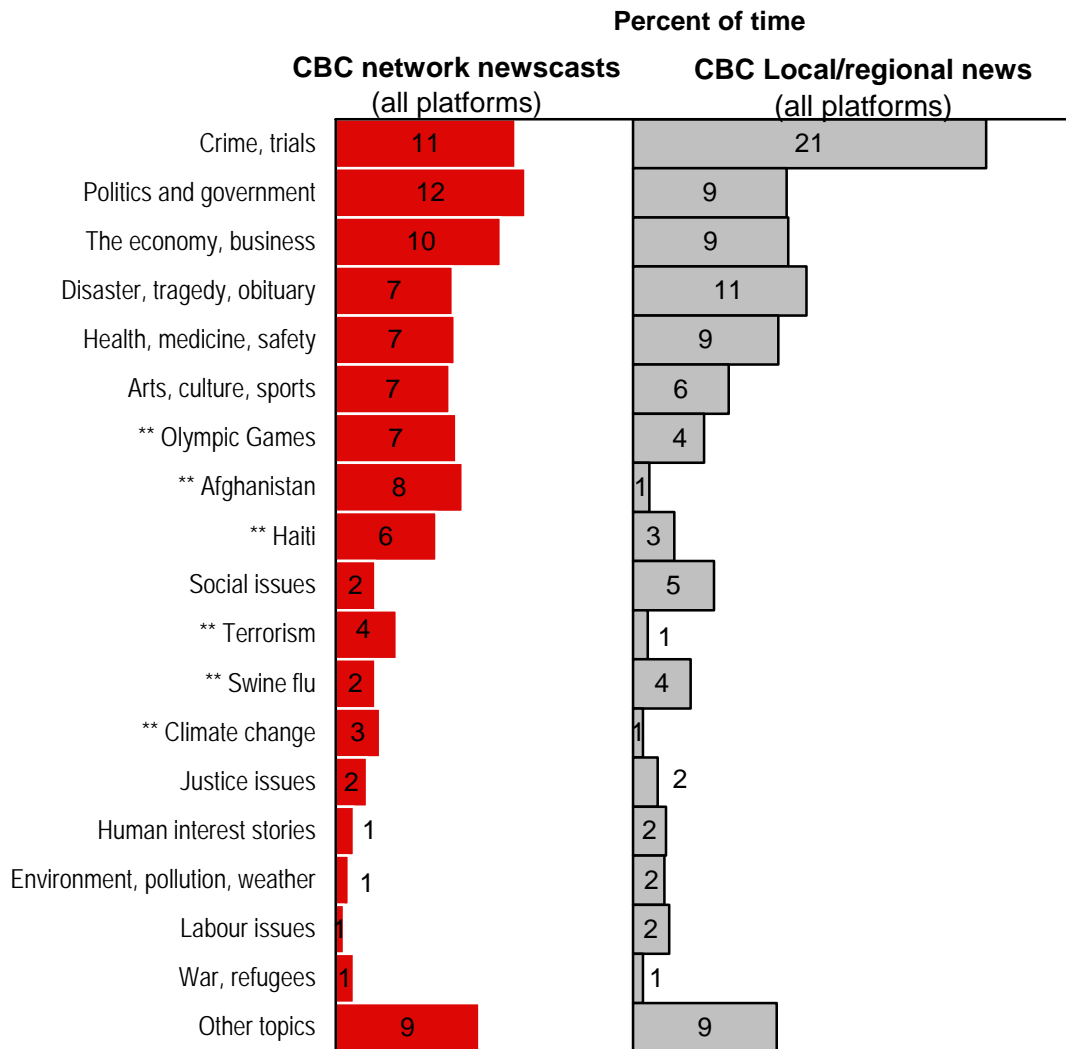
Figure 8 is a snapshot of the entire study period, and the starting point for a number of follow-up investigations. These are:

- Assessing similarities and differences by platform, between local and network news and between CBC and other providers.
- Balance among topics: for example, is the current emphasis on crime appropriate?
- Changes over time: results from past decades give a broader context.

Figure 8 also raises the interesting question of what might be missing. The comparison of CBC and other providers begins to answer this. The Pew Research Centre's Project for Excellence in Journalism (PEJ) compiles two indices of news content in the US media, the News Coverage Index of mainstream news sources and the New Media Index of the blogosphere and social media³. These provide useful points of comparison, particularly on international stories.

³ www.journalism.org

Figure 8. Prominence of issues in CBC network and local/regional newscasts



** Major stories that extend over several topic areas

For CBC.ca, the landing page and main news page are the sources of network news; the Canada page is local.

Measuring story length

Figure 8 and others following describe the amount of time given to different types of stories. For radio and television, duration in minutes and seconds is recorded from the beginning of the anchor's intro to the end of the wrap-up. Only full stories are analyzed – headlines and recaps are omitted.

For the Internet, a proxy for time is calculated on the basis that 150 words equates to one minute of broadcast. This enables combining results for the three platforms. The figure is based on counting the number of words in a sampling of CBC radio and television news reports. (Please see Section 4, Appendix A.)

Competing national television newscasts

The eight broad topics shown in Figure 9 account for a large majority of coverage on each newscast – 72% on The National, 67% on the CTV National News and 64% on Global National. CTV, the host broadcaster of the Olympics, gave considerably more coverage to the Games than the other two newscasts. The National placed greater emphasis on the political process and on the Afghanistan story. “Politics and government” includes all levels of Canadian government as well as political events in other countries. Figure 10 shows how the larger stories have played out over time.

Figure 9. Major topics on the three national television newscasts: The National, CTV National News and Global National

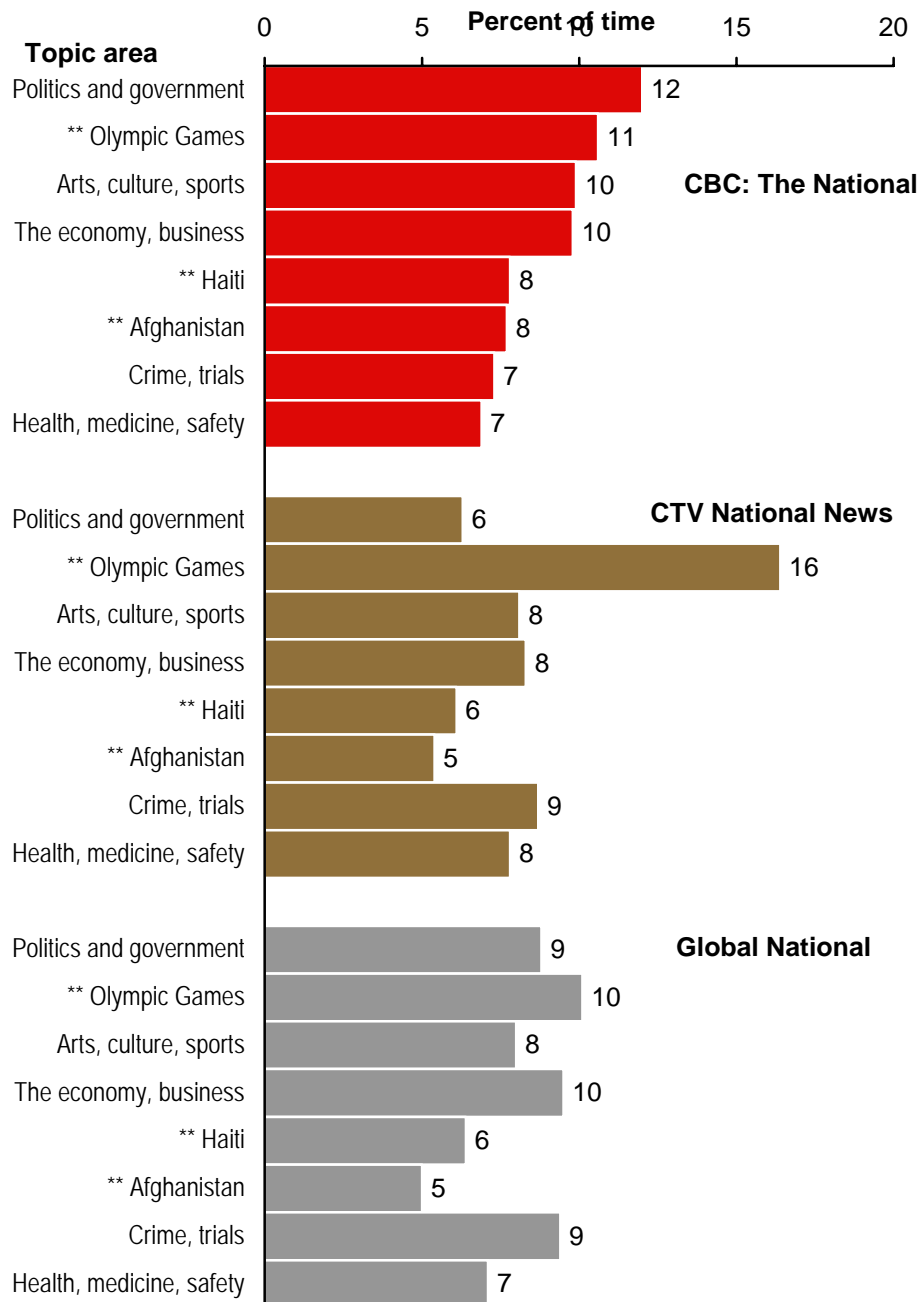
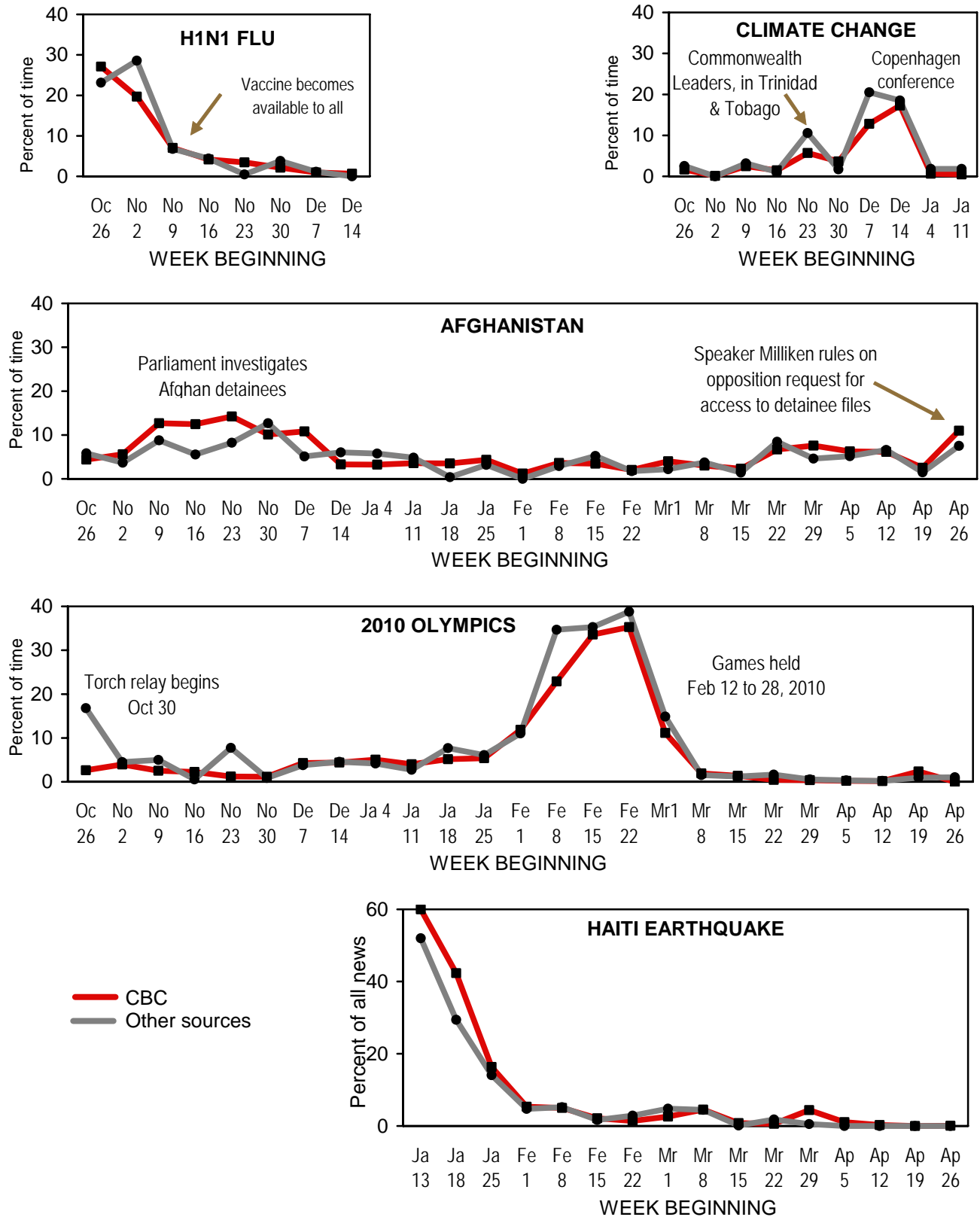


Figure 10. The course of selected stories over time: CBC and other sources



Issues by platform

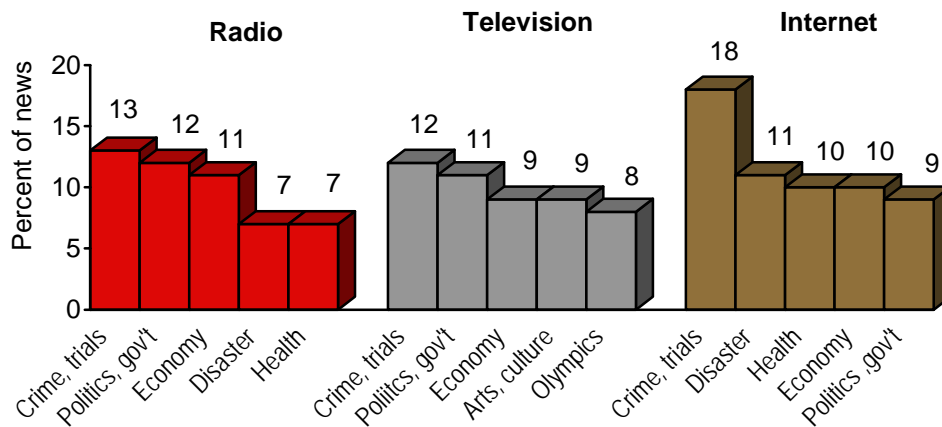
Figure 11 shows the top five topics on each platform, for CBC and the competition. Each of these sources has a different emphasis, but many of the same topics recur. Crime/trials and the economy appear in each of the six panels in Figure 11; politics and government appears in five of the six.

On CBC, the five top issues account for 58% of all Internet coverage compared to 49% of radio coverage and 49% of television coverage (measured by time for radio and television and word count for the Internet).

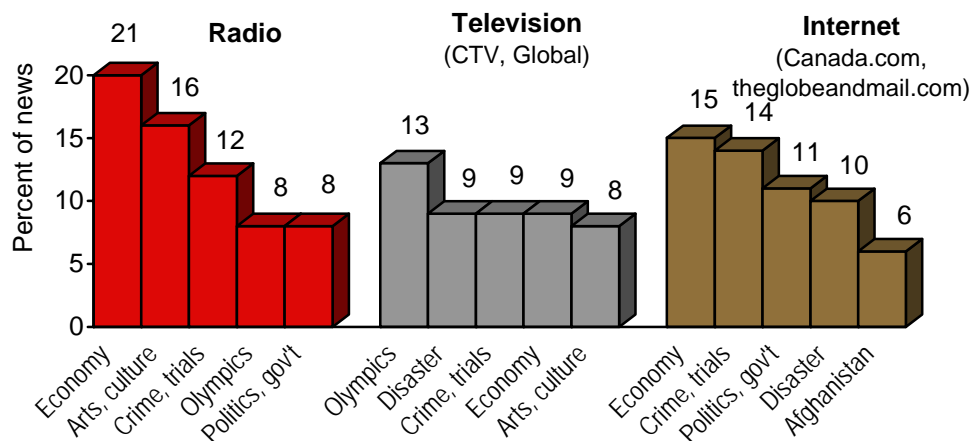
CTV's interest in the Olympics (as host broadcaster) is again apparent in the lower panels for television.

Figure 11. Top issues by platform: CBC and other sources

a) CBC



b) Other sources



Scope and location

Scope and location are related variables. Scope is the story's geo-political range and location is the dateline – where the story takes place. By way of example, the Parliamentary Committee inquiring into abuse of Afghan detainees was located in Ottawa, but the scope of the story extends to Afghanistan, Europe and the US. The story therefore falls into the category of international stories with Canadian involvement.

Scope is determined by how the story is presented. For example an H1N1 flu story can be local (vaccination line-ups in Victoria) or national (Canada's Chief Medical Officer comments on vaccine roll-out) or foreign (an announcement by the World Health Organization).

Figure 12 shows the scope of CBC network news programs on all platforms, measured by length of story:

- Internal Canadian stories make up 38% of the total;
- Stories involving Canada and other countries account for 38%; and
- Foreign news with no specific Canadian involvement is 24%.

The competing networks (combining television and Internet) have a slightly greater local focus: Internal Canadian news makes up 45%, Canada-International stories are 34% and foreign are 22% (Figure 13).

Local CBC news programs are not represented in the chart. As might be expected, local programming sticks more closely to home: 70% of local programming consists of local Canadian stories and less than 5% is foreign news.

The biggest stories in the Canada-International group are the Afghan war, UN climate change conferences in Singapore (Nov '09) and Copenhagen (Dec '09), the Winter Olympics (Feb '10), and the Haiti disaster (Jan '10).

Figure 12. Scope: CBC network sources (combined radio, television, and Internet)

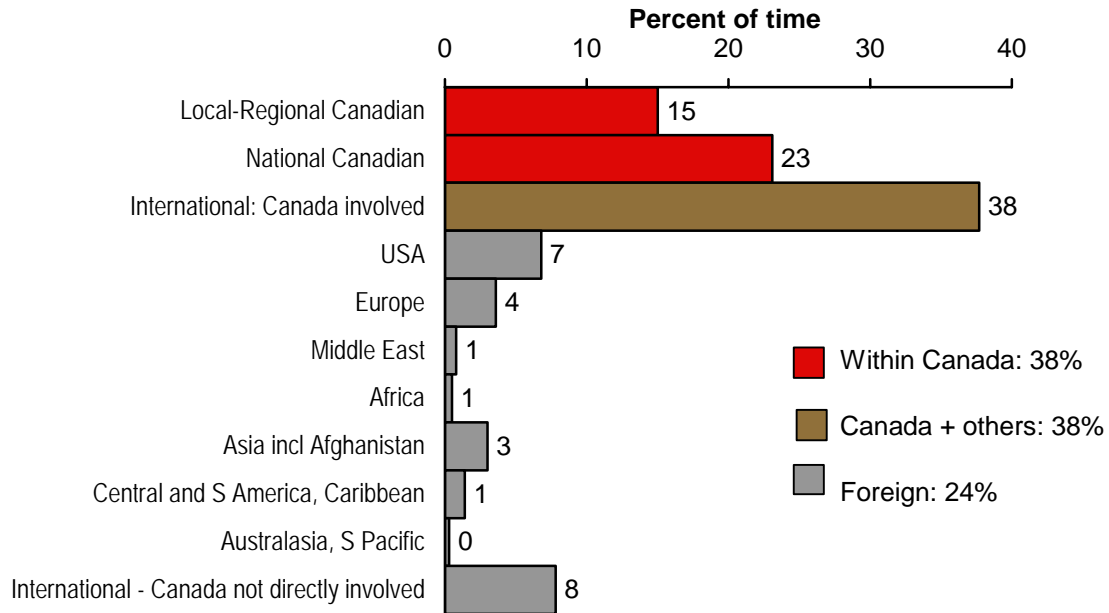
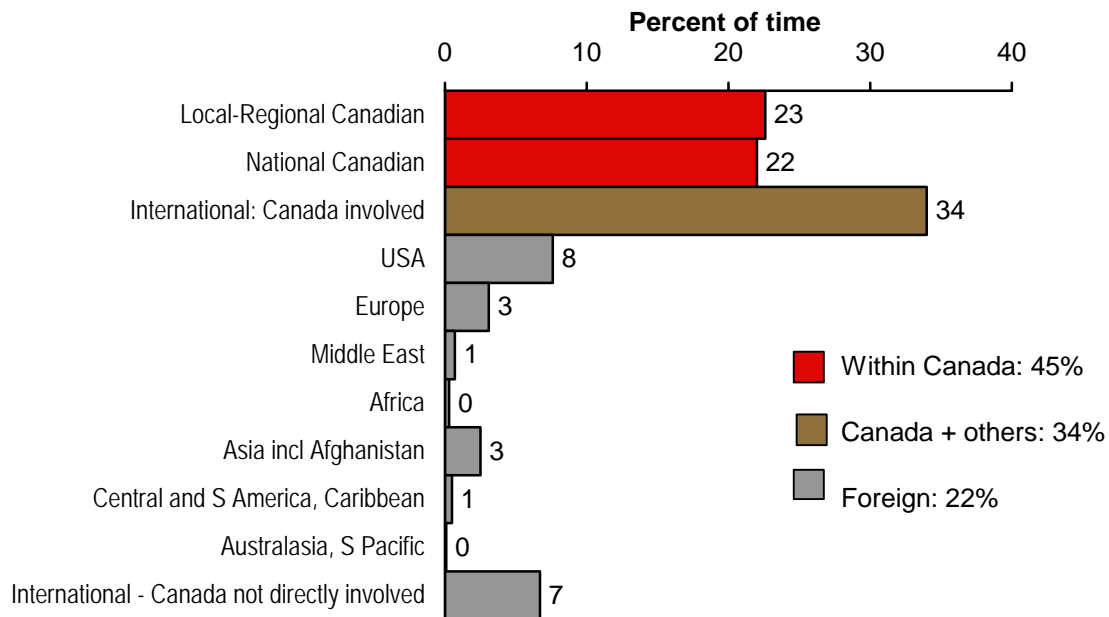


Figure 13. Scope: Other sources (combined television and Internet)



Note: Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

Location

There is a distinctly international emphasis to the geopolitical scope of CBC network news. (As Figure 12 shows, 62% of the time goes to international and foreign stories). However, looking at the location of the story gives a different perspective. A good portion of the “International – Canada involved” stories (brown bars in Figure 12 and Figure 13) are set in Canada. Some illustrations:

- Nearly half of the Afghan stories were located in Canada, for example at the Parliamentary Committee hearings, or covering the return of Canadian casualties.
- One-quarter of the Haiti coverage was from Canada, focusing on the response of Canadian governments and NGOs, aid efforts within Canada, and Canadians with family or friends in Haiti.

As a result, 53% of CBC network news is set in Canada (Figure 14).

Figure 14. Primary location of story: CBC network news (combined radio, television, and Internet)

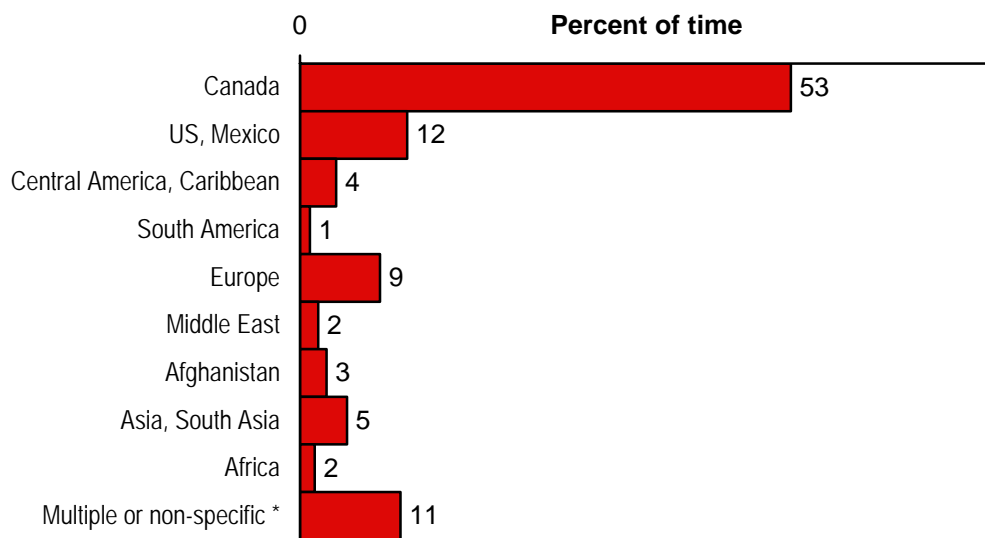
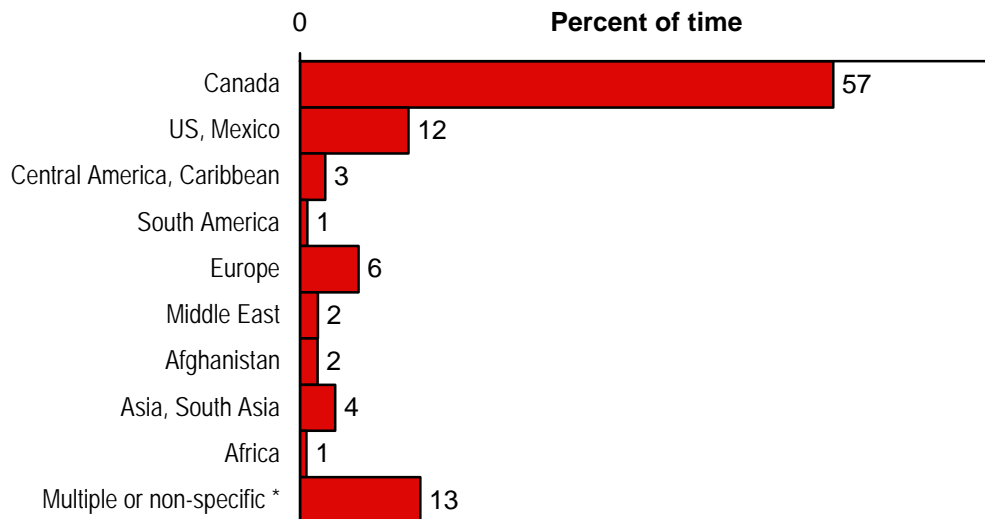


Figure 15. Primary location of story: Other sources (combined television and Internet)



* Locations categorized as "Multiple or non-specific" include stock market reports, events on the high seas or in space, certain science reports, e.g., "Geneticists say grandmas do play favorites", certain sports stories, e.g., "Formula One losing Toyota team", etc.

Canadian and foreign news

Globe and Mail columnist Rick Salutin commented on The National's foreign coverage on February 26, 2010 charging, “World stories zip by ‘in 80 seconds’. I find myself turning, amazed, to CTV for serious reporting”.

“World stories” are taken here to mean all stories located outside Canada, regardless of whether or not Canada is involved. Prime Minister Harper’s visit to China and the war in Afghanistan are included in this group.

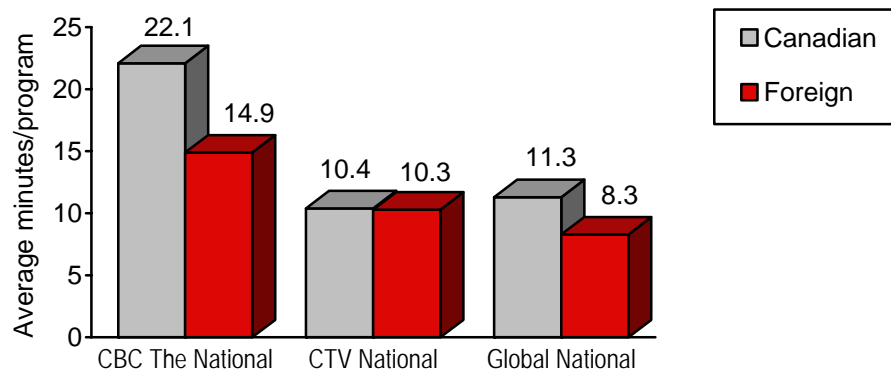
Salutin seems to feel a) that there is too little foreign news on CBC and b) that there is not enough depth of coverage. Does he have a case?

The following breakdowns show that, compared to the CTV and Global programs, The National has:

- More foreign news per program (partly because The National is a longer program);
- A faster pace: more short (30 second) items;
- A wider range of locations: in particular, less US news and more from other regions;
- More analysis;
- More interview time with people in foreign stories.

Figure 16 shows the average amount of foreign news per program on The National (a 55 minute program) and the two competing national newscasts (each 30 minutes). With 14.9 minutes of foreign news per program, The National has the most foreign news: 44% more than CTV and 80% more than Global. Because The National is a longer program, the proportion of foreign news relative to other news is smaller than on the competing programs. Foreign news accounts for 40% of The National, 50% of the CTV National News and 42% of Global National.

Figure 16. Canadian and foreign news ~ total amount per program: Three national television newscasts



Pacing of foreign news

The programs each use a mix of:

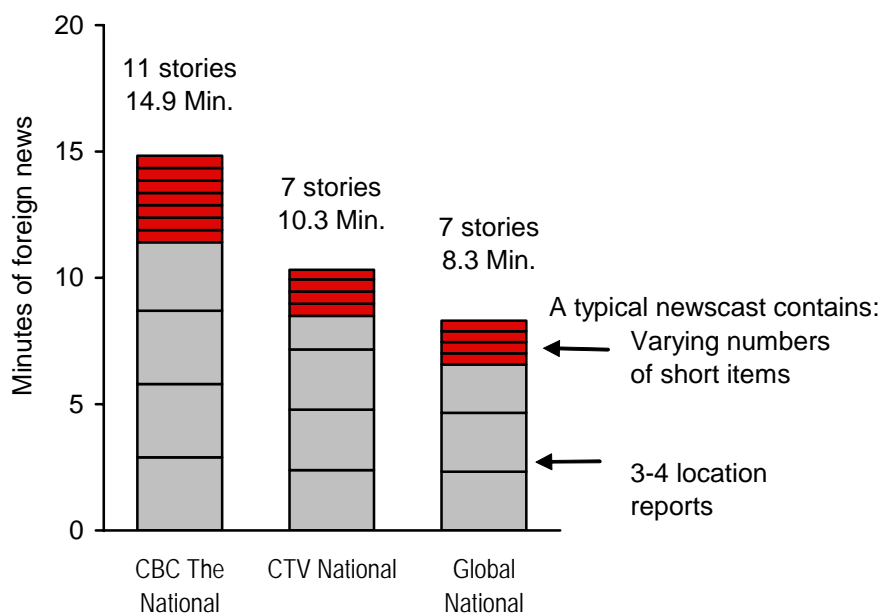
- Desk stories, read by the anchor, which average about 30 seconds in length;
- Location reports, which average about 2.5 minutes in length (the average length ranges from 2 minutes 20 seconds on Global to 2 minutes 54 seconds on CBC).

A typical edition of each newscast (Figure 17) contains three or four of the longer reports (the figures are 3.9 for CBC, 3.6 for CTV and 2.8 for Global), while the number of short reports varies considerably across programs:

- 7.3 for CBC;
- 3.8 for CTV; and
- 3.9 for Global.

The larger number of desk stories on The National, and the fact that they are often presented in quick succession, may explain the observation that foreign news appears to “zip by”.

Figure 17. Foreign news stories in a typical program: Three national television newscasts



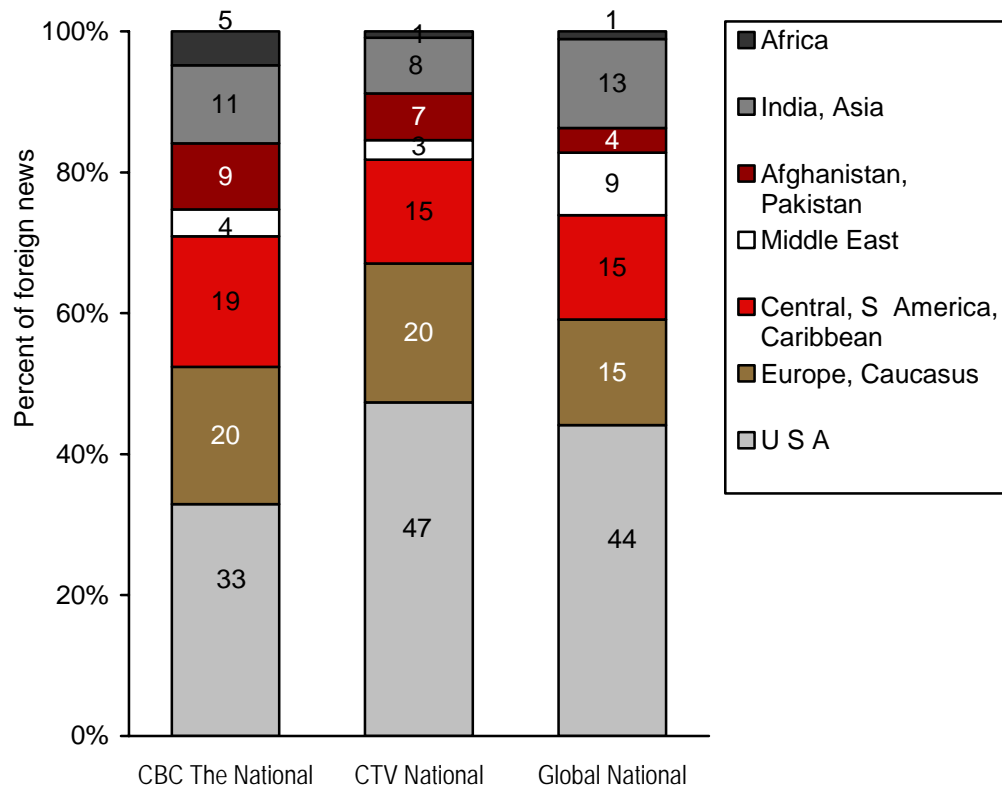
Locations and topics within foreign news

The great majority of foreign news is produced by the networks themselves. Other news agencies and networks were credited with 3% of foreign news stories on CBC, 7% on CTV and 5% on Global. (These numbers apply to location reports: for desk stories, the frequency of credits to other news agencies is even lower.)

The most striking difference between The National and the other programs is the proportion of US news. One-third of CBC’s foreign coverage is from the US compared to nearly half that of the competing programs (Figure 18).

As a result, CBC tends to have a larger proportion of coverage from other parts of the world.

Figure 18. Location of foreign news stories: Three national television newscasts



About 30% of stories either have no specific location or multiple locations where none predominates. Examples include “Remembrance Day around the world” and certain stories in science and medicine. These are omitted from this chart.

People interviewed in foreign news

Figure 19 shows the range of people who appear in foreign news. Results are given as the average number of seconds per program. While The National provides more interview time in each category, it differs from the other programs in two major respects:

- It provides approximately twice as much exposure to representatives of foreign governments;
- It provides much more input from analysts and experts.

The programs make quite different use of interviewees (Table 2). The number of people who appear in foreign news on each program is similar (ranging from 11 to 15 per program). The National gives each interviewee close to twice as much time as the other programs, resulting in considerably more overall exposure of interviewees.

Figure 19. Range of people interviewed in foreign news, on a per-program basis

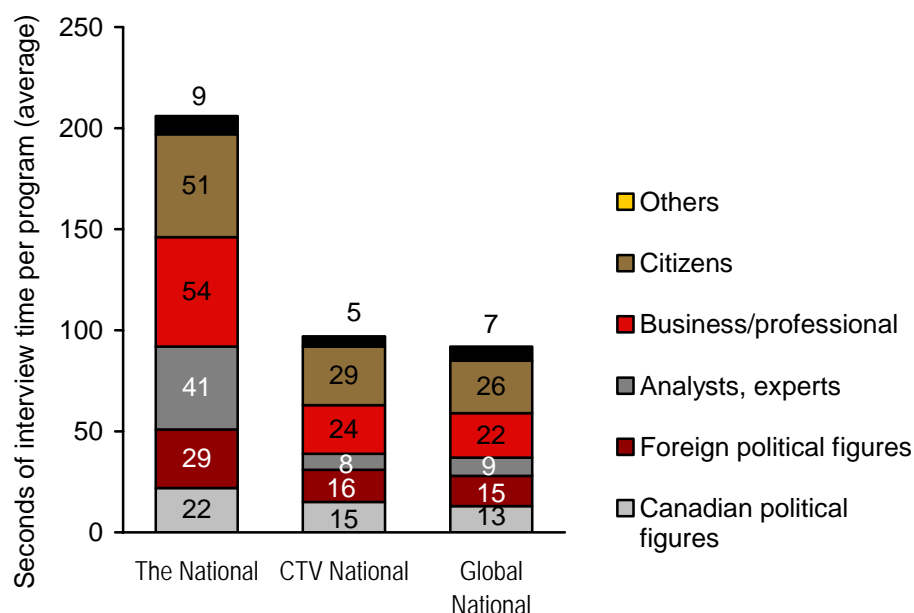


Table 2. Statistics on foreign news interviews, on a per-program basis

Measure	CBC The National	CTV National	Global National
Total interview time (minutes)	3.4	1.6	1.5
Number of people interviewed	14.5	14.7	11.4
Average speaking time per interviewee (seconds)	14.1	6.6	8.1

5 People in the news

Each person mentioned or interviewed is recorded in the database, along with variables describing their role in the story, amount of interview time, and other characteristics. People pop up at the rate of about 1.5 per minute on CBC radio and television, and every 120 words on the Internet.

The majority of the people in radio and television news, about 60%, are heard speaking in interviews, while 40% are mentioned but not heard.

In Internet reports, the trend reverses: about 40% of those named are quoted directly (in quotation marks) while 60% are described or paraphrased, but not quoted directly.

Persons interviewed on radio or television are timed while they are speaking. Only that time when the person can be heard and understood is included (The rare instances where a person speaks through a translator are included.) Time when the person is seen but not heard is not counted.

In all, the 25 weeks of news includes 38,000 individual appearances. Most people appear in one or a few stories, while others are familiar names. A few examples of more frequent mentions/interviews across the three platforms are:

- Stephen Harper (716 instances or 2% of the total);
- Former US President Clinton, active in Haiti relief efforts (119 instances); and
- Alexandre Bilodeau, winner of Canada's first gold medal of 2010 (23 instances).

The big picture

Figure 20 combines all interviewees on radio and television into five broad groups. The largest group (on the basis of interview time) is representatives of governments (including opposition parties). This category includes all levels of Canadian government plus foreign governments. Politicians are the main component, but civil servants and employees of government institutions such as the army and police are also represented. Government interviews account for more than one-third of all interview time.

The political process guarantees that political figures will always play a strong role in news, but in addition to politics-as-usual, the past months have featured a number of major events in which governments played a lead role: the war in Afghanistan, H1N1, the climate change agenda leading up to Copenhagen, and disaster relief in Haiti.

The business and professional sectors cover individuals who represent business, labour, education, health facilities and scientific enterprises. They account for about one-quarter of interview time.

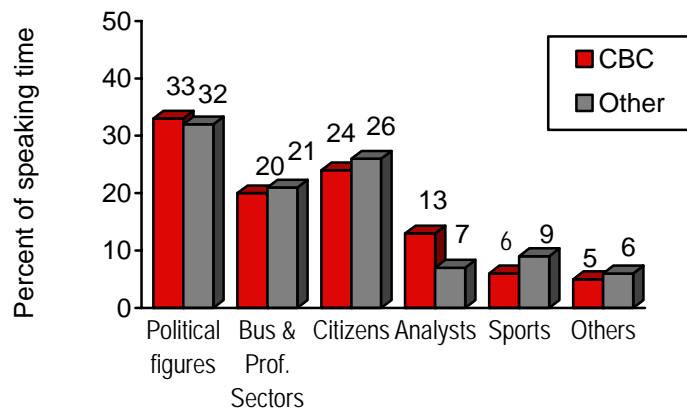
Citizens, who speak either as individuals or as representatives of groups (e.g., ethnic groups, religious groups, NGOs, etc.), account for one-quarter of the news pie.

Analysts are the last major group, with 13% of time on CBC and 7% on the private networks.

The Other category includes artists, celebrities and other smaller groups.

Representatives of governments are the largest group of interviewees – forming approximately one third of all interviewees on CBC and the competing networks.

Figure 20. Interview time for major groups on radio and television: CBC and other sources



Appearances: an alternative measure of prominence

Interview time is a sensitive measure of presence in the news, but it is incomplete in two ways: a) it leaves out people who are mentioned but not interviewed; and b) it does not apply to the Internet.

Figure 21 repeats the previous chart but includes both people interviewed/quoted and mentioned. The government sector remains the most frequent; in fact, the gap between government and other sectors increases. The reason is that the activities of political figures are frequently described in news reports, while the individuals involved are not interviewed. Most other people in the news are directly interviewed (frequent exceptions being criminals and athletes).

Television has more citizens and fewer government representatives than the other platforms. Radio and Internet have comparable results.

Figure 21. Major groups mentioned: CBC platforms

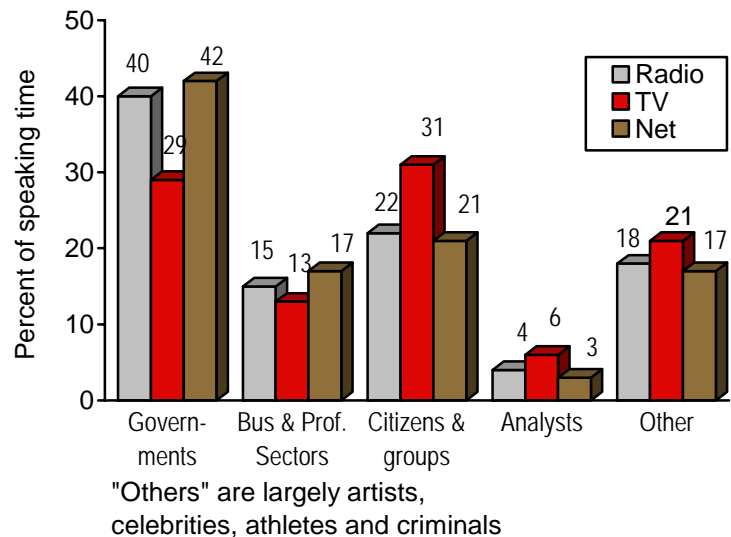


Table 3 compares the full sets of people mentioned on CBC and on the competing news outlets. The government sector is broken down into seven components (the first seven lines of the table, ending with foreign politicians). The profiles for CBC and the competing sources are very nearly identical.

Table 3. Groups mentioned: CBC and other sources

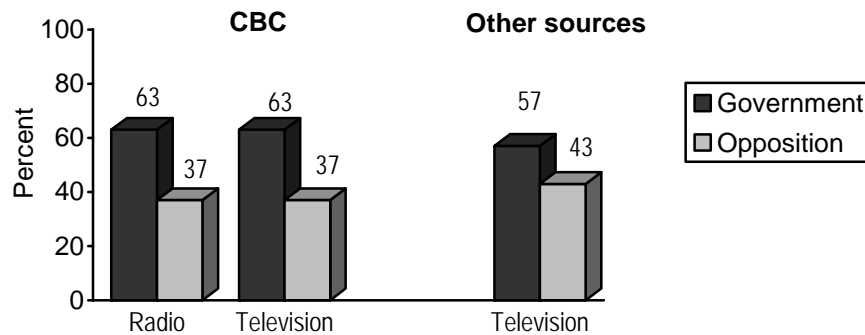
Group	Percent of mentions		
	CBC	Other sources	Total
Federal politicians, including Senate	9.7	8.9	9.5
Provincial MPs, MLAs	3.8	2.6	3.6
Municipal politicians	1.4	1.3	1.4
Civil servants, all governments, including judiciary	3.1	2.7	3.0
Police	3.5	3.5	3.5
Military	2.7	2.4	2.6
Foreign politicians, civil servants	10.2	10.8	10.3
<i>Subtotal for governmental groups</i>	<i>34.4</i>	<i>32.2</i>	<i>33.9</i>
Analysts, academics, experts	4.7	4.7	4.7
Ordinary citizens	26.1	25.8	26.0
Business and professional sector	14.4	14.0	14.3
Artists, performers, writers, celebrities	5.5	8.1	6.1
Sports players, coaches, owners	7.9	8.9	8.1
Criminals	4.2	3.5	4.0
Others	2.9	2.7	2.9
Total	100	100	100

The federal government presence

Politicians value the opportunity to speak directly to citizens on the national airwaves, and the balance of time that government and opposition politicians receive is therefore a critical measure. The government side often gets the greater share of time as it drives the agenda, represents the country abroad and so on. Considering all CBC news on radio and television, the Conservatives had 63% of the interview time and the opposition parties 37%, or a spread of 26 percentage points. On the competing television programs, the spread was 14 points.

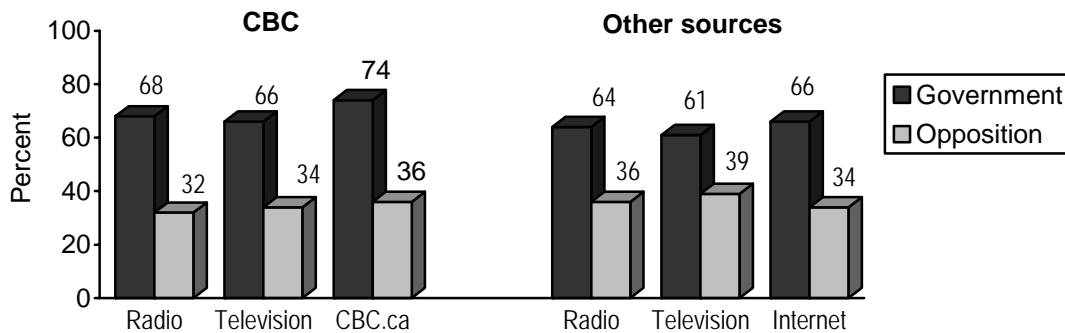
Results for mentions of federal politicians, Figure 23, again show a greater advantage to the government side on CBC than on the competing programs.

Figure 22. Exposure of the federal government and opposition ~ interview time: CBC and other sources



Note: Results for competing radio are not reported as there was too little federal political coverage to report reliable figures.

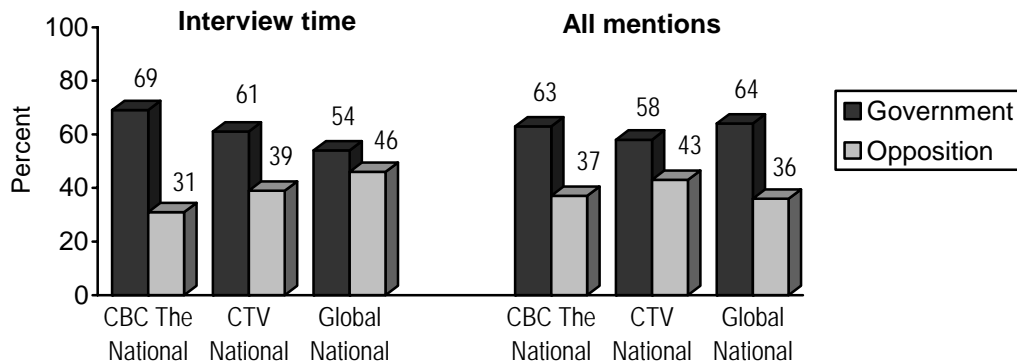
Figure 23. Exposure of the federal government and opposition ~ mentions: CBC and other sources



The three national television newscasts have rather different takes on what this balance should be, Figure 24. The National gives less interview time to the opposition than the other two programs. The Conservatives' advantage arises in large measure from feature interviews. The sample includes 5 long interviews with Conservative politicians and 2 with Liberals. In each of these, the interviewee spoke for about three minutes. In regular news stories, federal politicians speak for about 9 seconds, on average – on this basis a feature interview is the equivalent of 25 regular news stories.

The “mentions” data report the number of stories in which a name occurs (any given person can count only one mention per story), and so these results are not affected by length of interview. The National gives greater exposure to the government side than does CTV, and about the same exposure as does Global.

Figure 24. Exposure of members of the federal government and opposition: Three national television newscasts



6 Diversity

This chapter reports on areas where demographic data provide numerical yardsticks for assessing balance in news coverage. These are the location of the story, gender of journalists and people in the news, and the presence of visible minorities and Aboriginal people among journalists and people in the news.

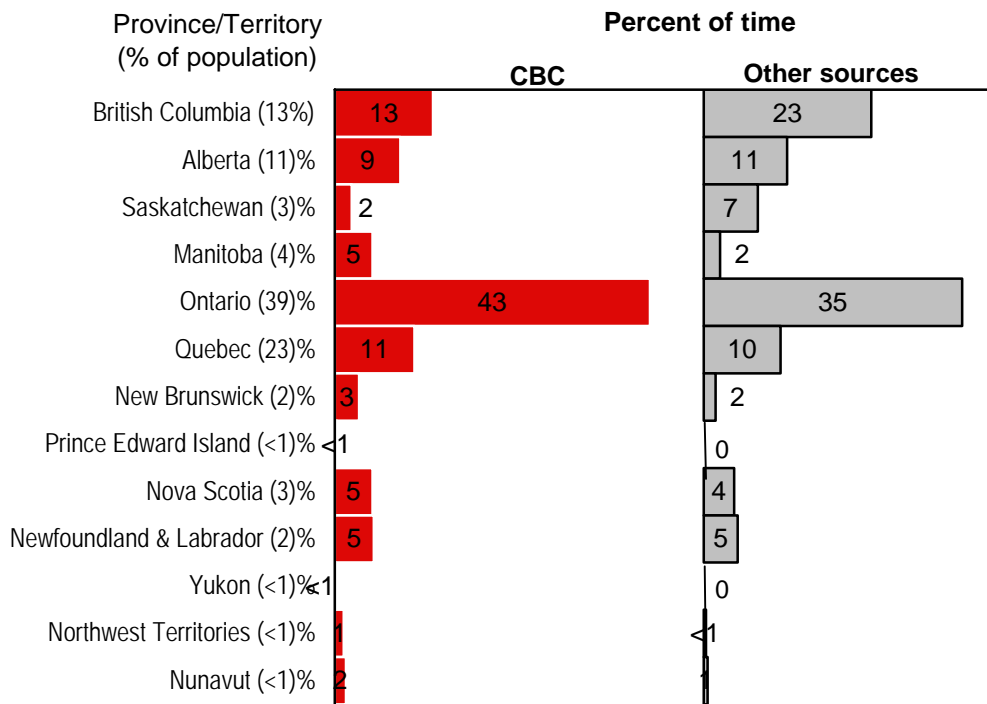
One element of CBC’s mandate is to represent all regions of the country. Local newscasts focus strongly on the region in which they are produced, but the expectation is that network programming will reflect the country as a whole. Population is a reasonable criterion for balance in this context: is the proportion of Canadian news from each province/territory close to the population of that region?

Locations within Canada

Figure 25 shows the locations of Canadian stories on network programs with two topics excluded, a) Parliament Hill stories, which are national rather than provincial in scope, and b) the Olympic Games, which are discussed following. The location of a story is where the event takes place. In cases where a program host interviews a person located elsewhere, the location of the interviewee is used.

Figure 25 shows that BC has 13% of the Canadian population; it accounts for 13% of Canadian news (by time) on CBC and 23% of Canadian news on the competing networks.

Figure 25. Canadian locations in network news on radio, television and Internet: CBC and other news sources (2010 Olympics omitted)



Parliament Hill stories are not specific to Ontario, and are omitted from these results.

In CBC network programming, the representation of the provinces and territories is roughly proportionate to their populations. The one main exception is Quebec, which has 23% of the population but just 11% of CBC network news. On the competing news sources, Quebec accounts for 10% of Canadian news. This lack of attention to Quebec is a long-standing pattern. Historically, English news media have reflected English-speaking Canada, while French-language broadcasters have focused on Francophone Canada.

The slim coverage of Quebec can be construed as consistent with the Broadcasting Act (1990), which states that the Corporation's programming should "be in English and in French, reflecting the different needs and circumstances of each official language community" (3. (1) (m) (iv)). On the other hand, a greater emphasis on Quebec in CBC news would be consistent with other sections of the Act, e.g., the provision to "reflect Canada and its regions to national and regional audiences..." (3. (1) (m) (ii)).

The topics covered in network news from Quebec differ in two ways from network news in the rest of Canada:

- Crime stories make up 30% of the network news from Quebec compared to 19% of the news from the rest of Canada (there were several notable criminal investigations in the study period including the Earl Jones Ponzi scheme and allegations of fixed bidding processes for municipal construction contracts).
- Canada's Haitian community is centred in Quebec, and network news programs covering the Canadian perspective on the quake focused on Quebec. The Haiti story accounts for 14% of network news located in Quebec, compared to just 1% of network news in other provinces and territories.

The 2010 Olympic Games

For three weeks in February, the nation focused on the 2010 Olympics in BC. One-third of network news was about the Games. If coverage of the Games were added into Figure 25, the BC proportion would jump from the present 13% to 26%, and the proportion for each other province would decline slightly.

Including the Olympics for the non-CBC sources would increase the BC proportion from 23% to 34%.

Gender

Gender balance on radio and television has been a policy objective of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) since the early 1980s. The CBC has had a gender policy of its own as well. Both policies distinguish between balance in on-air staff positions and balance in persons who appear in programming.

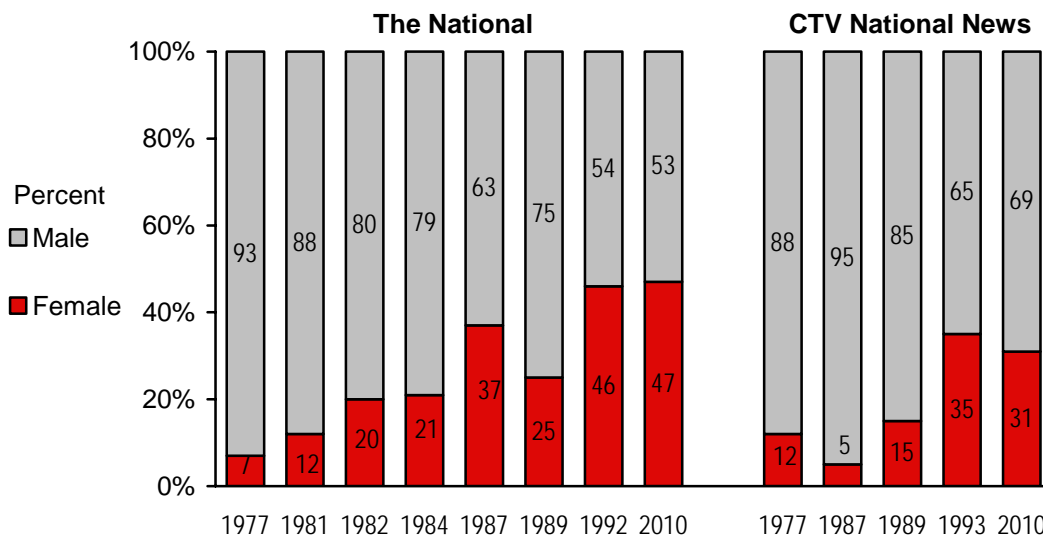
In news programming, the meaning of balance at the staff level is easily defined as approximately 50:50. In the past, the CRTC has accepted departures of up to 40:60. The definition of balance for people who appear in the news is a more flexible target. For politicians, the media have little choice: political stories tend to focus on specific office-holders, so the gender balance reflects who has been elected.

At the other end of the spectrum, in stories featuring ordinary citizens, a 50:50 gender balance can be expected. This leaves the in-between areas, where interviewees represent businesses or professions, or are experts on some topic. Many of these interviewees are discretionary and a debate is possible over whether and how hard journalists should try to seek out qualified women in some areas, or men in others.

Gender balance among journalists

Earlier research, summarized in Figure 26, shows a fairly steady increase in the presence of female anchors from the 1970s onward. CBC had achieved gender parity among reporters on *The National* by 1992⁴.

Figure 26. Gender of reporters: The National and CTV National

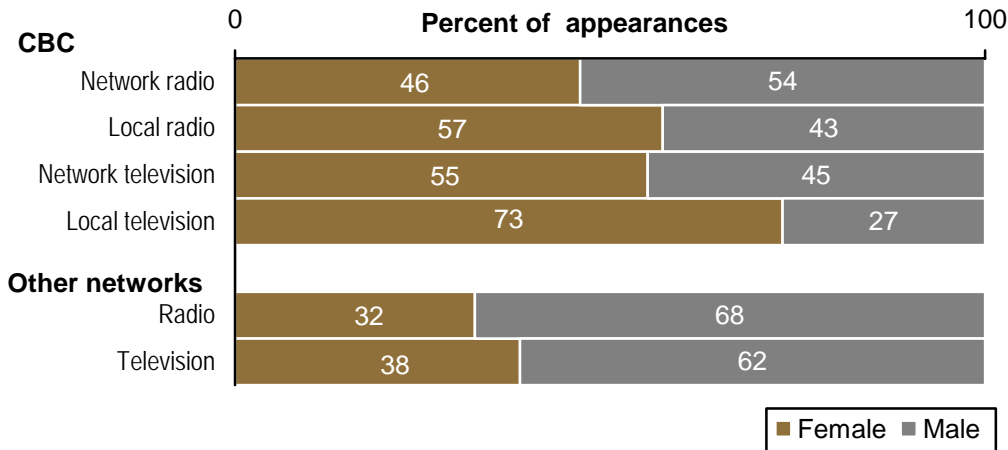


⁴ Older data are from “Social Trends on CBC Prime Time Television, 1977 – 1992: A Content Analysis Commissioned By The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation”. ERIN Research Inc., 1992.

Looking at the CBC network today, Figure 27 shows a close balance between male and female anchors on network radio, local radio, and network television. On local television there is a distinct majority of female anchors⁵. Combining the four areas, 57% of news stories were anchored by women and 43% by men.

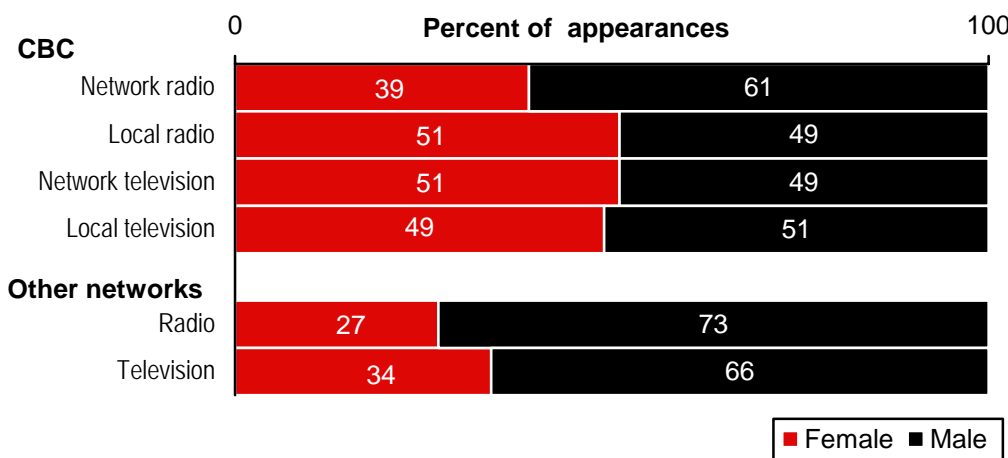
On the private networks, 35% of radio and television anchors are female.

Figure 27. Gender of anchors and program hosts: CBC and other sources



The balance among reporters is very close in three areas of CBC programming (Figure 28); on network radio more stories were filed by men than by women. For CBC as a whole, 47% of stories were filed by women and 53% by men. On the other networks, there are, as in the past, fewer female than male reporters.

Figure 28. Gender of reporters: CBC and other sources

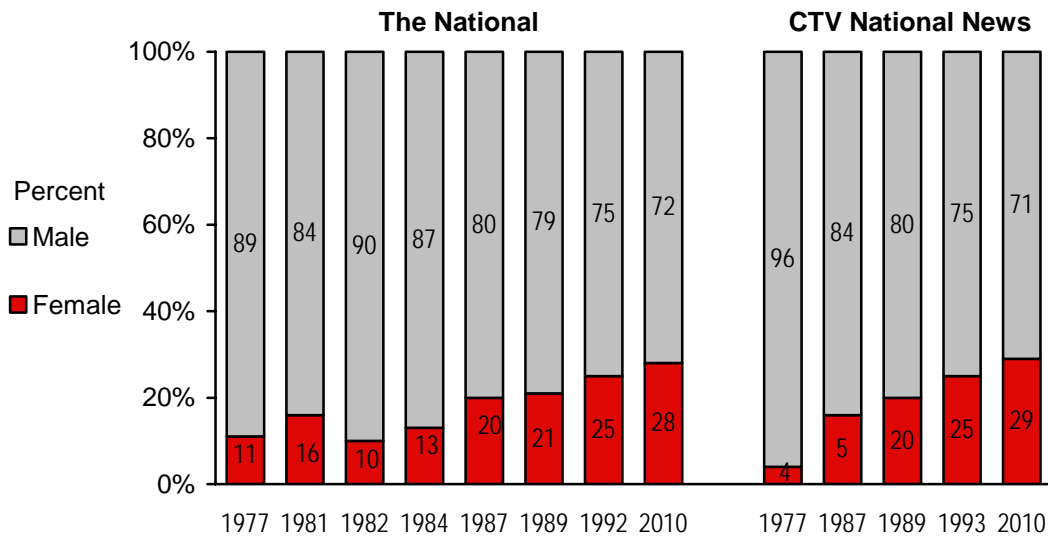


⁵ Figure 27 and Figure 28 report the proportions of stories with male and female anchors and reporters. The total number of stories is 11,080 for CBC and 2,450 for the competing networks. A reporter is present in approximately half of these stories.

Gender balance among people in the news

The past 30 years have seen a steady increase toward parity in the presence of women and men as anchors and reporters on The National (Figure 26) and on CBC generally. The trend among news subjects, Figure 29, is more modest, and appears to have leveled off since the 1990s. This section examines the gender balance among news subjects in more detail.

Figure 29. Gender of interviewees: The National and CTV National



To begin, it is useful to separate domestic and foreign news, as their topical content and associated gender balances are slightly different.

Figure 30 shows the total number of people who are interviewed or mentioned in Canadian domestic stories. CBC radio has a significantly greater proportion of women than the competing networks; results for CBC television and Internet are similar to the competing networks.

Figure 31 gives parallel results for interview time (61% of people mentioned are heard speaking). These results mirror the counts of people mentioned: on CBC radio, women garner a larger share of interview time than on the other networks. On television, CBC and the other networks are similar.

Figure 30. Gender of people in the news ~ interviews and mentions, within Canada: CBC and other sources

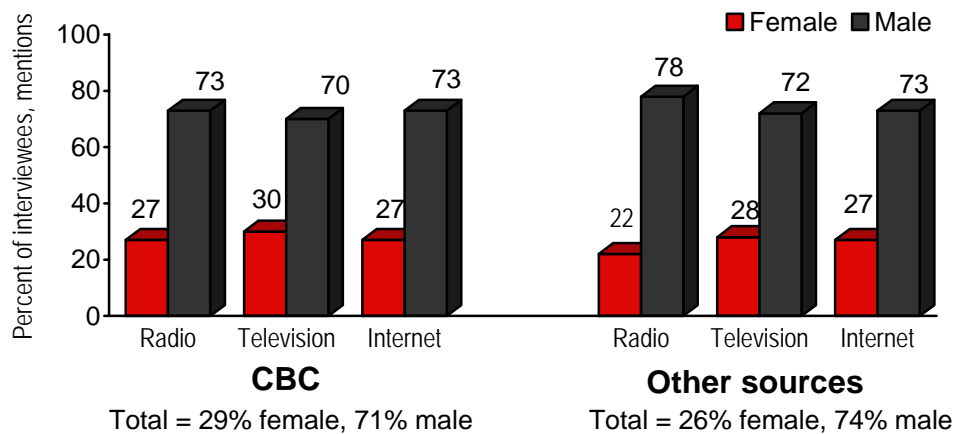
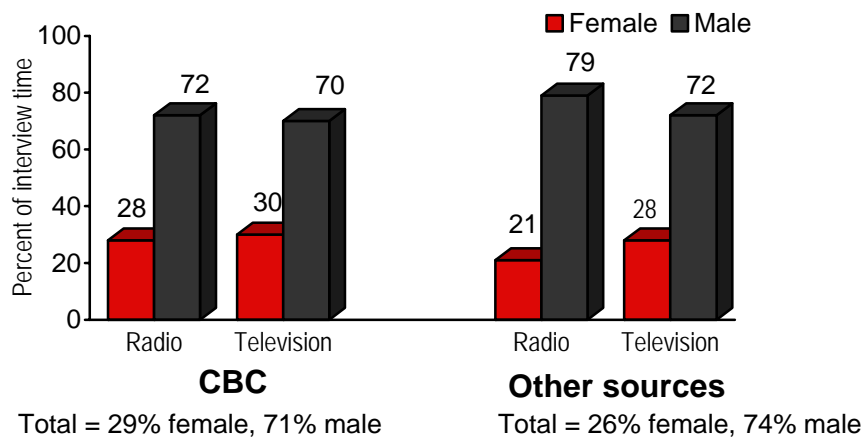


Figure 31. Gender of people in the news ~ interview time, within Canada: CBC and other sources



For stories located outside Canada (Figure 32 and Figure 33), the proportion of women mentioned/interviewed drops on the CBC platforms and on the competing radio. This follows from two things: 1) foreign news has a greater proportion of government interviewees *and* the proportion of women interviewed in foreign governments is smaller than in Canadian governments; 2) foreign news has a smaller proportion of interviews with ordinary citizens – a group in which the proportions of women and men are in close balance.

This difference is not as evident in the competing television programs, where the proportions of government people, citizens and so on is very similar in domestic and foreign news.

Figure 32. Gender of people in the news ~ interviews and mentions, outside Canada: CBC and other sources

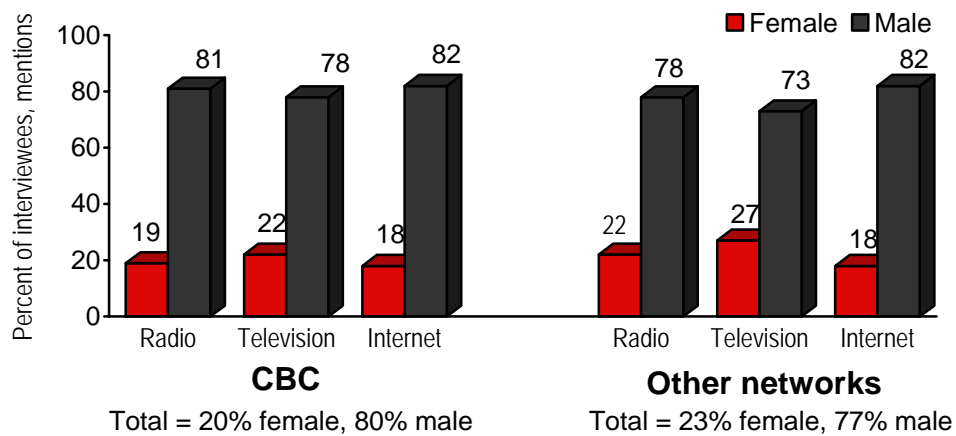
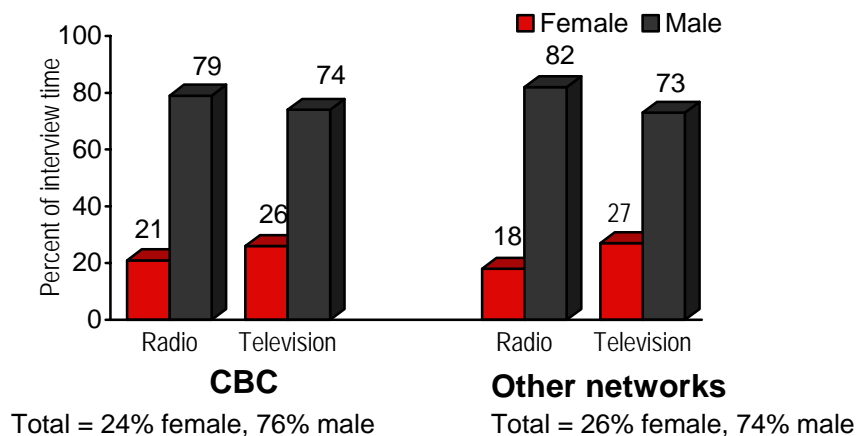


Figure 33. Gender of people in the news ~ Interview time, outside Canada: CBC and other sources



Roles of women and men

In round figures, approximately half of CBC journalists are women but only one-quarter of the people in the news are female. This one-quarter figure has not moved much in the past 20 years or so, and it is worth examining how it is composed.

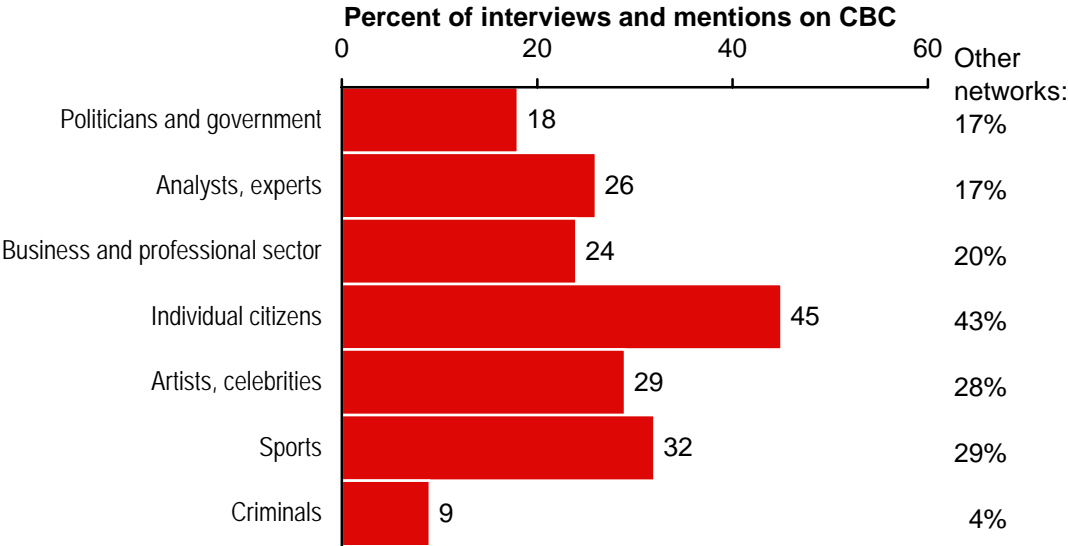
Figure 34 shows the proportion of women in Canadian news stories, broken down into seven groups. The gender composition of two groups, criminals and politicians/government, is largely pre-determined – the newsworthy individuals in these groups exist apart from anything that the media might do.

The gender composition of the “individual citizens” group is discretionary: journalists can choose whom among the pool of voters or the people in the lineup for H1N1 flu vaccine or the witnesses to an accident they interview, and the present finding of 44% female result may be a reasonable balance.

Among experts, the business/professional sector and artists/celebrities sector, the proportion of female newsmakers on CBC varies from 24% to 29% and raises the question: do these numbers reflect the activities of women in these areas? The biggest difference between CBC and the other sources lies in the use of analysts and experts – a considerably higher proportion appear on CBC (women are 26% of this group) than on the other sources, where women are 17%.

The results for Sports require one further cut. In CBC’s Olympic coverage, women account for 41% of the athletes, coaches and officials in the news. Outside of Olympic coverage, women account for just 14%. Results for the competing networks are similar: women account for 36% of sports figures in the Olympic context and 12% outside of it.

Figure 34. Women in the news ~ by role in society, for Canadian stories only: CBC and other sources



Visible minorities and Aboriginal people

Visible minorities constitute about 17% of Canada’s population and Aboriginal people another 4%. There are large regional and local differences. Among the larger cities, Toronto has the greatest proportion of visible minorities, about 47%.

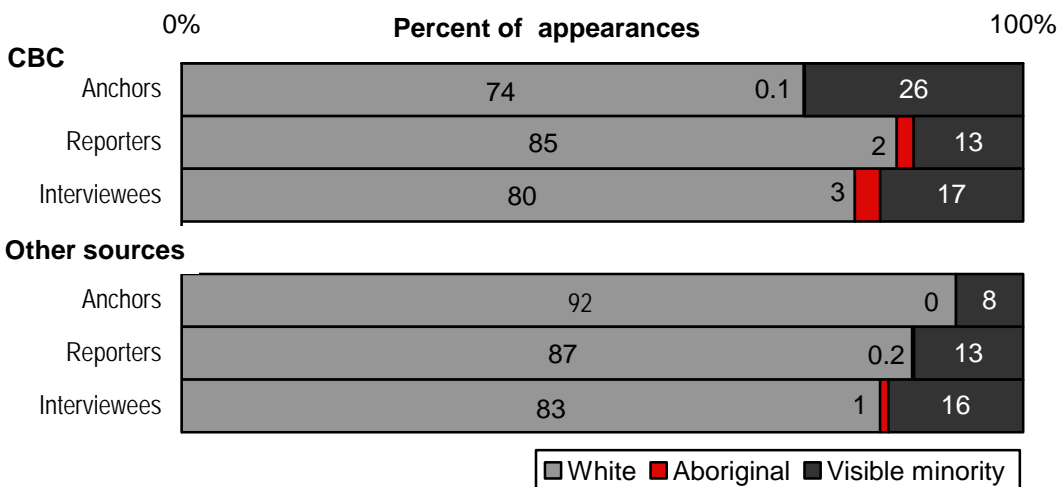
Results for visible minorities and Aboriginal people are presented only for television, as there is no information on this variable for most people who appear on radio or the Internet.

Figure 35 includes all news – located in Canada and elsewhere.

For anchors and reporters, the population-based yardsticks of 17% and 4% are appropriate, as all anchors and the great majority of reporters are CBC staff. Visible minorities are well represented in CBC news as anchors, and reasonably well-represented as reporters. Aboriginal people appeared rarely as anchors and more frequently as reporters⁶.

For interviewees, the population-based yardsticks apply only to Canadian stories; (Asians who appear in news from China, for example, are not visible minorities in the Chinese context). Results for interviewees in Canadian stories appear in the following charts.

Figure 35. Overall representation of visible minorities and Aboriginal people on television ~ Canadian and foreign coverage: CBC and other sources



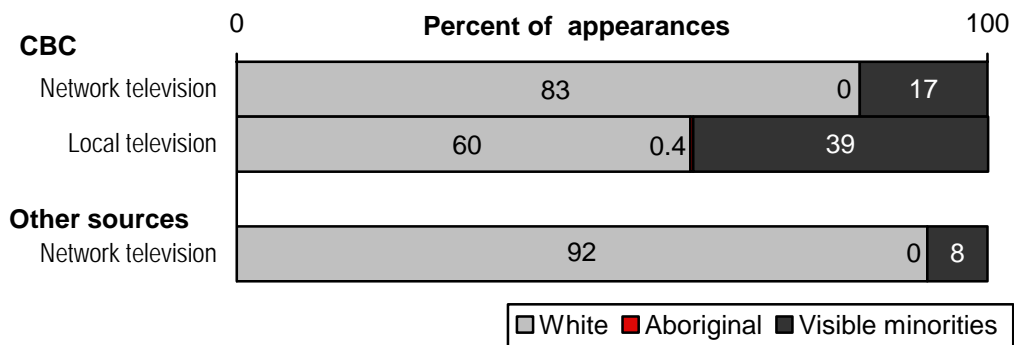
⁶ Note that the CBC sample did not include CBC’s Aboriginal programming.

Journalists

Among both anchors and reporters, visible minorities appear more often in local than in network programs (Figure 36 and Figure 37)⁷. This parallels the manner in which women entered broadcast journalism. The representation of visible minorities is greater on CBC than on the other networks.

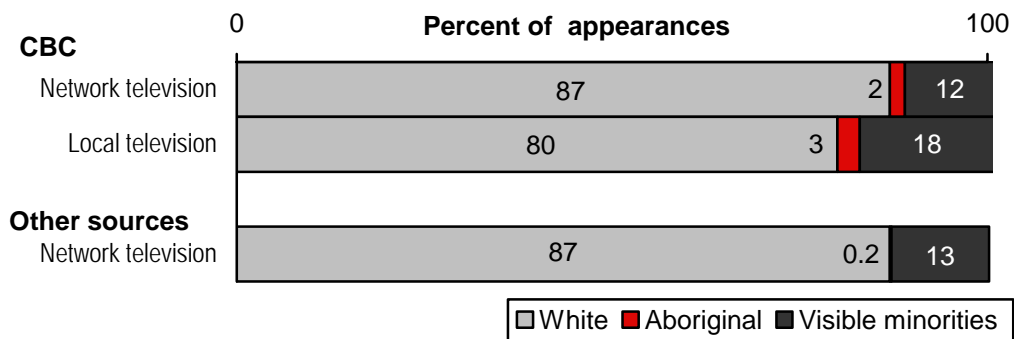
The 39% figure of visible minority anchors on CBC local television is high compared to the 17% Stats Can number for the population at large, however “the population at large” may not be the best yardstick. The sample of local television news is drawn from eight of Canada’s larger cities, where the proportions of visible minorities are generally higher than in smaller centres. A figure higher than 17% is appropriate if these programs are to reflect their audiences.

Figure 36. Visible minorities and Aboriginal people among anchors and program hosts ~ Canadian and foreign coverage: CBC and other sources



Note: The television sample did not extend to local newscasts on the other sources

Figure 37. Visible minorities and Aboriginal people among reporters ~ Canadian and foreign coverage: CBC and other sources



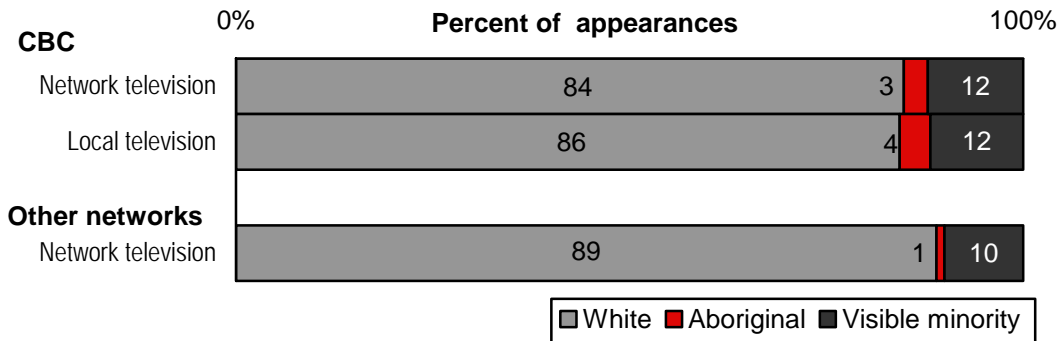
⁷ Appearances are tallied on a story-by-story basis. There is generally one anchor per story.

Interviewees

Figure 38 and Figure 39 show interviewees within Canada.

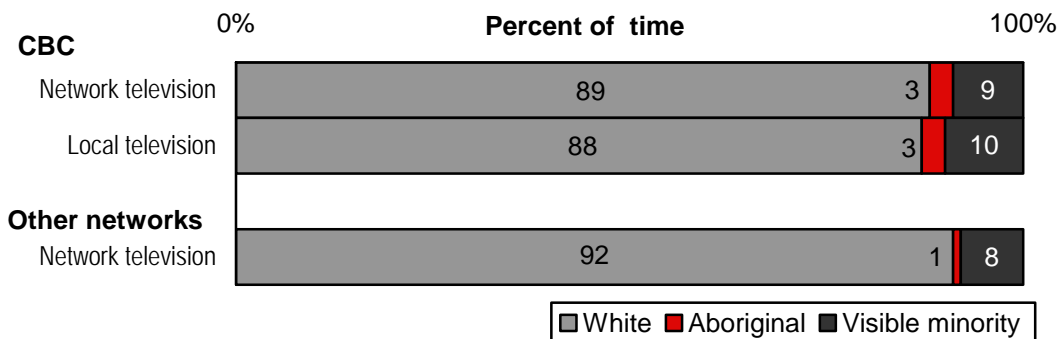
When interview time is used as the measure of prominence, the shares for visible minorities and Aboriginal people shrink by 4 or 5 percentage points on both CBC network and local news. This is because the individual interview clips for visible minorities are shorter than are clips for other interviewees. The underlying reason is that visible minorities tend to appear in the role of citizen, where sound bites are generally short, and less often in the contexts where sound bites tend to be longer – politicians, the business and professional sectors, and analysts.

Figure 38. Visible minorities and Aboriginal people among interviewees in Canada ~ people mentioned: CBC and other sources



Note: The television sample did not extend to local newscasts on the other sources

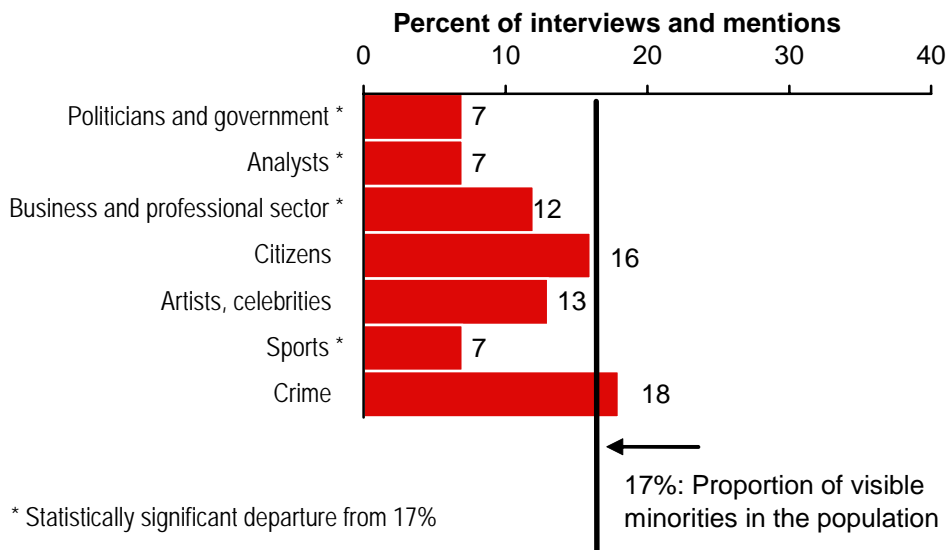
Figure 39. Visible minorities and Aboriginal people among interviewees in Canada ~ Interview time: CBC and other sources



In some studies of US media, visible minorities and Aboriginal people have been over-represented in groups including entertainers, athletes and criminals. This is not the case on CBC. Artists/celebrities and criminals are close to the expected 17% while sports figures are less than 17%. Representation in sports is low, in part, because of the fact that hockey and the winter Olympics are the dominant sporting events in the time period analyzed to date. Visible minorities are poorly represented in most winter sports.

In addition to sports, visible minorities are under-represented in politics, the business/professional sector, and as analysts/experts.

Figure 40. Roles in which visible minorities appear in Canadian stories: CBC



7 Tone

News is about success and failure, good and evil, and the tensions that exist among countries, political parties and individuals. Describing such events requires the use of evaluative statements: “tone” is an essential component of news.

The “intro” to a story invites the audience to interpret the information that follows in a certain way, and the “extro” cements the message that the audience carries away. The tone of these short segments is an important yardstick.

While intros and extros are read by journalists, the evaluative content often originates with some newsmaker, for example, “Mr. Layton attacked the government, saying that...”

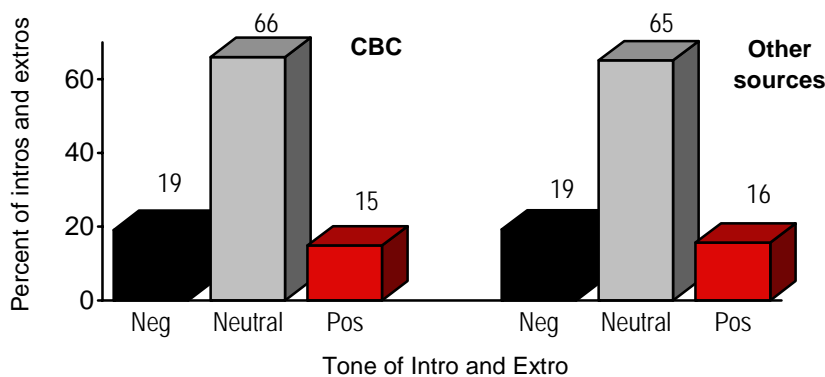
Tone is always assessed with reference to some individual or group. An intro can be positive *about* the government, or negative *about* Tiger Woods or neutral *with respect to* the Bank of Canada.

Figure 41 reports the tone of all intros and extros for the entire study. For CBC:

- 19% of intros and extros were negative;
- 66% of intros and extros were neutral;
- 15% of intros and extros were positive.

The tone of stories on CBC and the private sources does not differ to a statistically significant degree.

Figure 41. Tone of intros and extros in all news stories: CBC and other sources



Measuring “tone” (See also examples in Appendix C)

“Tone” is measured in the story’s intro and extro. The intro is the reporter’s setup of the story, usually from one to three sentences in length and the extro is the reporter’s wrap-up, again about one to three sentences in length. If the story has no reporter, the anchor’s intro and extro are used.

“Tone” is an intuitive concept, but in order to code stories consistently, an objective process was developed.

1. Define who the intro or extro is about. “Who” can be an individual, a defined group such as a political party, or a more amorphous group such as swine flu victims. When the intro has a non-human subject, for example a snow storm, tone is not assessed. The intro and extro are frequently about different people or groups, which is why stories with “mixed” tone can occur.
2. Document how the intro/extro describes that individual or group using six statements, which are scored 0 (Absent) and 1 (Present). The first three statements are negative while the second three are positive versions of the first set:
 - Are they criticized, directly or indirectly? (0/1)
 - Is their standing in society diminished? (0/1)
 - Is it suggested that they have harmed or might harm others? (0/1)
 - + Are they praised by others directly or indirectly? (0/1)
 - + Is their standing in society heightened? (0/1)
 - + Is it suggested that they have benefited or might benefit others? (0/1)

The tone score for an intro or extro can range from -3, strongly negative, to +3, strongly positive. For most reported results, the gradations of positive and negative are combined into a single score: positive, neutral or negative.

In results to date, the overall balance of tone does not differ significantly between stories where tone is assessed on the anchor’s intro/extro and on the reporter’s intro/extro.

Negative Examples (See Appendix C for a more comprehensive set of examples)

- Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff blasted the federal budget for being full of “gimmicks” that ignore important issues, but reaffirmed he won’t bring the government down over it. “The throne speech and the budget let Canadians down. They expected vision and got gimmicks. They deserved ambition and got drift.”
- Belarus’s first Olympic hockey victory since 2002 on Saturday night was overshadowed by the news that injured Mikhail Grabovski was taken into custody following a bar fight in Vancouver.
- Court documents filed in Vancouver say a Quebec couple made a “deliberate choice” to ski out of bounds at a British Columbia ski resort last February and cannot blame the police and others for the fatal consequences.

Positive examples (See also Appendix C)

- An RCMP officer is being credited with saving an elderly woman from a house fire in Cochrane, Alberta, on Saturday morning.
- Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada Inc. announced Thursday it is adding a second shift at its assembly plant in Woodstock, ON, creating more than 800 jobs.
- Michael Bubl  is the one to beat at the upcoming Juno awards, after the West Coast crooner nabbed a leading six nominations for Canada’s most prominent celebration of popular music.

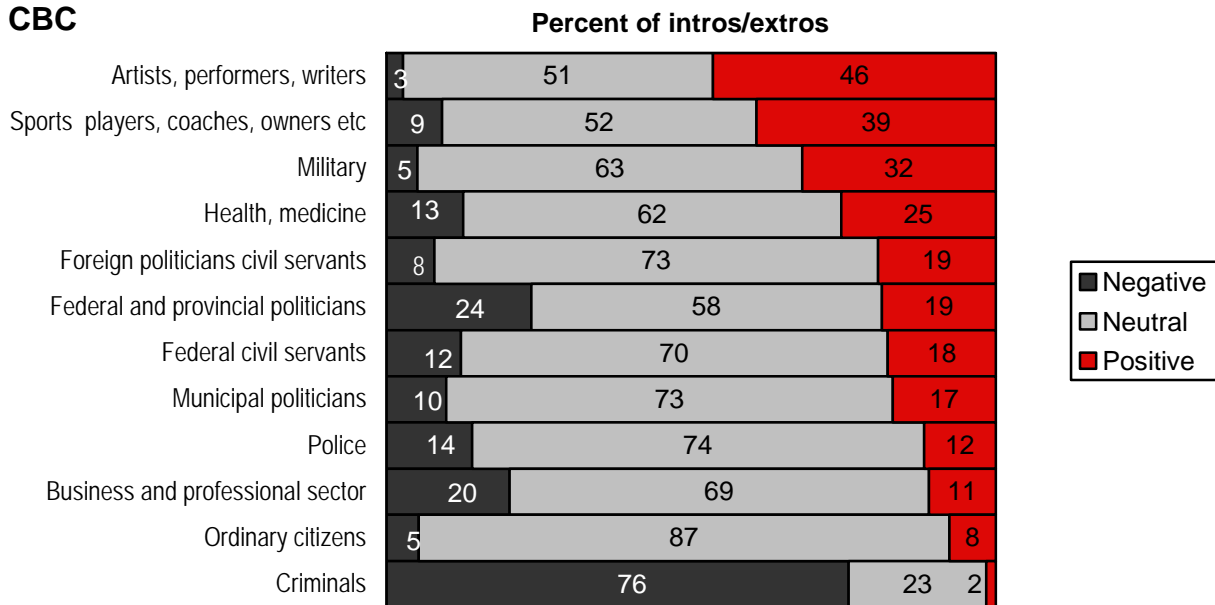
Tone in selected topic areas

Figure 42 shows the tone of intros and extros about major groups of people in the news. The differences are striking, and some appear to be intuitive while others may not. At the top of the list, for both CBC and the others sources, are artists and performers. These groups often make the news because of an accomplishment, and the positive tone follows. Criminals fall, not surprisingly, at the bottom.

The positive tone for sports figures suggests that the news dwells on winners more than losers. The very positive tone for the military comes in part from coverage of rescue efforts, such as in Haiti, and also from the Afghanistan war, where reports of fatalities often lead with praise for the victim. The negative slant to political coverage is discussed later in this chapter.

Figure 42. Tone of intros/extros for selected groups of people in Canadian stories only: CBC and other sources

CBC



Other sources

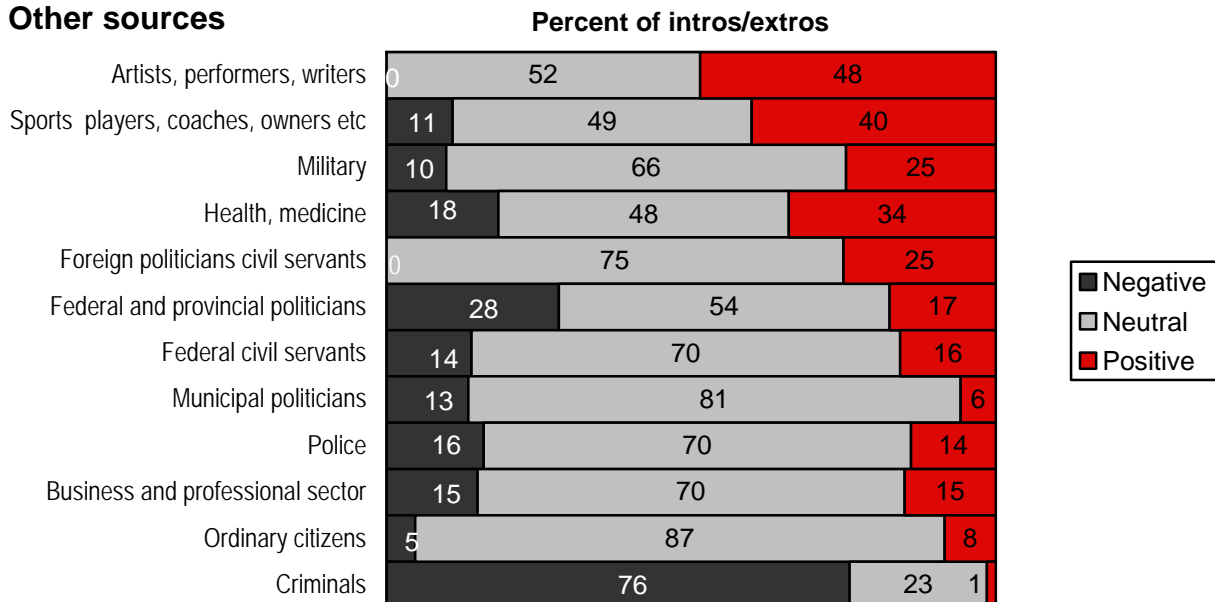


Figure 43 changes the focus to look at major stories. Each story includes several of the groups shown in Figure 42. Some of these results are intuitive while others give pause. A positive tilt to stories about the Olympic Games is to be expected, but how is it that coverage of the Haiti earthquake is even more positive? In part, reports tended to accent the hopeful and heroic side of the rescue effort. This is discussed further in Chapter 11.

Tone on the other news sources is similar to CBC (Figure 44). Haiti and the Olympics lead the positives, and terrorism brings up the rear. The ranking of stories in terms of negative tone is identical for CBC and the other networks.

Figure 43. Tone of intros/extros for major stories: CBC

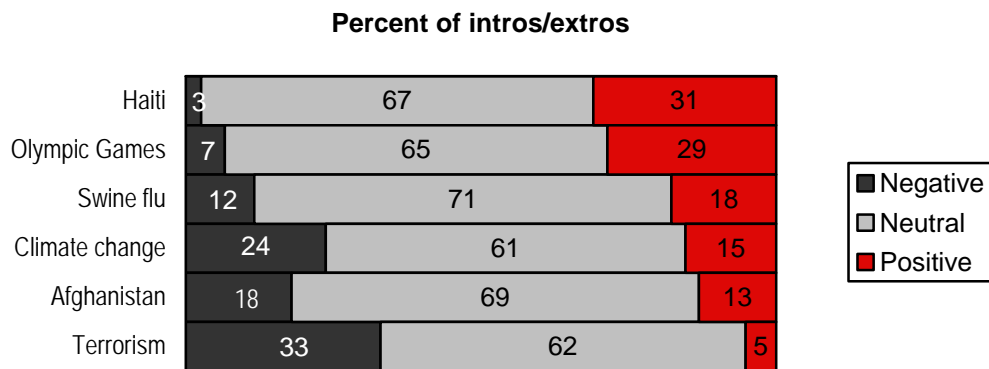
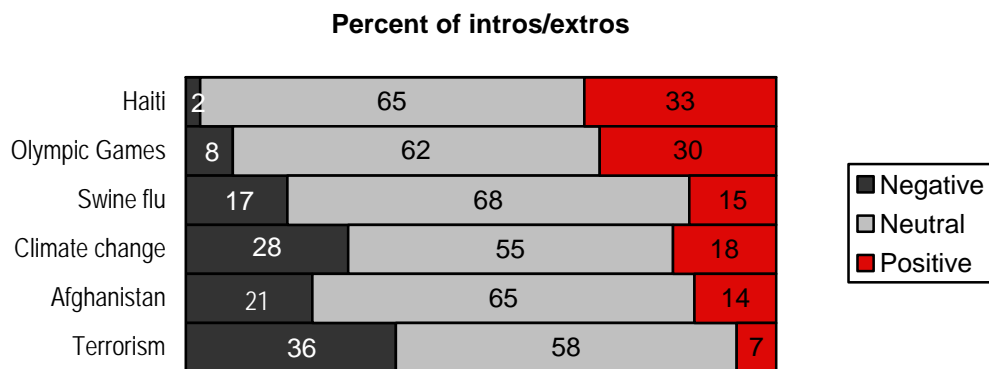


Figure 44. Tone of intros/extros for major stories: Other sources



The tone in major stories often focuses on a few prominent themes. Some examples are:

H1N1 coverage

Main theme in stories with a positive tone:

- Vaccine is finally becoming available

Main themes in stories with a negative tone:

- Lack of vaccine
- Long lineups at clinics
- Queue-jumping by professional sports teams and others

Afghanistan coverage

Main themes in stories with a positive tone:

- Progress in the war, troop buildups
- Profiles of soldiers
- Election win for Karzai

Main themes in stories with a negative tone:

- Detainee probe
- Problems with the general election
- Setbacks in the war

Climate change coverage

Main themes in stories with a positive tone:

- Governments make commitments to reduce emissions
- Examples of green technology, efforts to reduce CO2

Main themes in stories with a negative tone:

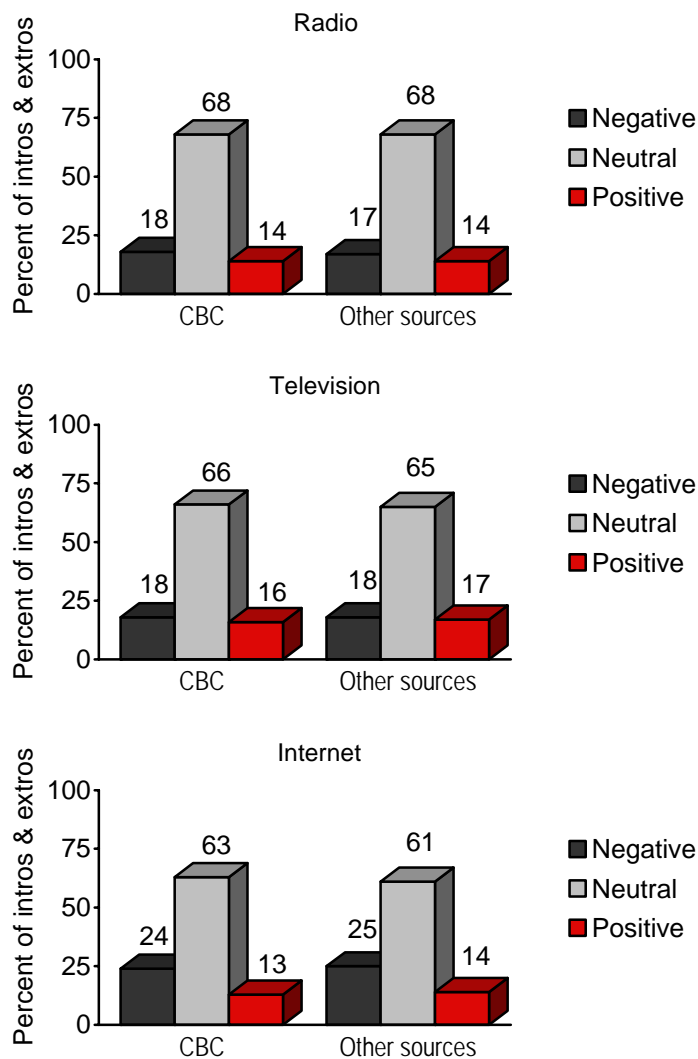
- Opposition to Canadian and other governments' policies on climate change; protests
- Controversy over the Copenhagen process, disagreements among nations

Tone on CBC and competing sources

Different groups of people and different types of stories generate large differences in the positive/negative balance. Stepping back to consider the overall picture, we find a high degree of similarity across platforms and between CBC and the competition (Figure 45).

The balance of positives and negatives is almost identical on CBC radio and television and also very similar between CBC and the competing sources on radio and television.

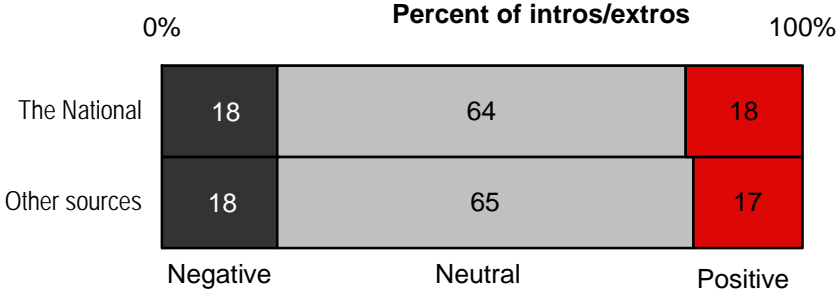
Figure 45. Tone of intros and extros by platform: CBC and other sources



Three major newscasts

Overall, tone does not differ across the three national television newscasts.

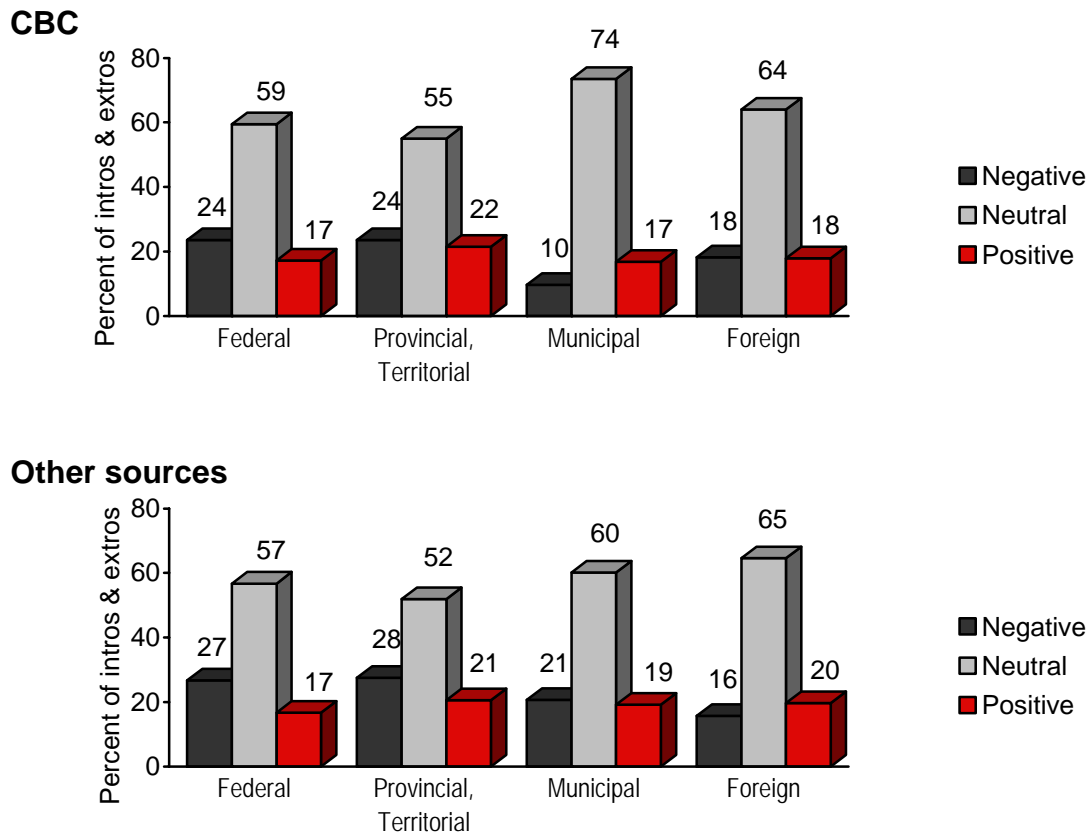
Figure 46. Tone of intros/extros for major stories: The three major newscasts



Tone in the political sphere

Figure 47 presents intros and extros about politicians in four contexts. In three of these, the tone is more often positive than negative. The tone of intros/extros about federal politics is mainly negative. This is consistent with the common observation that Ottawa politics can be particularly acrimonious. (It is not possible to infer cause with certainty: either Ottawa politics really are rancorous or the media just portray them that way. If the latter, it is equally true of CBC and the other networks, Figure 48, as results do not differ significantly among sources.)

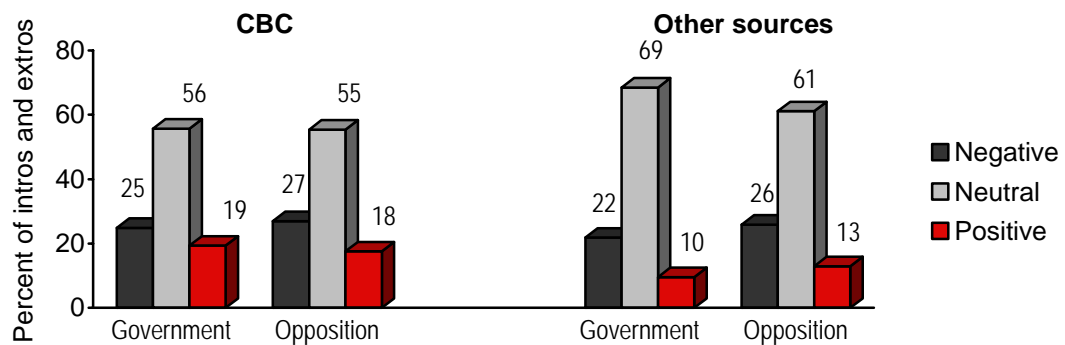
Figure 47. Tone of intros and extros about political figures: CBC and other sources



Tone for the federal government and opposition

Figure 48 compares the tone of intros/extros about the federal government and opposition across all CBC sources. Negatives slightly outnumber positives. The negative tilt arises in large part due to the partisan nature of the “blame the other” game: the government criticizes the opposition and vice versa. The government receives more negatives *and* more positives than the opposition. Results for the competing news sources are very similar to those for the CBC.

Figure 48. Tone of intros and extros for federal government and opposition: CBC and other sources



“Why is political coverage so negative?”

That political news has a negative cast is common observation, but one that is only partly true, as Figure 42 shows. The tone used for politicians is more negative than for some groups and less negative than others. Nonetheless, it bears investigating what contributes to the tone of political stories.

To begin, we can ask just where the negative tone in political coverage arises – is it associated with certain stories and events, or is it an across-the-board phenomenon?

In the data at hand, negative tone is most strongly associated with just three topics:

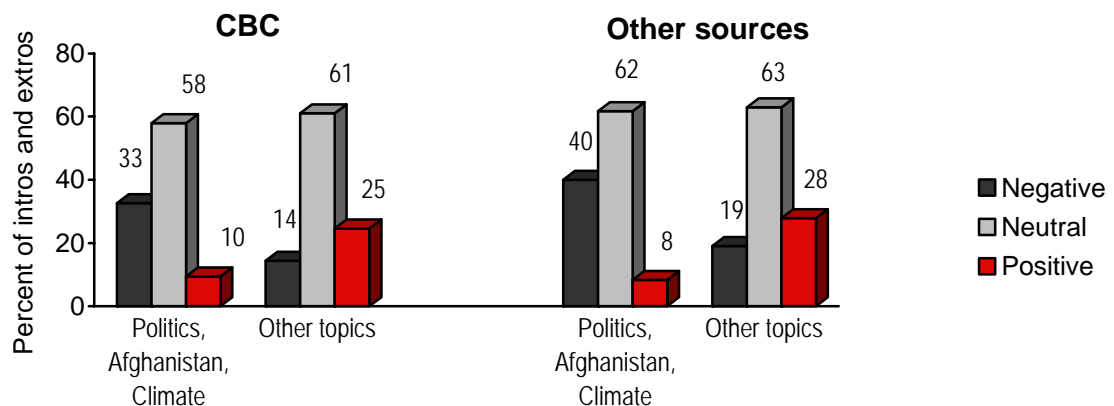
- Stories about the political process (i.e., parliamentary business, poll results, political strategy, etc.);
- Climate change; and
- Afghanistan, which is dominated by the detainee issue.

These three topics – especially climate change and Afghanistan – are strongly negative, while tone in other topics is decidedly positive (Figure 49). Together these three negative topics account for 45% of federal political news but 67% of the negative tone.

Criticism is an inherent part of the political process, so the negative edge to reporting on this topic is hardly surprising. Few observers would likely have predicted in September 2009 that climate change and Afghanistan would become such political flashpoints, but events unfolded in a way that these topics, more than any others, stimulated and sustained controversy.

At any point in time, a larger or smaller number of these highly charged issues may be active. As a result, the overall tone in coverage of federal politics can shift considerably from month to month and year to year.

Figure 49. Tone about federal politicians in three negative stories: CBC and other sources



The role of success and failure

It may be useful to look at the negativity in political coverage through a broader lens. In any topic area, politics included, the essence of tone is success and failure. Positive tone describes success of one form or another, for example personal triumph or technological breakthrough or helping those in need or making money. Negative tone describes the corresponding failures. (A range of examples are listed later in this section.)

Looking at tone in this way, it appears that we, as a society, keep track of success and failure differently in different areas. In a nutshell, success can be celebrated in every field of endeavour, but we are selective in the types of failure that attract wide interest.

Failures are particularly newsworthy in government and politics, and they are all but ignored in the field of arts, culture and entertainment (though there is always interest in scandal, e.g., Tiger Woods). Other topic areas lie between. One underlying reason is likely that failures in the political realm can have serious consequences for society, while those in other areas are less likely to have widespread repercussions. A focus on the negative in politics and government is therefore a matter of prudent self-interest.

The political sphere also has the unusual feature that no matter what a political figure says or does, someone is likely to attack it. That is the nature of partisan politics. But automatic criticism is less frequent in other areas of endeavour: rescuing earthquake victims is good, in most people's books, as is a medical breakthrough or an upward tick of the stock market. Such events are unlikely to generate criticism. In politics, on the other hand, nothing goes unchallenged.

Politics and government

It is important to distinguish between political process and government. Party politics is a zero-sum game where one party's gain is another's loss. The political process is therefore defined in terms of success and failure, and reporting in this area can be expected to convey changing fortunes. A good proportion of stories in this area will be either positive or negative. Considering stories just about party fortunes, one might expect the balance to be about even – the ups should be matched by the downs. On the other hand, the political process is also about success and failure in a wide variety of contexts, and in these we may sometimes take a prurient interest in the negative. Examples from the present data are stories about the Mint's "lost" bullion, MLAs with their hands in the till, and others listed in the examples that follow.

In the field of government, policy decisions and policy application affect individuals and businesses. They result in better or poorer services, they can convey advantage or disadvantage to various groups, and they may consume more or fewer tax dollars. As a result, our society has created a sizable industry devoted to tracking and anticipating policy outcomes, charting the impact of things gone wrong, and laying blame where it appears to be deserved. In addition to the opposition parties and the media, this industry includes business interests, think tanks, academics, unions and citizen organizations, all of which analyze every move that the government makes (or doesn't make).

Following are stories from the current data set that illustrate common types of success and failure:

Examples:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Political success | Conservatives win 2 by-elections, 1 at Bloc's expense |
| Political failure | According to a recent national poll, Canadians do care that Harper prorogued Parliament |
| Personal success | A private member's bill is trying to help former employees of Nortel |
| Personal failure | Canadian diplomat who spit on Tanzanian policeman being sent home
Keddy apologizes for comments about homeless people in Nova Scotia |
| Policy success | Canada may fast-track Haitian immigration
Canadian government acting to protect foreign caregivers from abuse |
| Policy failure | New admissions from Federal Government over transfer of detainees and allegations of torture in Afghanistan
Liberal Senators voted against Bill C6 (consumer product safety) because they feel it puts too much power in inspectors' hands
Federal government has not stated position going into Copenhagen talks |

Arts, culture and entertainment

At the other end of the spectrum is the field of arts, culture and entertainment. The focus here is almost entirely on success. The stories in the current analysis centre on people who win awards, people and events that create a buzz (Gustavo Dudamel receives the Glenn Gould award), and obituaries for popular artists. There are plenty of failures in the world of arts and culture: the artists who don't make it, the albums and movies that fail to draw an audience, and so on, but these are not news.

Failure in the arts is a side-issue, from a news perspective. It can become visible when the arts story merges with another area such as business (Garth Drabinsky) or when a scandal erupts (Roman Polanski, Tiger Woods). The consequences of failure are borne by the artist, not by the audience. Failure just does not have repercussions for society as a whole.

The positive tone centres on personal achievement:

Examples:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Personal success | Linden Macintyre wins the Giller Prize
Founder of music program in Venezuela will receive a \$50,000 prize from the Glenn Gould Foundation
A Lawren Harris painting was auctioned for \$3.5M |
|-------------------------|--|

Business and the economy

Failures in the area of business and the economy can have serious impacts, on employment, on consumer well-being, and on investors. Society has a vested interest in this sphere running smoothly and considerable media resources are devoted to ferreting out the bad, as well as marking the good. The tone of business stories may be less negative than government for a couple of reasons:

- Businesses can avoid failure in ways that governments cannot. They can move into new areas where success is likely and away from areas where failure is likely. There may be dislocation along the way (lost jobs) and this does generate a certain amount of negative press. However, if the bottom line is improved, it can generate positive press as well. Governments, on the other hand, have a mandate to provide services that may not be easy or popular.
- Mechanisms that create transparency and accountability are stronger in the government sphere. Sins are more likely to see the light of day with relatively open accounting, freedom of information provisions, etc.

Examples:

Failures

Meat recall is expanded over listeriosis fears
Nortel executives get big bonuses while former employees struggle
Power failure caused by human error
Banks lost millions on digital cheque project

Successes

Car sales are picking up
General Motors investing \$90 million in a plant in Ingersoll, ON
Globalive says wireless network launch imminent

Health, social services and related sciences

This field lies to the positive side of business. Given that these services have a direct and widespread impact on people, one might expect that media scrutiny would be as tough-minded as it is for business – perhaps more so. Still, the tone of stories in this area is quite positive.

Failures are often characterized by a negative impact on society, e.g., diminished levels of service.

Examples:

Failures

Central NL hospitals cancel some services due to shortage of workers
Vaccine queue jumping: Mount Sinai board members get H1N1 vaccine
Saskatchewan Radiologist fails competency test

Successes

Calgary doctor on trail of resistant E. coli
Montreal's English School Board has voted to upgrade French programs in three schools
New crossing guard in Charlottetown
School district reverses teaching cut for autistic boy

Summary

The patterns of positive and negative tone are rooted in societal institutions. The negative cast to political coverage is possible in a multi-party system of government and depends on a free media. The tone of political coverage in Libya or Belarus or Myanmar is no doubt very different. Perhaps the negative cast to political coverage is something we should celebrate.

Methodological note: The analysis of tone in this project is restricted to intros and extros – segments that distill the story’s larger content into a few sentences. It is possible that intros and extros may emphasize success and failure somewhat more than the body of the story. Analyzing tone in a broader context might reveal additional dimensions – that is an open question and could be researched in the future.

8 Story frames

Introduction to frames

Many stories tend to follow one of a small set of thematic lines. These forms have developed because certain types of content recur in the news, and because all stories need a structure. Using a consistent or familiar “frame” helps the journalist compose the story and helps the audience to understand it.

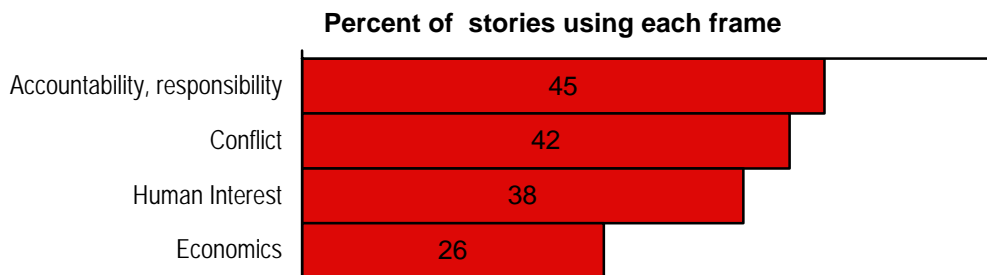
Previous research has identified frames in common usage in both US and European news⁸. They are titled Attribution of Responsibility, Conflict, Human Interest and Economy. Appendix B describes the frames in detail.

Most news stories use one or more of these common frames. Tracking their use provides a means of a) comparing how different stories are presented, and b) assessing how different media treat the same story.

A story can use one or several frames, or none at all. 81% of the stories in the sample generated one or more frame codes. The 19% where no framing was present were generally short items, with an average length of 44 seconds. This group includes items where there is no real story, such as daily stock market reports.

Attribution of Responsibility is the most frequent frame. As Figure 50 shows, 45% of stories used this frame while 42% used Conflict.

Figure 50. Frame scores for the entire news sample: CBC and other sources combined



⁸ Semetko, Holli, and Patti Valkenburg, Framing European Politics: A Content Analysis of Press and Television News. *Journal of Communication*, Spring 2000.

How frames are scored

Each story frame has from two to four measures, as described in Appendix B. Each measure is a theme that may or may not appear in the story. By way of example, the measures for Attribution of Responsibility are as follows:

Does the story suggest...

- That some level of government has the ability to alleviate the issue/problem?
- That there are solution(s) to the issue/problem?

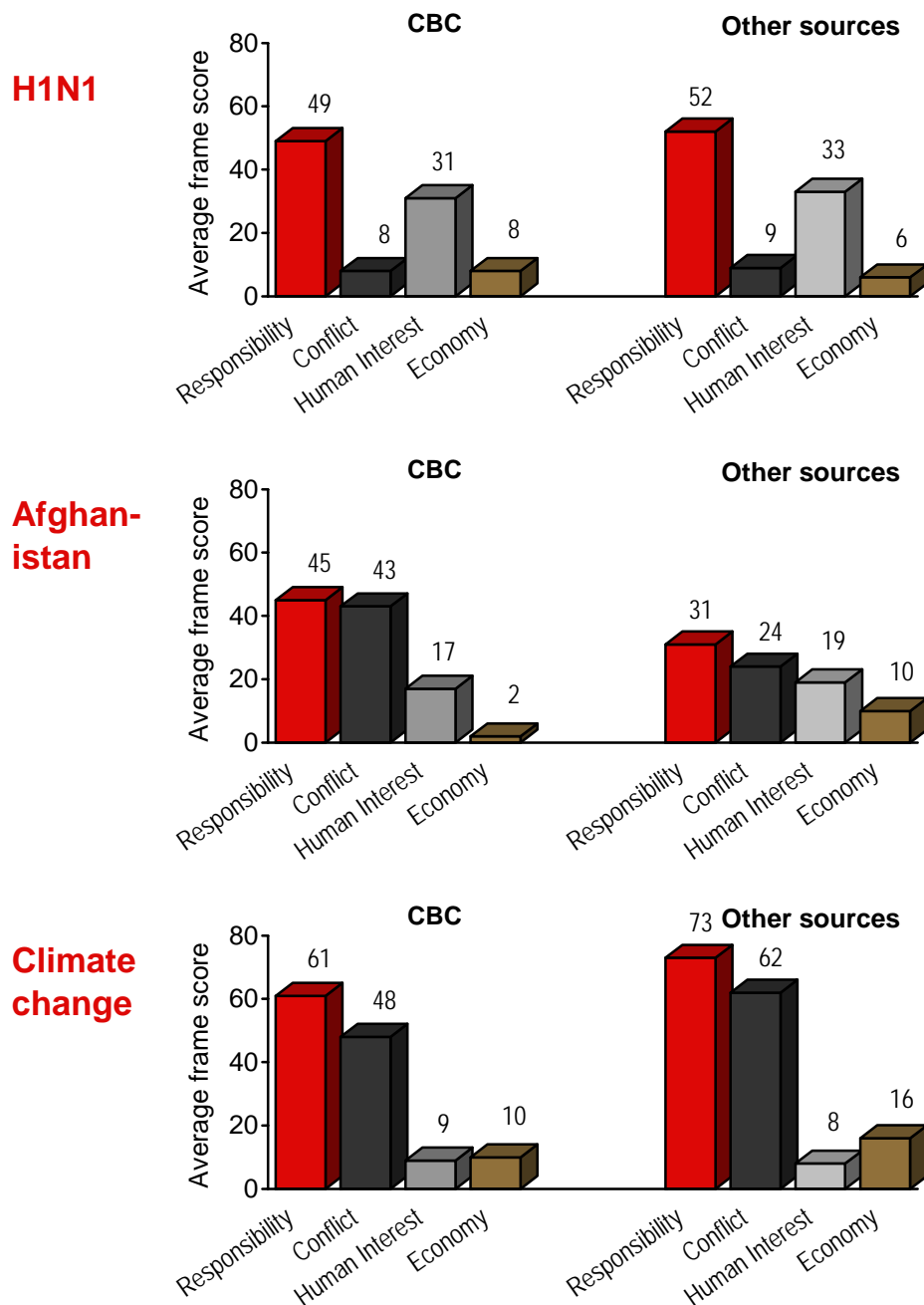
Each story is scored 0 (absent) or 1 (present) on each theme. The score for this frame is the total score (0, 1 or 2) divided by the number of frames (2 in this case) times 100. The possible score for each frame therefore ranges from 0 to 100.

There is some tendency for the number of frame codes to increase with story length – a longer story invites more perspectives. The correlation between number of frames and story length is .48, in the “moderate” range.

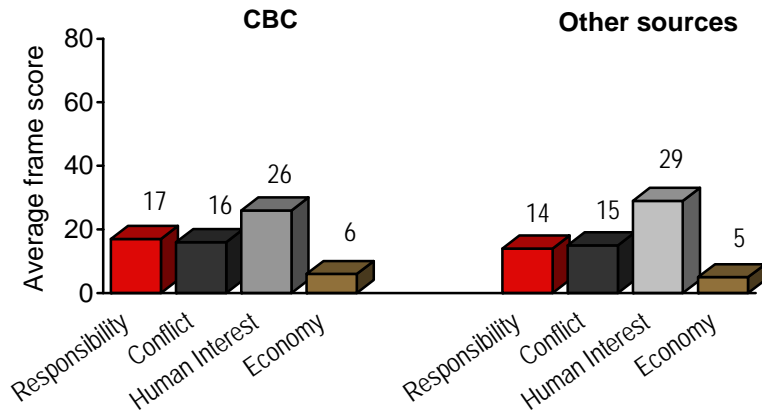
Figure 51 shows the use of frames in five issues. The differences across issues are striking. The CBC and competing networks are broadly similar, but differ in the degree to which frames are used within each issue.

There is a high degree of similarity between CBC and the other sources. Two points of divergence are that the CBC was more vigorous in its use of the Conflict and Responsibility frames in the Afghanistan story, while the other sources used these same frames more than CBC in the Climate Change story.

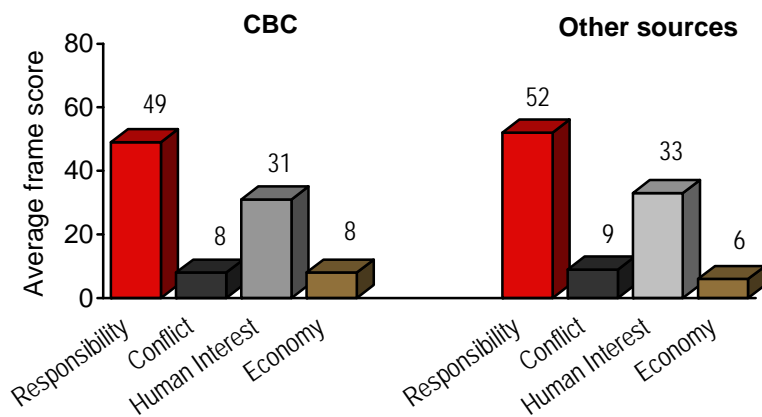
Figure 51. Frames used for major issues: CBC and other news sources



Olympic games



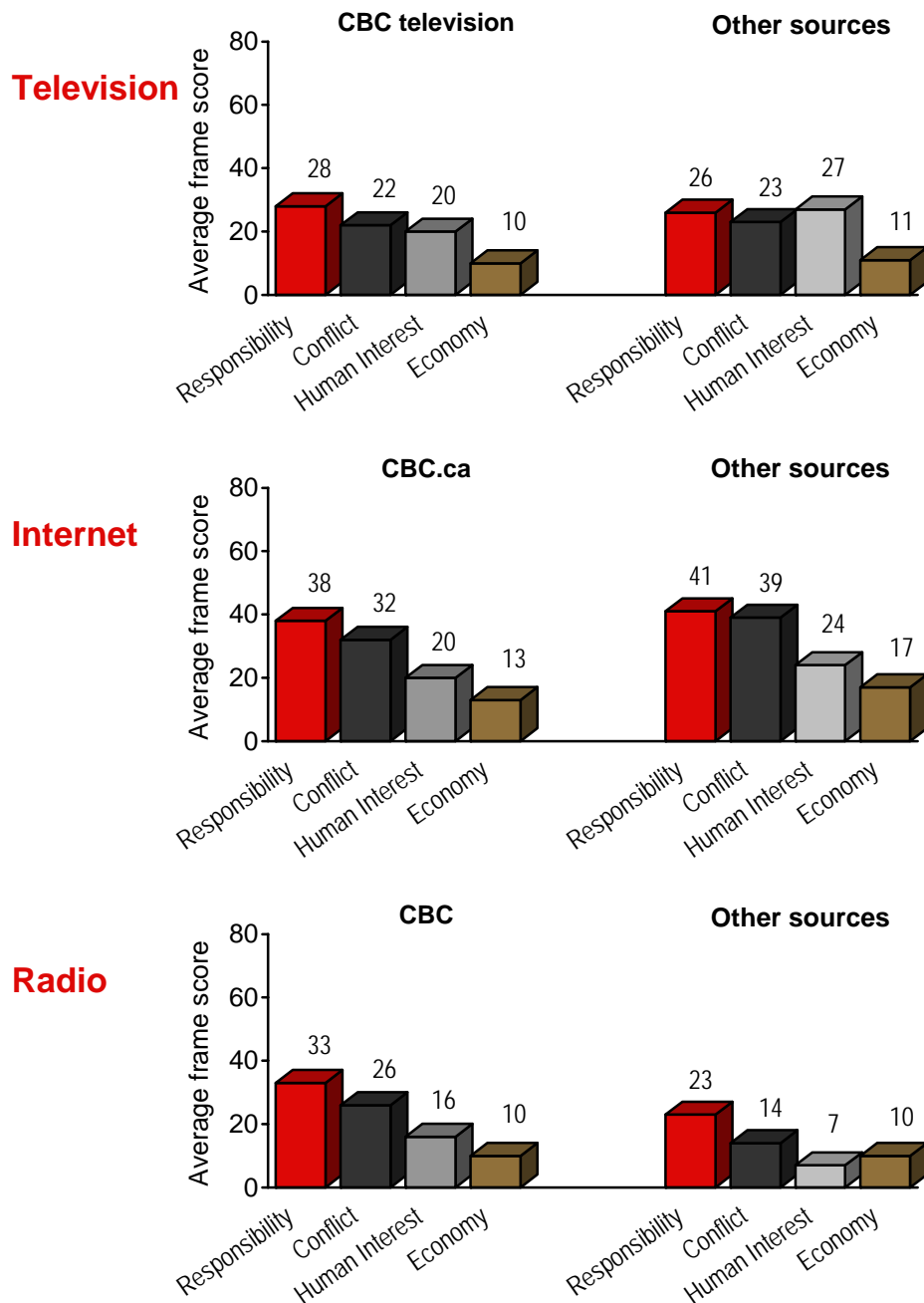
Haiti earthquake



In Figure 52, first consider the three CBC platforms. CBC.ca uses the greatest amount of framing and CBC television the least. This is primarily because internet stories are longer than television stories, and longer stories use more framing. For stories of any given length, the amount of framing on television and Internet is very similar.

Looking at television, CBC and the competing newscasts are very similar, the main difference being that CTV and Global use the Human Interest frame more than CBC. The competing Internet sources are similar to CBC.ca, although their use of the Conflict frame is more pronounced.

Figure 52. Frames used by platform:





CBCnews

PART II:

THREE CASE STUDIES

Chapters 9 to 11 apply the measures described in Part I to three major stories of the 2009-2010 season:

- In October 2009, the H1N1 flu gripped the nation's attention like few events in the past decade. It was a close-to-home crisis that demanded quick, coordinated action by both governments and the health system.
- The Copenhagen conference on climate change, December 2009, was billed by some as possibly the last chance to save the planet. It generated tremendous conflict among the many interest groups, and the most strongly negative tone of all stories over the season.
- The Haiti earthquake of January 2010 was by far the biggest story of the year, as measured by volume of coverage. Despite the tragedy and suffering, the tone associated with this issue was strongly positive.

A brief chronology of the H1N1 story

Week 1: Oct. 26-Nov. 1 2009

- Swine flu immunization underway: available to health care workers and high risk people
- Ottawa: H1N1 wristbands prevent gaming the system
- Canada's largest vaccination program is underway but there is a lot of skepticism

Week 2: Nov. 2-8

- Ontario aims for 2 million H1N1 shots this week
- Vaccine queue jumping: Mount Sinai Hospital board members get H1N1 vaccine
- Lineups for flu vaccine continue across the country

Week 4: Nov. 16-22

- Flu shots are available to the public at large

Week 6: Nov. 30-Dec. 6

- Clinics are closing, but provinces are still shipping in the vaccine

This chapter examines the amount of coverage by different sources, the people who appeared in that coverage, the tone applied to different constituencies and how the stories were framed.

The “double peak” that some experts anticipated for 2010 did not materialize, and the story stayed quiet.

Amount of coverage

H1N1 coverage ran at close to one-quarter of all news for the two weeks beginning October 26 (Figure 53). On CBC, the average for these two weeks was 23% and on the competing networks, 26%. (These results include all platforms.)

In the US, The Pew News Coverage Index put swine flu at 5% for the week of October 26 and 2% for the week of November 2. Five percent was the highest that swine flu ever ranked in the fall of 2009. The New Media Index placed swine flu at 11% for the week of Oct 26 and out of the top five (and thus less than 8%) for the week of November 2.

Figure 53. Proportion of news devoted to H1N1: CBC and other sources, all platforms

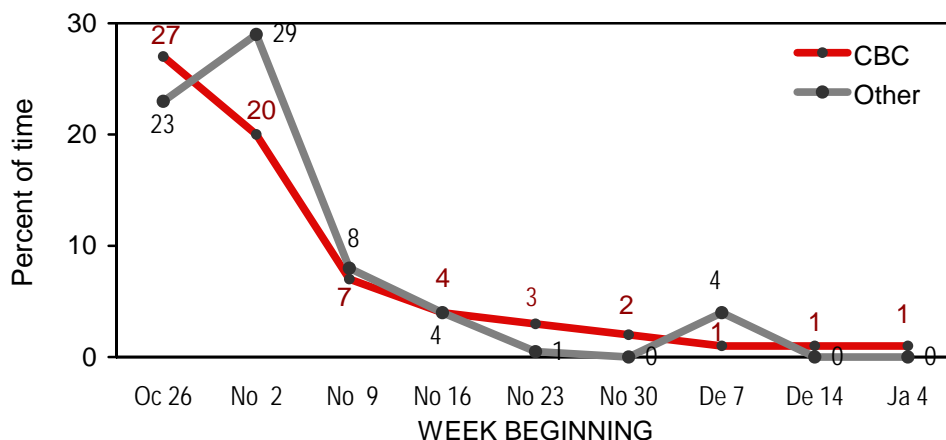
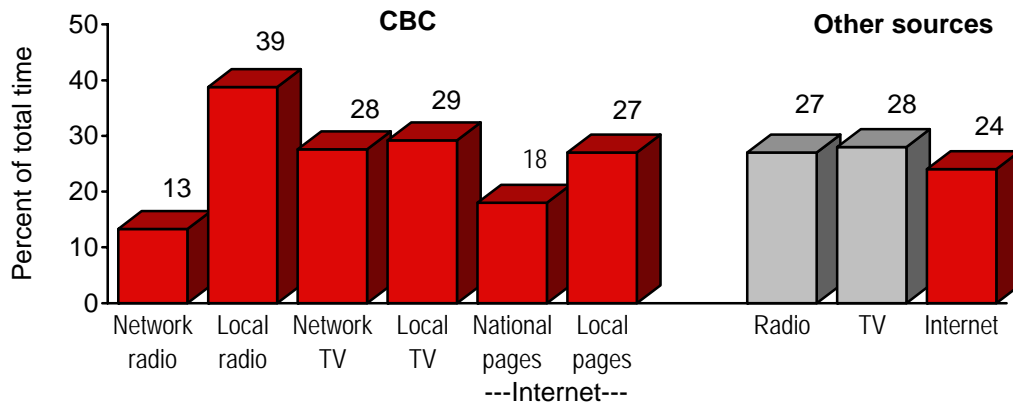


Figure 54 shows the amount of coverage on different platforms during the height of the crisis, the two weeks from October 26 to November 8. On CBC radio, local newscasts gave this issue three times more play than did network newscasts. On CBC.ca, the issue was also more prominent in local coverage. On CBC television, local and network news gave it equal prominence. On CBC television, local and network news gave it equal prominence.

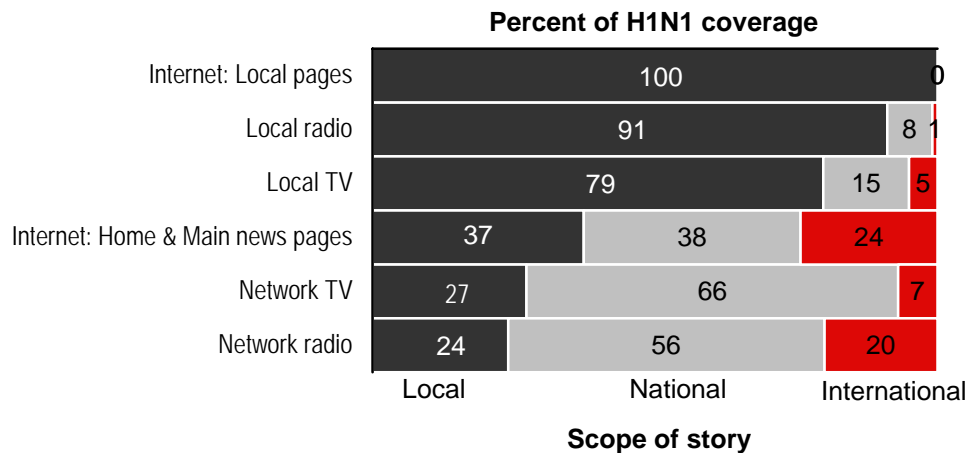
Figure 54. Amount of H1N1 coverage: CBC and competing sources



Scope of coverage

While H1N1 was affecting people around the world, the emphasis in coverage was on the Canadian scene (Figure 55). In CBC news *overall*, the international component accounts for 62% of news (see Figure 12). International coverage of H1N1 (the red bars in Figure 55) is a small fraction of this.

Figure 55. Scope of H1N1 stories: CBC

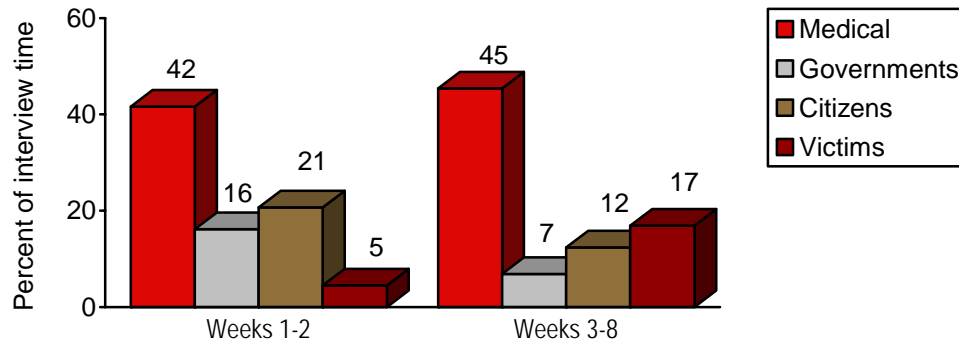


Note: "International" includes foreign stories in which Canada is involved, e.g., Canadian participation at the UN.

Interviewees

After weeks 1 and 2, the height of the crisis, there was a small shift in focus. Government officials became less prominent, dropping from 16% of interview time to 7%. More victims were interviewed; their proportion of interview time rose from 5% to 17% (Figure 56). The total proportion of interview time for citizens does not change greatly, but more of these citizens were victims.

Figure 56. Interviewees in H1N1 coverage in early and later stages: CBC

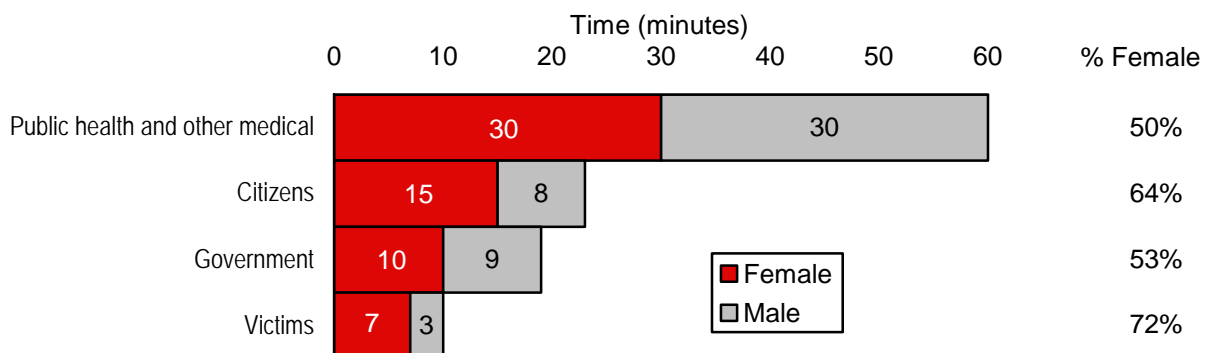


The four groups in Figure 57 include about 95% of all interviewee time.

Dr. David Butler-Jones, the Chief Public Health Officer, was the go-to individual for this event. He represents 12 of the 48 minutes for medical interviews, and was the most-interviewed individual on this topic by a wide margin.

It is unusual that women are so prominent: they represent half or more of the interview time in each major category of interviewees. In topics *other than H1N1*, women account for just 25% of interview time.

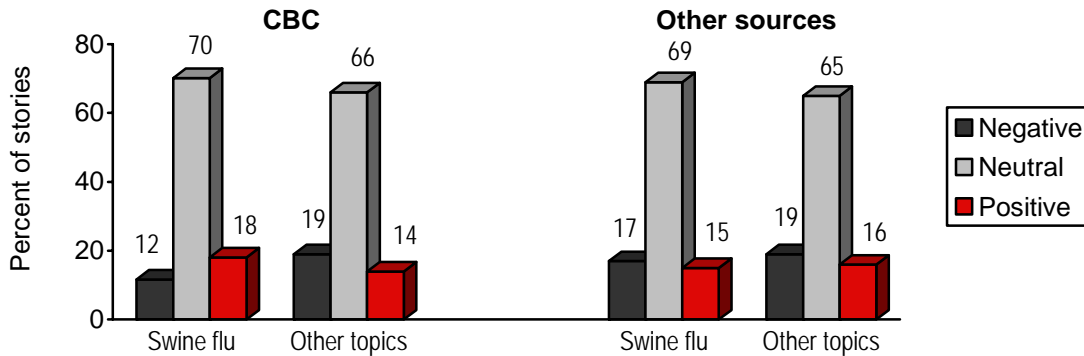
Figure 57. Gender of interviewees in H1N1 coverage, by role: CBC



Tone

On CBC, the tone of H1N1 stories is markedly less negative and more neutral than that of other stories. On the other networks, flu stories and other stories have very similar tone patterns.

Figure 58. Tone of intros and extros for H1N1 and other topics: CBC and other sources

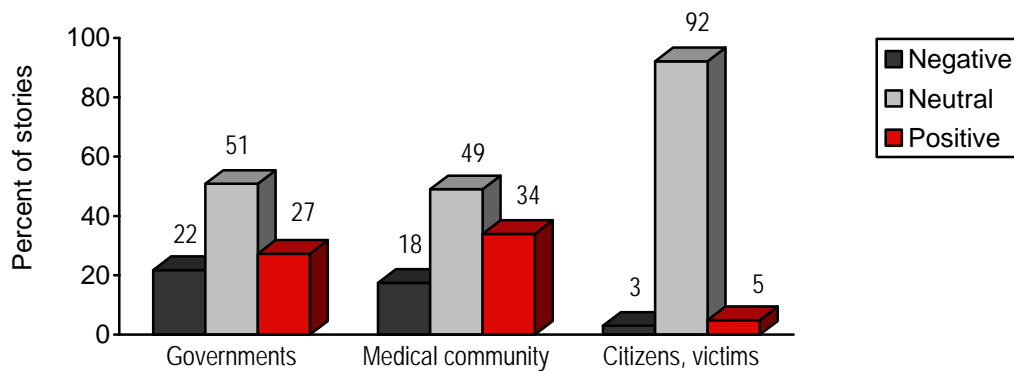


Note: "Other topics" includes all news other than the Haiti story.

The relevant medical community consists mainly of public health workers (ranging from experts to clinic workers) with a smaller number of medical commentators from hospitals and other settings. Intros tend to be positive. Intros about governments (other than public health) are mixed, while those describing citizens and victims are overwhelmingly neutral.

The pattern of tone in intros and extros is very similar and Figure 59 combines the two. There is not a sufficient volume of data from the other sources to provide this breakdown.

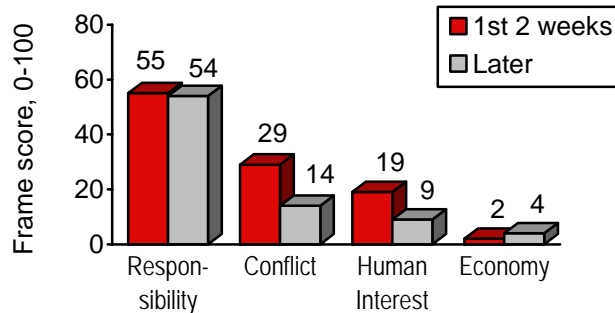
Figure 59. Tone of intros and extros about major groups in H1N1 coverage: CBC



Frames

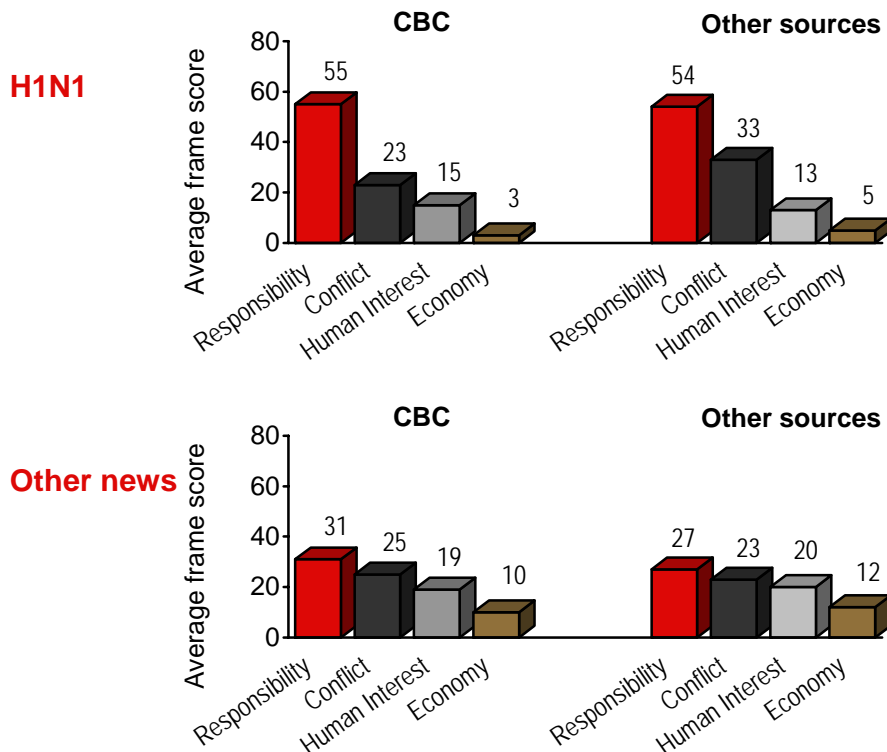
The relative chaos of the early weeks of the flu story is reflected in the higher Conflict and Human Interest scores. Various governments blamed each other for delays, and certain high-profile groups jumped the cue to receive the vaccine early. The Human Interest scores arise from stories of long lineups, anxiety and illness.

Figure 60. Frames in H1N1 coverage, early and later phases: CBC



Frame scores on competing media differ significantly only for Conflict, CBC's score is 23 and the competing media's is 33 (Figure 61, top). H1N1 differs from other news (lower panel) largely in its high Attribution of Responsibility scores.

Figure 61. Frame scores for H1N1 and other issues: CBC and other sources



10 Climate change



The Wordle chart uses word frequencies of the headline descriptions that analysts wrote for each news story. Font size is proportional to word frequency. The phrase “Climate change” was omitted from this chart.

In December 2009, the world’s leaders came together in Copenhagen for a historic summit that might change the course of world history. According to one script, the UN Climate Change Conference was the best and possibly the last chance to save the world from passing the tipping point into carbon dioxide induced devastation. The cost would be enormous, requiring political sacrifice, the transfer of considerable money and resources to the developing world, and the creation of a new financial market to administer trade in carbon credits.

Given the potential impact of the decisions being considered at Copenhagen on a) the Earth and b) the economies of both rich and poor countries, one might expect that there would be critical analysis of both the science underlying climate projections, and the costs and benefits of proposed solutions, or indeed the costs of failing to find solutions.

The debate in the US and the UK was more pointed than in Canada, as a consequence of events including:

- The Waxman-Markey bill in the US, which aroused fears of potential costs;
- The EPA endangerment finding that CO₂ and other greenhouse gasses are a threat to public health, which allows solutions to be imposed by regulation rather than legislation;
- The release of the “Climategate” files from the Hadley Climate Research Unit, University of East Anglia;
- The BBC’s investigation into its long-term coverage of the climate issue and other science reporting.

Partly in response to these events, there was a growing debate about the science and the economics of the issue in the US and UK media.

In Canada, the public debate leading up to Copenhagen was more political than substantive. On the one hand, the federal government held that Canada must act in concert with the US (and because the US did not have a clearly formulated position there was nothing much to do); on the other hand environmentalists and some provinces (notably Quebec) criticized the government for dragging its feet on a critical issue.

A brief chronology

Week 4: Nov. 16-22, 2009

- APEC summit in Singapore. World leaders fail to reach a consensus in this lead-up to the Copenhagen conference. Environmental groups target Canada for its failure to live up to Kyoto pledges.
- Climategate files are released.

Week 5: Nov 23-29

- Following President Obama’s decision to attend Copenhagen, Prime Minister Harper reverses his stand and announces that he will go too.

Week 8: Dec 14-20

- Copenhagen summit.

Week 9: Jan 4-10, 2010

- BBC launches investigation into balance in its coverage of climate change and other science-related topics.

Week 10: Jan 11-17

- The Sunday Edition panel on media coverage of climate change.

Weeks 11-25: Jan 18-May 2

- Little coverage of this topic.

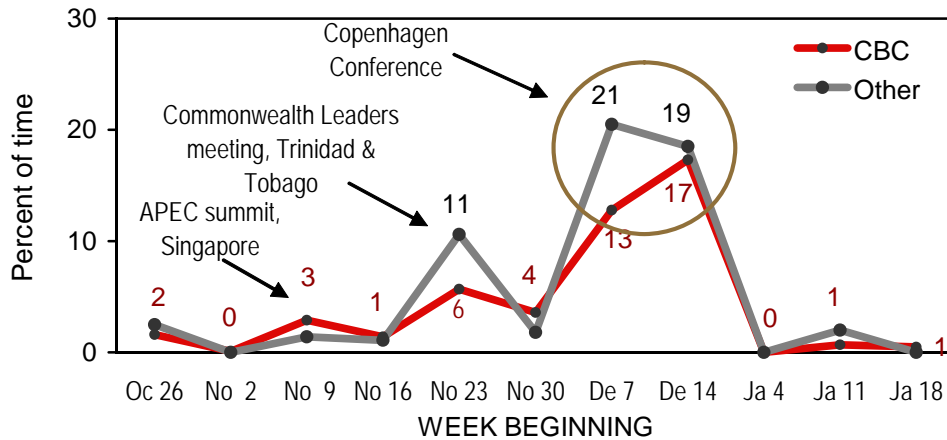
Coverage of climate change

In terms of volume of coverage, climate change was one of the major events of the fall season. There was a small spike in CBC coverage of the climate issue at the time of the APEC summit, week of November 23, when climate rose to 6% of all news (Figure 62). A larger spike occurred in the two weeks around the Copenhagen conference in mid-December.

In the competing Canadian media, climate change accounted for a slightly larger share of the news: 11% for the week of November 23, 21% for the week of December 7 and 19% for the week of December 14.

The PEJ News Coverage Index put “Global Warming” at 10% and 11% of news coverage for the two weeks around Copenhagen. In the New Media Index, Global Warming surged to 52% for the first week of the conference, December 7.

Figure 62. Coverage of climate change: CBC and other sources, all platforms



People in the news

The events of November and December focused on the actions of the UN and of governments around the world, whereby government roles are well represented in the news. CBC differs from the other sources primarily by using more analysts and more scientists. The other sources relied more heavily on government figures (politicians and civil servants).

Figure 63. Interview time: CBC

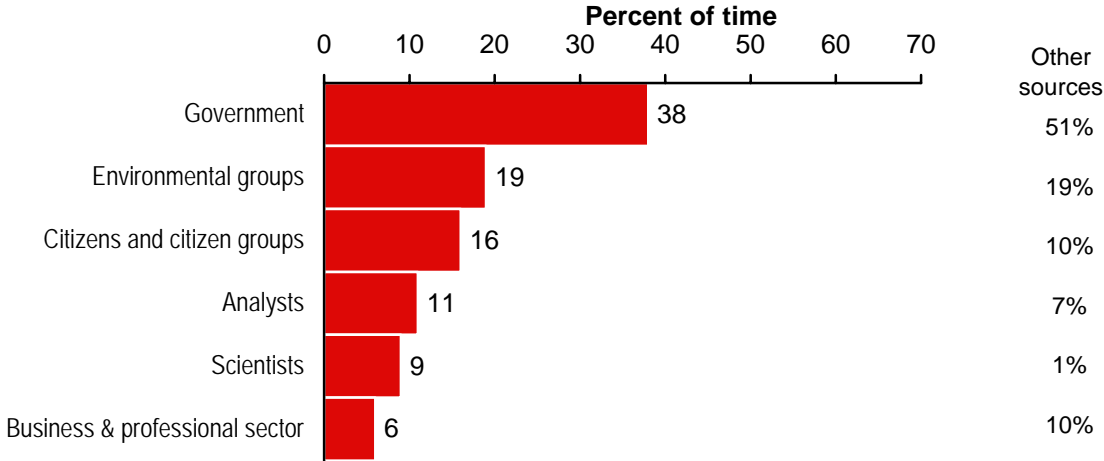
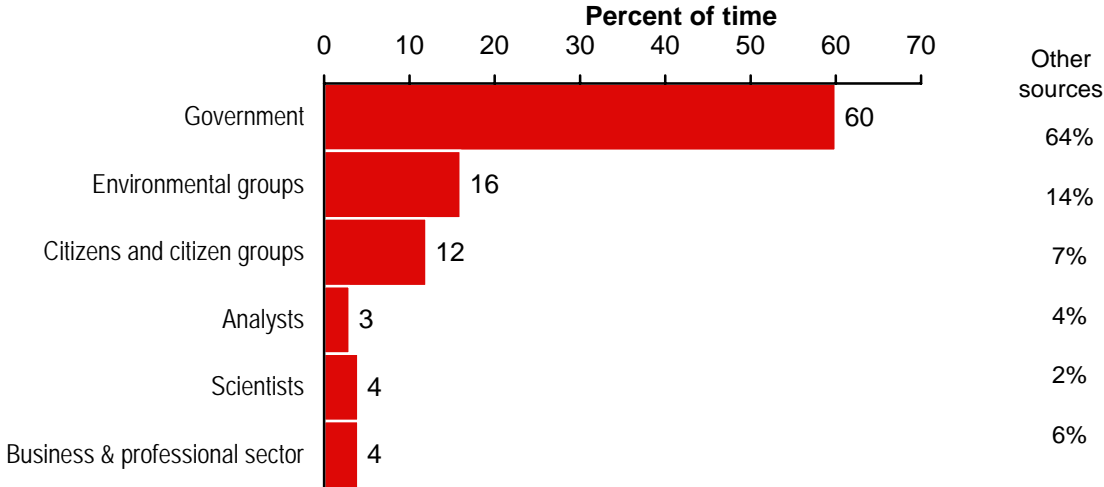


Figure 64 shows the head-count data, adding up the number of appearances by people in each group – both interviews and mentions. The percent for governments increases, from 38% for the time measure to 60% for the mentions measure. This reflects the fact that government leaders were often discussed in stories (i.e., mentioned) without being interviewed (or in the case of cbc.ca, directly quoted).

Figure 64. Frequency of mentions: CBC



The government group is split almost equally between Canadian and foreign sources, reflecting the international nature of the issue.

It is of interest to look into the non-government groups to determine the positions that were represented. The environmental groups were, by definition, on the green side of the issue, arguing for an active government response to the threat of global warming. Citizens generally aligned with the environmentalists.

In contrast to the H1N1 story, where expert commentary abounded, there was relatively little input from scientists or economists or others with technical expertise on the issues. Scientists interviewed on CBC all advanced opinions consistent with the mainstream (UN) position.

Several other perspectives were introduced by non-scientists:

- A debate arose around a report by a polar bear expert who reported seeing a bear cannibalize some cubs as a result of starvation induced by climate change. This was countered by Inuit who stated that male bears will eat cubs when they have the chance.
- A story on The National on December 2 described the global warming debate with interviews with mainstream scientists and a skeptic, UK journalist Christopher Booker.
- A commentary by Rex Murphy approached the issue of sloppy science, following the email leak from the University of East Anglia.

(CBC.ca produced a number of analysis and background pieces that increased the range of views on the issues, however these areas of the website are not included in this analysis, which is restricted to the news section.)

In the main, alternative perspectives were offered at the political level rather than in the scientific/economic arena, for example:

- Canada was either doing enough (the Canadian government position), or not enough (Ban Ki-moon, some European governments, the Quebec government, environmental groups, protesters);
- The divide between developed and developing nations was frequently mentioned, with certain developed countries insisting on substantial CO₂ cuts from developing nations, while they in turn argued that the fight against global warming should not perpetuate their historical disadvantage;
- Political factions and maneuvering at the Copenhagen conference were a focus of coverage, for example the controversial Danish proposal that would shift more of the burden of mitigating CO₂ onto developing nations, and which widened the divide between rich and poor countries.

Frames in climate change news

Climate change reports were framed strongly in terms of Responsibility and Conflict, in particular:

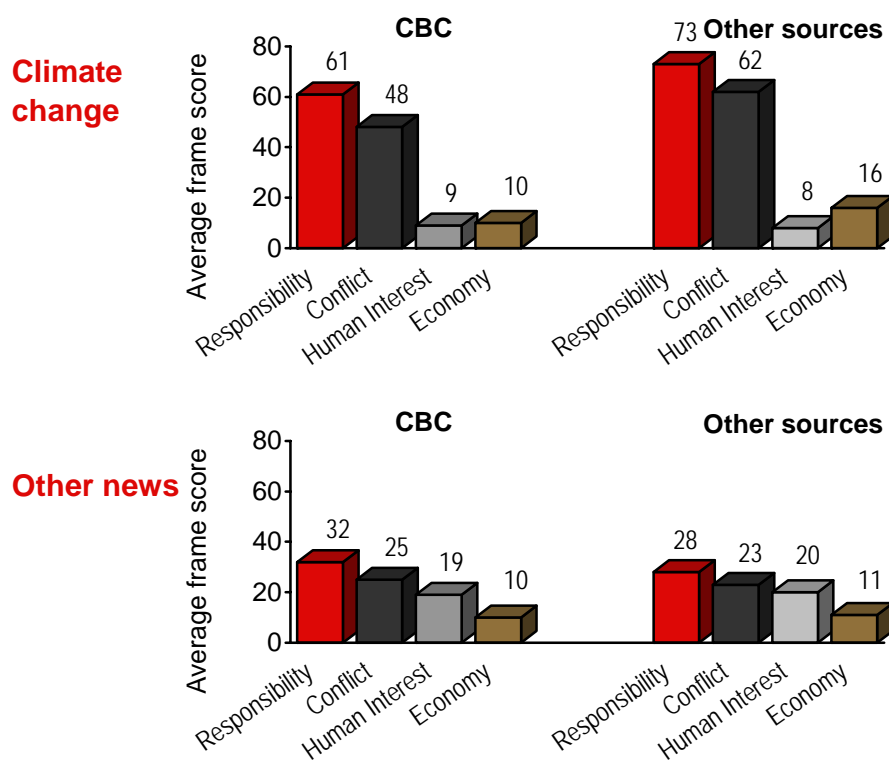
- The responsibility of governments to take concerted action; and,
- Conflicts between governments and environmentalists, as well as conflict among governments.

Differences among the CBC platforms are not statistically significant.

Given that a primary purpose of the Copenhagen process was to create a new economic order based on the cost of carbon, it is perhaps surprising that the economic frame scored so low (significantly higher on the competing sources than on CBC), Figure 65.

The competing sources emphasized Responsibility, Conflict and Economy significantly more strongly than did CBC in framing climate change stories.

Figure 65. Frames in climate change news: CBC and other sources



The Responsibility frame centred strongly on the perceived need for government action to reduce global warming, for example:

- APEC summit leaves concerns: leaders fail to give concrete emission targets
- A UN agency says greenhouse gasses in the atmosphere are at their highest level ever recorded
- New study released by the UN world meteorological organization says urgent action must be taken now to slow down global warming
- The mayors of Toronto and Vancouver are disappointed in the federal stand on the environment
- Copenhagen – What about Canada?

The Conflict frame reflected several different points of friction, between protesters and government delegates, between developed and developing countries, and between business and environmental interests:

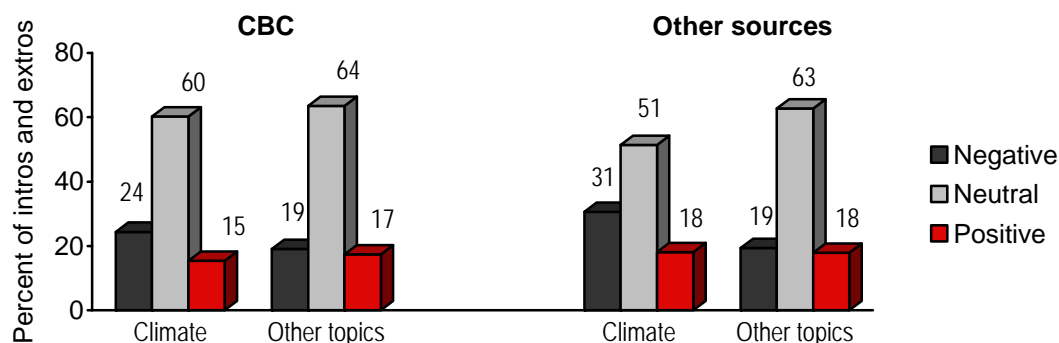
- Demonstrations at climate change summit in Copenhagen
- Police break up climate protest at Parliament buildings
- The climate question in Fort McMurray
- Canada under attack for considering weaker emissions target for oil sands
- Inuit leaders think that any agreement on the environment should include them
- Developing nations decry Danish climate plan in Copenhagen

Tone

The tone of climate stories tilts well to the negative on both CBC and the other sources. News other than climate change is nearly equal parts positive and negative.

Because reporting on the climate issue focused largely on the activities of governments and politicians, most of the tone, both positive and negative, arose in descriptions of governments. Tone associated with foreign governments was roughly balanced between positive and negative, while tone associated with the Canadian government was largely negative. Canada swam against the prevailing current in these negotiations, and was criticized as a laggard by groups ranging from the Quebec government to Ban Ki-moon to environmental lobbies, which gave Canada several “fossil awards”.

Figure 66. Tone of intros and extros on climate change and other topics: CBC and other sources



Note: “Other topics” includes all news other than the Haiti story.

Climate coverage

Over the period of this study, there were two prominent branches to the climate change story. The main branch was the tortuous path toward a global carbon reduction agreement, and the consequences of failure.

The smaller branch questioned the assumptions of the main story – is the accepted climate science accurate? Are remedies such as cap and trade likely to reduce CO₂ in a meaningful way? Are they fair to developed and developing countries?

This second branch gained legs after the Copenhagen Conference. The failure to reach any comprehensive agreement pushed the possibility of a solution well into the future, creating a post-Kyoto policy vacuum which invited divergent views. The Climategate emails and subsequent investigations in both the UK and the US have given profile to the issue. The BBC's ongoing examination of its own science reporting is part of the fall-out.

Observations

If climate change is indeed a serious issue, the media should get to the bottom of the science and of the remedies. A panel on The Sunday Edition, CBC (January 17, 2010) discussed why this is so difficult. It lamented there is still a thick layer of wool between the core science and the public. There was a consensus that the media had not explained the issue in sufficient depth, and had often taken the easy way out. Who to blame? The panel explored many possibilities: editors who are not going to give a lot of space to articles that describe highly technical explanations such as “climate sensitivity”, even when they are critical to informed thinking, scientists who are “lousy communicators”, journalists who go for the easy story with emotional resonance, and consumers who are presumed to skip past challenging material.

The impression at the end of the discussion: media coverage of science is not up to the level that is found in politics and business. The science of climate change has not been well-reported. Layers of the question wait to be explored.

The climate story is about politics as well as science and economics, and in this area media coverage is on firmer ground. Science reporting is something of a poor cousin to other areas of journalism, possibly because science seems removed from more immediate issues like wars, money, jobs and health care. The climate issue shows that even when the science is urgent, when the Earth may soon pass a tipping point, it is difficult to tell the story.

It seems safe to conclude that:

- Public knowledge of the subject is relatively low (even though opinions are many);
- The issue is important; and,
- It is not likely to go away any time soon.

What, then, is the role of a news program (or of the media in general)? Should it provide basic education – primers on climate change? Should it widen the scope of debate to include dissenting positions that some (e.g., economist Paul Krugman) consider to be immoral, or stick to the mainstream view?

While it seems clear enough that citizens and journalists and probably politicians could all benefit from a better understanding of the science and the economics involved, scientist Daniel Sarewitz points out that this will not automatically make the solutions any clearer. Scientific facts can be marshaled to support all kinds of conflicting policy options:

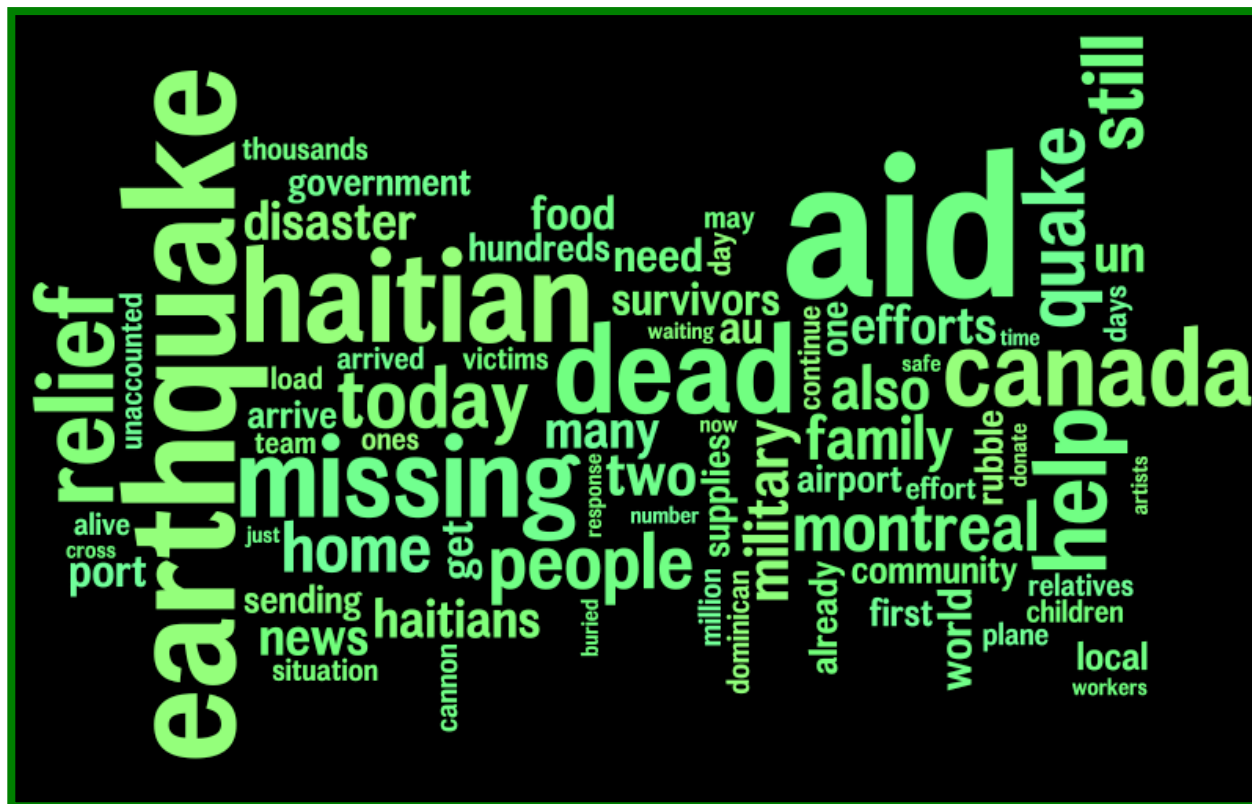
A dangerous idea has taken hold in modern politics, and the sooner it is discredited, the better. The idea is that political disagreements can be resolved by science. Its basic logic seems sensible: As good children of the Enlightenment, we should turn to science to establish the facts about problems such as climate change before deciding what policies to implement. Yet the types of things that scientists are good at figuring out don't have much to do with the types of things that politicians need to decide.⁹

Taking one large step back from the controversy, several scientific authorities in the area have observed that climate change is taking up an inordinate amount of attention¹⁰. It has hijacked the environmental agenda, largely because of the enormous prestige it has gained from the UN IPCC process and the consequent attention by world governments. As a result, all environmental issues tend to be seen through the narrow lens of climate change. The climate will be with us as an issue for a long time to come, but it might be of benefit to examine environmental problems from other perspectives.

⁹ Sarewitz, Daniel. The Trouble With Climate Science: More research makes the controversy worse. Slate, March 10 2010. <http://www.slate.com/id/2247487>. See also Sarewitz, Daniel. How science makes environmental controversies worse. *Environmental Science and Policy* 7 (2004) 385-403.

¹⁰ For example, Wallace, John M. Beyond climate change: Reframing the dialogue over environmental issues. The Seattle Times, March 26, 2010.

11 Haiti



The Wordle chart uses word frequencies of the headline descriptions that analysts wrote for each news story. Font size is proportional to word frequency. “Haiti” was omitted from this chart.

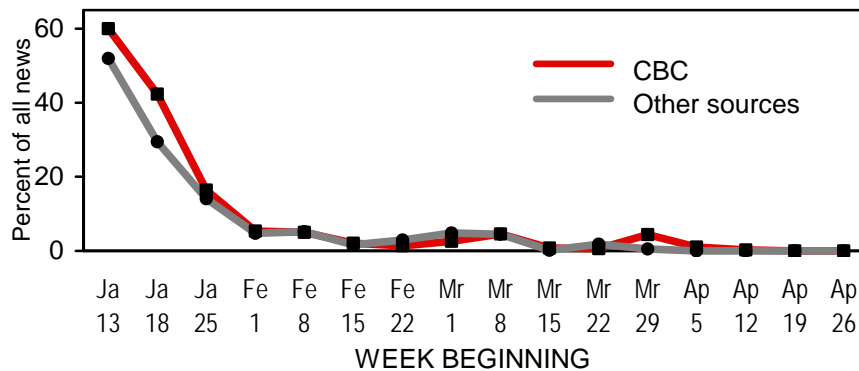
The most striking aspect of the Haiti story is the sheer volume of coverage that it generated. The earthquake occurred on the afternoon of Tuesday, January 12, 2010. The network’s flagship newscasts were particularly involved in the story. For January 13-17, Haiti accounted for:

- 84% of all news on The National (the sample included the editions of January 13, 15, 17, 2010);
- 89% on the CTV National News (January 13, 15); and
- 91% on the Global National News (January 16).

Broadening the picture to include all newscasts, Figure 67, the volume of CBC’s coverage was slightly greater than that of the competing networks for the initial weeks of January 13 and 18. CBC and the competition had very similar amounts of coverage thereafter. The Pew News Coverage Index does not have data for the week that the quake occurred, however for several weeks thereafter it reports that Haiti occupied 27%, 11%, 8% and 5% of US mainstream news – essentially the same figures as for the competing networks in Figure 67.

The amount of coverage devoted to Haiti is far greater than for any other single topic. The Olympic Games are a distant second place, accounting for about 35% of the news for two weeks in February.

Figure 67. Coverage of the Haiti earthquake over time: CBC and other sources



The prominence of the story varied widely across the different CBC venues (Figure 68). On network programming, coverage in the first week ranged from 50% on the Internet to 81% on television. At the local level, the range ran from 13% on the Internet to 55% on television. These high volumes declined quickly on each platform, as shown in Figure 69.

Haiti was the biggest story within every arm of CBC news; however, the emphasis on the story varied widely across platforms.

The degree of divergence is greater than for other major issues that arose over the study period.

Figure 68. Amount of Haiti coverage, January 13-17 2010: CBC

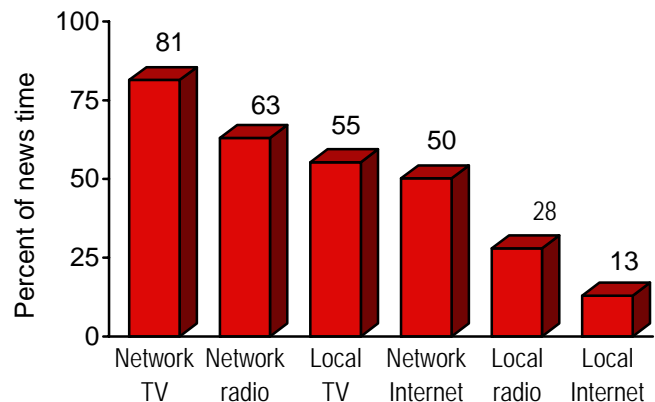
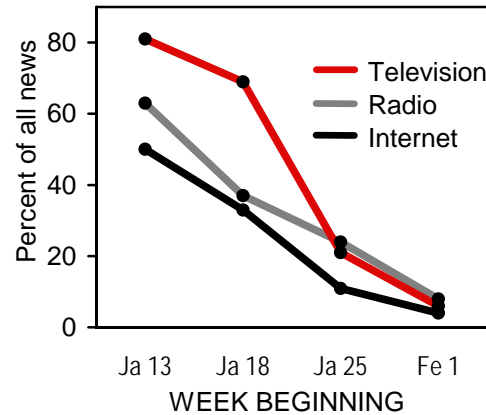


Figure 69. Coverage of the quake on network radio, television and Internet: CBC

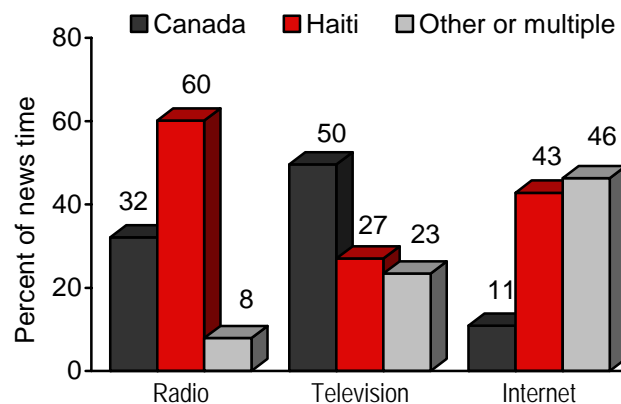


Location of CBC coverage

Figure 70 shows that story locations differed widely across platforms: CBC radio focused on coverage from Haiti, while the majority of CBC television coverage was located in Canada. The Internet focused almost entirely on Haiti and “Other” locations. Much of the material in the “Other” location category either covered a number of different locations or could be termed “international”, with no fixed location, for example, “UN appeals for aid”, or “European leaders are promising to act quickly”.

Stories within Canada tended to focus on family connections, telethons and other efforts to raise money or resources, and preparations by the Canadian government and NGOs.

Figure 70. Location of Haiti coverage, Jan. 12 to Jan 17 2010: CBC



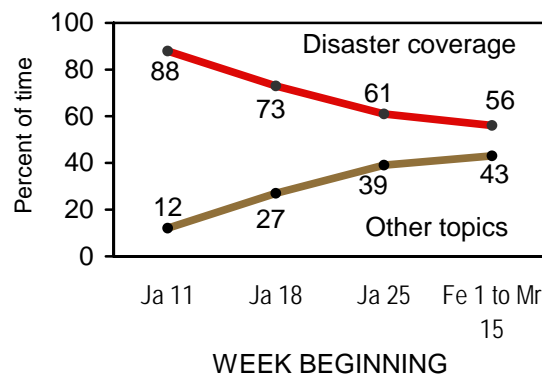
Issues in coverage of the quake in Haiti

In the five days following the quake, coverage was almost entirely focused on the disaster aspect: the extent of damage, aid to victims, the plight of relatives in Canada and the response of governments and agencies around the world. This constellation of issues accounts for 88% of stories about the quake (Figure 71). In following weeks, the disaster element remained strong but emphasis turned to rebuilding and the political situation.

CBC stories that are not “disaster coverage” are distributed over many topics. In the two months following the quake the main non-disaster issues were:

- Social problems, and in particular the adoption of Haitian orphans;
- Benefit concerts, telethons, etc.;
- International political actions;
- Human interest stories (e.g., survivors, Canadian connections to Haiti); and
- Crime stories (e.g., fraudulent fundraising scams and the American missionaries arrested for transporting orphans out of Haiti).

Figure 71. Relative emphasis on disaster coverage and other topics: CBC

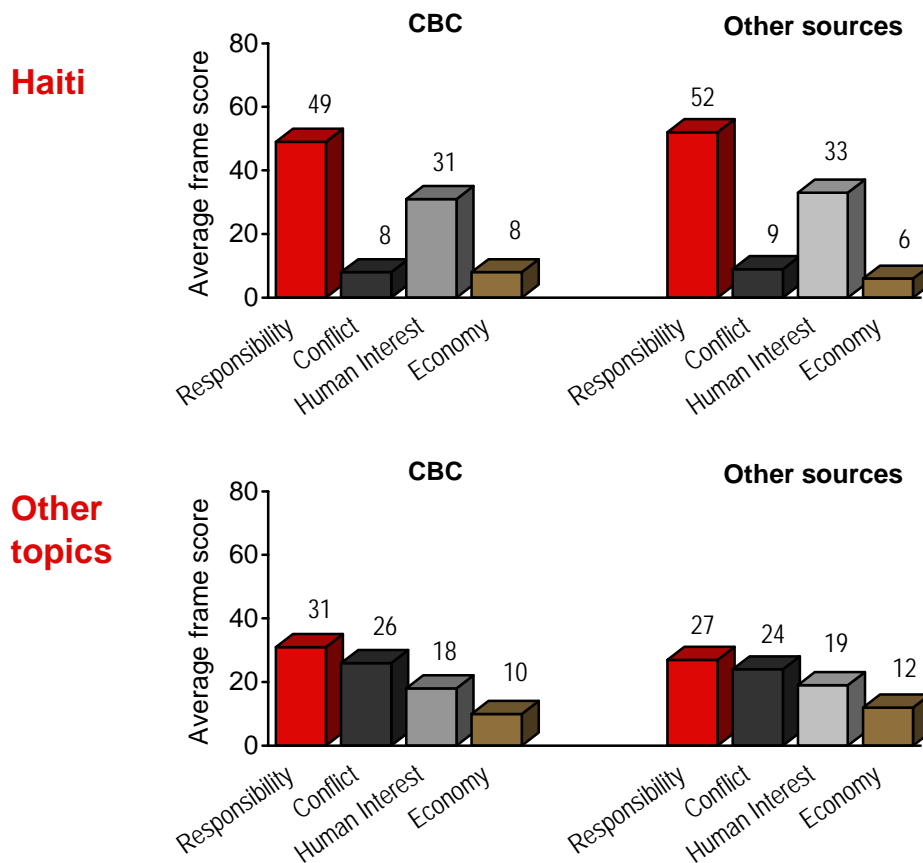


Framing of the Haiti story

The disaster was framed almost exclusively in terms of Responsibility and Human Interest.

The framing of this issue is consistent across platforms and for both network and local programming. CBC and the competing networks present very similar profiles.

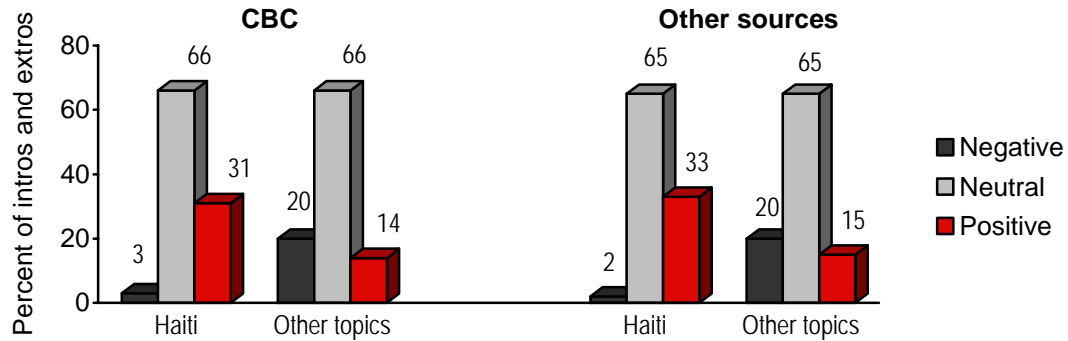
Figure 72. Frame scores in coverage of Haiti: CBC and other sources



Tone of Haiti stories vs. other stories

In CBC coverage, the Haiti story has the most positive tone of any of the major stories, including the Olympic Games (Figure 42, Figure 73). The competing news sources are almost identical in tone.

Figure 73. Tone of intros and extros for Haiti vs. all other topics: CBC and other sources



Note: "Other topics" includes all news other than the Haiti story.

While many stories described the appalling conditions and the problems that existed, they were typically presented using neutral intros and extros.

The positive context was used to describe relief efforts, both in Haiti and in Canada. Examples follow.

Examples of positive stories on Haiti

Canada matches individual donations

The federal Government has so far allocated \$113 million to match individual donations made by Canadians to the Haiti relief effort, International Co-operation Minister Bev Oda said Monday. "This amazing response reflects the true values of Canadians," she said.

Haiti will lead rebuilding, Canada says; Haitian PM thanks other countries

Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive offered thanks to the international community Monday for its support since the January 12 earthquake, adding that his country will need "more and more and more aid" to complete reconstruction.

continued...

Examples of positive stories on Haiti, continued

Montreal family opens its home to 8 orphaned relatives

At a time in life when many couples contemplate empty nests and quiet retirement, Eric and Nicole Pauyo are embracing parenthood all over again. So many kids are overrunning their Montreal home these days that the household has been compared to a reality TV show.

The family has been called Pauyo Plus 8 – the number of kids who have suddenly showed up in their home in the last few weeks. This story is born out of tragedy, however. The couple’s eight new charges are nieces and nephews left orphaned by Haiti’s earthquake.

PM tours Haitian town

[Harper] announced that Canada will donate \$12 million to build a temporary headquarters to house government departments whose buildings were destroyed in the earthquake. The Canadian-funded base will include tents and hard-shelled temporary buildings. It is expected to be used for as long as a year, and will be installed after the Haitian government chooses a location.

A negative example

The very rare negative context was mainly reserved for bungling of one sort or another, as the following example illustrates:

Montreal Haitians question government response

This was supposed to be an information meeting in a north end Montreal community centre. Two Immigration Canada bureaucrats are squirming in front of about 50 Haitians. The Haitians want to know why things are moving so slowly.

What is the “right” journalistic response to a catastrophe of this magnitude? Arguably, it is to show, over time, the entire range of situations and emotions, from triumph to failure and hope to despair.

John Doyle, the *Globe and Mail*’s TV critic, reviewed a PBS documentary titled *The Quake* (March 30, 2010). In this program about US coverage of the event, the reporter states, “The world had watched hours of dramatic rescues on television, but the truth was, only a very small fraction of those caught in the rubble survived. Fewer than 150 people. Many tens of thousands were buried.”

In Doyle’s opinion, the media overplayed the hope and triumph: “What TV news brought us from Haiti, over and over, were scenes of somebody being dramatically rescued from under rubble. The sheer scale of the disaster and the lives lost were less important.”

It is interesting to speculate how the story would have been covered had a Canadian city been shattered. Would the tragic element be stronger when the victims were closer to home?

People

Figure 74 indicates that aid groups had the largest speaking presence on radio and television coverage.

Looking more broadly to include all people who were mentioned by name, there are similar proportions of government people, aid groups and citizens. (This latter measure includes the Internet as well.) From the Canadian government we heard from Stephen Harper, Lawrence Cannon, Peter Mackay, Jason Kenney as well as a number of military personnel, and Michaëlle Jean. On the international level, Ban Ki-moon, Bill Clinton, President Obama, René Préval and Jean-Bertrand Aristide were present. All of these appearances were brief sound-bite appearances with the exception of longer interviews with Peter Mackay and Bill Clinton.

Large numbers of aid workers and citizens appeared, both in Canada and Haiti. Three aid workers had substantive interviews of more than 2 minutes speaking time, while all the rest who were heard in these groups were brief appearances.

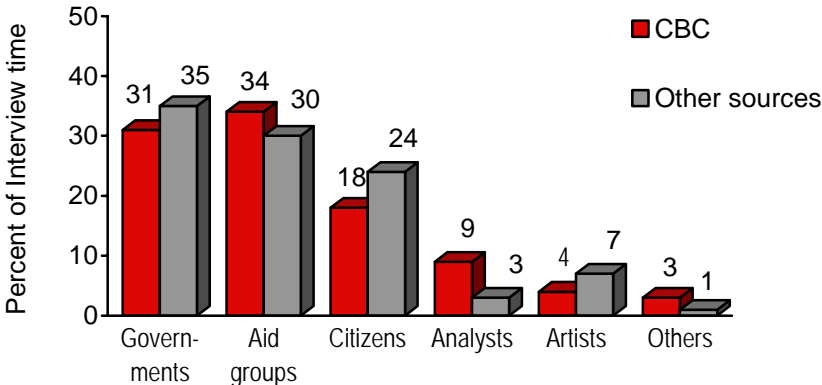
On CBC television, the initial week of the Haiti story was told using the participants’ own words to a greater extent than is the norm. 34% of CBC television coverage was direct interview time, compared to 25% in news generally. The difference is partly due to the inclusion of longer interviews, averaging about 5 minutes in length. Neither CBC radio nor the competing networks did this to the same extent.

The government interviewees on CBC break down as two-thirds Canadian figures and one-third foreign. On the competing networks we see 80% Canadian and 20% foreign.

There are three notable differences between CBC’s network and local news:

- Government officials figure more prominently in network news (32% of interview time) than in local news (21%);
- Analysts are more prominent in network news (11%) than in local news (1%);
- Citizens are heard more in local news (34% of interview time) than in national news (15%).

Figure 74. Major groups of interviewees on radio and television: CBC and other sources



Note Results include both local and network news

Appendix A: Research method

ERIN Research Inc. has conducted analyses of media content for nearly 30 years, and during this time has developed numerous processes and statistical techniques to ensure quality and accuracy. These are described briefly in the Research Method following.

1. Material analyzed

The sample began October 26, 2009 and ended May 2, 2010. A two-week period from December 21, 2009 to January 3, 2010 was excluded, giving 25 weeks of analyzed news content in all.

The database encompasses three platforms: radio, television and CBC.ca. It includes newscasts on CBC Radio 1, CBC Television and CBC News Network along with news presented on CBC.ca. For comparative purposes, material is also sampled from the CTV National News, Global National, five private all-news radio stations, theglobeandmail.com and canada.com. The programs and stations are listed in Table 4. The total amount of material analyzed is:

- **116** hours of radio news (5,980 news stories);
- **189** hours of television news (7,545 news stories); and
- **2,483** Internet news stories (the textual equivalent of about 120 hours of broadcast content).

The sample draws on material from all parts of the country and from each day of the week. The recording schedule is adjusted each week to provide a representative sample of programs and time slots:

- Some Network newscasts are broadcast separately in different time zones and their content may differ from one time zone to the next. For these programs (e.g., World Report, The National), the sample draws from all time zones.
- Local CBC radio programs are sampled from the universe of 32 CBC stations; stations in larger markets are selected more frequently than those in small markets.
- Local CBC television programs are sampled from the eight stations available on satellite: Halifax, Fredericton, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary and Vancouver.
- Sports and weather stories that appear as items within a newscast are included as news. Stand-alone sportscasts and weather reports are not included.

Table 4. Weekly sample

Program	Minutes per week
CBC News Network	
CBC News Now: 7:00-9:00 AM	30
CBC News Now: 9:00-11:00 AM	30
CBC News Now: 11:00-Noon and 1:00-2:00 PM	30
CBC News Now: 2:00-4:30 Weekdays, (2:00-5:00 Saturday and Sunday)	30
CBC network television	
CBC News Now: 6:00-7:00 AM	30
CBC News Now: 12:00-12:30 PM	30
The National: 10:00-10:55 PM (6:00-6:30 PM Saturday)	240
CBC local television	
CBC News: 5:00-6:30 PM (various locations)	150
CBC News: 10:55-11:05 PM (various locations)	50
Competing television	
CTV National News: 11:00 PM	60
Global National News: 5:30 PM	60
CBC network radio	
World Report: 5:00, 6:00, 7:00, 8:00 Weekdays	
World Report: 6:00, 7:00, 8:00, 9:00 Saturday and Sunday	70
The World This Hour: 4:00, 5:00 PM	30
The World at Six: 6:00 PM	60
The World This Weekend: 6:00 PM	30
Hourly newscasts during the day	20
CBC local radio	
AM drive: newscast only, on the 1/2 hr	25
PM drive: newscast only, on the 1/2 hr	15
Local noon news	20
Competing radio	
95.7 Halifax: Rogers	10
680 Toronto: Rogers	10
880 Edmonton: Corus	10
660 Calgary: Rogers	10
1130 Vancouver: Rogers	10
Total	1,060
Internet	Number of stories per week
CBC.ca	75
theglobeandmail.com	13
Canada.com	13
Total	101

Selection of internet stories

Programs are natural and convenient units for sampling radio and television news, but a different strategy is required on the Internet.

To create the Internet sample:

- The sample was limited to news stories and did not include backgrounders, feature articles, commentaries or reader comments. Only stories that appeared for the first time on the day in question were chosen.
- No duplicates were taken, e.g., when the same story appeared on two or more pages.
- When selecting one or several stories from a larger page, stories were chosen at random from those available.
- On CBC.ca, the large majority of stories on the home page and on the main news page are national or international in scope. Local stories were selected from the Canada page, which provides a compendium of local material taken from the individual local sites (Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, etc.).

CBC.ca Weekdays

All 4 stories on the home page, www.cbc.ca/

5 stories from the main news page, www.cbc.ca/news/

4 local stories from the Canada page, www.cbc.ca/canada/

CBC.ca Saturday

2 stories from the home page

1 story from the main news page

2 local stories from the Canada page

CBC.ca Sunday

2 stories from the home page

2 stories from the main news page

1 local story from the Canada page

Globeandmail.com weekdays

1 home page, www.theglobeandmail.com/

1 national news page (which includes local material), www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/

Globeandmail.com Saturday

1 home page

1 national news page

Globeandmail.com Sunday

1 home page

Canada.com Weekdays

1 home page, www.canada.com/

1 news national or news local page, www.canada.com/news/national/index.html or

www.canada.com/news/local/index.html

Canada.com Saturday

1 news page
1 news national

Canada.com Sunday

1 news page

2. Data collection

All news material was recorded, then analyzed following broadcast. Radio programs were recorded over the Internet as MPEG audio files. Television programs were taken from satellite, cable and off-air sources and recorded onto computer hard drives. Internet stories were saved as web archive files and printed on paper for analysis.

3. Coding system

Content analysis records factual information about the people and issues that appear in the news. A coding system is designed, in which each variable records information about one aspect of the news item. Most of the variables are identical for radio, television and Internet news, though some are necessarily unique to one platform.

An initial coding system was designed by ERIN Research Inc. and submitted to CBC and the Expert Panel for comment. This process generated a substantial number of revisions and additions. The final coding system contains four distinct sets of variables.

1. Variables that describe each story

These include:

- Program and date
- Topic
- Location of story
- Length for radio and television; word count for Internet

2. Variables that describe each person interviewed or mentioned

These include:

- Role (e.g., MP, business sector, labour sector, police)
- Time speaking (radio and television)
- Gender
- Status as interviewed/directly quoted *versus* mentioned

3. Variables that describe story “frames”:

Previous research has found that a large proportion of news stories are built around several “frames”. A frame is a loose structure that reporters and editors use to organize material and that news readers/viewers use to easily assimilate news content.

This analysis is based closely on the five frames defined by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Appendix B describes the frames and method of analysis.

4. Variables that describe the “tone” of the story’s intro and extro

“Tone” refers to whether the person or group that is the main subject of the story is presented in a positive or a negative light. To code this dimension as objectively as possible, the concept was defined by six separate variables, each scored Yes/No. This is similar to the coding of frames, described above. The six statements are:

- Is the person or group criticized, directly or indirectly? (scored Yes = -1 , No = 0)
- Is their standing in society diminished? (Yes = -1, No = 0)
- Is it suggested that they have harmed or might harm others? (Yes = -1, No = 0)
- Are they praised by others directly or indirectly? (Yes = +1, No = 0)
- Is their standing in society heightened? (Yes = +1, No = 0)
- Is it suggested that they have benefited or might benefit others? (Yes = +1, No = 0)

The tone of an intro or extro can therefore range from -3, strongly negative, to 0, neutral, to +3, strongly positive. In most instances the seven scores are reduced to three: negative, neutral, and positive.

4. *Story length*

For radio and television, story length is simply the duration of the story. For the Internet, a proxy for time is calculated on the basis that 150 words equates to one minute of broadcast. The figure is based on counting the number of words in a sampling of CBC radio and television news reports that totaled approximately 15 minutes, then dividing by the number of minutes. This enables combining results for the three platforms.

Using word counts as the measure of salience for stories on the Internet gives an approximate basis for comparison with the other platforms. On radio and television, time is tightly budgeted: more time given to one story means less time for others. On the Internet, there is not the same competition for space. Still, the length of an Internet story does reflect the amount of time and resources put into it, and over a large sample of stories, the number of words devoted to one topic versus another should reflect the salience of those topics.

Using word counts as a proxy for time is the best available means for comparing platforms, and is used in other research contexts, including the Pew News Coverage Index.

5. Training and supervision of analysts

The coding definitions and data collection spreadsheets were tested and refined by the Principals and Senior Project Manager at the outset of the project. Analysts were introduced to the project and trained for one week prior to the beginning of the project.

In the initial stages, analysts worked in pairs to ensure consistency. Following this, they worked individually. Daily meetings were held in which the analysts and Project Director went over questions and decided how new issues were to be treated. In addition, analysts discussed their work informally among themselves and with the Project Director. The Project Director and Principals were on-site and available to staff throughout the data collection and coding process.

A total of 12 staff worked full-time on this project. The majority of the nine analysts, as well as ERIN Research Inc.'s senior staff, had worked on news projects that were similar in method and content to the present research.

6. Accuracy and Reliability

Thirty percent of all material was reviewed in detail by another analyst, who went back to the original broadcast or Internet story and checked how each variable was coded. Discrepancies were discussed with the original analyst and/or project team and corrections were made.

The checking process has three outcomes:

- It eliminates or greatly reduces errors in the 30% of material that is checked;
- It maximizes stability and uniformity in the coding process (continual exposure to the work of others keeps everyone in the team on the same page); and
- Analysis of the corrections that have been made provides an estimate of coding reliability.

Reliability statistics for major variables Table 5. These show the percent error in the 30% of stories that were recoded. The presence of error in the overall data is less than this, because errors in 30% of the data have been corrected. By way of example, assume that the data file has 1,000 records. 30% of these (300) are checked, and errors are found in 15 of the 300 (an error rate of 5%). These 15 errors are corrected. An error rate of 5% for the entire file gives 50 errors, but since 15 have been corrected, 35 remain. The actual error rate in the data is thus 3.5%.

For the six tone variables, percent error ranged from 1.1% to 4.0% with the average across all tone codes being 2.3%. For the frame codes, percentage error ranged from 1.7% to 3.6% with the average of the 16 codes being 2.1%.

Table 5. Reliability of major variables

Variable	% error
Story codes (Base = 4,162 stories)	
Format	0.4
Topic	3.0
Location	1.5
Scope	1.9
News feed	0.5
Person codes (Base = 4,549 people)	
Role	2.2
Gender	1.1
Presence (interviewee vs. mention)	1.5
Lead newsmaker vs. not involvement in story	1.6
	1.3
Tone codes	
Subject of intro	3.7
Subject of extro	3.8

The variables used for coding tone and frames are each coded as 0, absent or 1, present. It is appropriate with these data to calculate two separate measures of error, termed specificity and sensitivity. These are based on the four possible outcomes of 1/0 coding:

- Coding present when the variable is actually present (a true positive or “hit”);
- Coding absent when the variable is actually present (a false negative, “miss” or Type II error);
- Coding present when the variable is actually absent (a false positive, “false alarm” or Type I error);
and
- Coding absent when the variable is actually absent (a true negative or “correct rejection”).

The error measures are defined as follows:

- “Specificity” or “correct rejection rate” is calculated as correct rejections / (correct rejections + false alarms);
- “Sensitivity” or “hit rate” is hits / (hits + misses).

Specificity and sensitivity can have values from 0 (very low) to 1 (very high).

In the present research:

- Specificity for the tone variables ranged from .96 to .99;
- Specificity for the frame variables ranged from .97 to .99;
- Sensitivity for the tone variables ranged from .92 to .99; and
- Sensitivity for the frame variables ranged from .91 to .99.

Appendix B: Frame analyses

The analysis of frames is based closely on research conducted in Europe by Semetko and Valkenburg (2000). Their frames have been adapted by ERIN Research Inc. for the Canadian context.

The 18 framing variables are listed below. Each story was coded Yes=1, No=0 for each variable. The frame code is applied if the frame occurs anywhere in the story (unlike tone, where only the intro and extro are considered).

The Ethics frame is based on a Morality frame that was originally proposed for research on US media. Semetko and Valkenburg found that it occurred infrequently in the European news media, and it has been re-worked as an Ethics frame here – ethics in both business and government being a recurring theme in recent years.

Framing variables

Attribution of responsibility frame: Does the story suggest...

- That some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem?
- That some level of the government is responsible for the issue/problem? (This item was dropped due to low reliability.)
- That an individual (or group of people in society) is responsible for the issue/problem? (This item was dropped as its association with other variables in the set was low.)
- Solution(s) to the problem/issue?
- That the problem requires urgent action? (This variable was not used on the basis of its performance in the Semetko and Valkenburg research.)

Human interest frame: Does the story...

- Provide a human example or “human face” on the issue?
- Employ adjectives or personal vignettes that generate feelings of outrage, empathy/caring, sympathy, or compassion?
- Emphasize how individuals and groups are affected by the issue/problem? (This item was dropped on the basis of its performance.)
- Go into the private or personal lives of the actors?
- Contain visual information that might generate feelings of outrage, empathy, sympathy or compassion? (This variable was not used as it does not apply to radio or to many Internet stories.)

Conflict frame: Does the story...

- Reflect disagreement between parties/individuals/groups/countries?
- Show one party, individual, group or country criticizing another?
- Refer to two or more sides of the problem or issue?
- Refer to winners and losers? (This item was dropped as its association with other variables in the set was low.)

Economy frame: Is there a mention of...

- Financial losses or gains now or in the future?
- The costs/degree of expense involved?
- Economic consequences of pursuing or not pursuing a course of action?
- Economic theory or predictions or statistics? (This item was added on a trial basis, as various economic theories have been referenced since the financial meltdown of 2008.)

A factor analysis was conducted to check whether the hypothesized four factors are present and whether the variables load as expected. This is indeed the case. The analysis uses Principal Components with Promax rotation. While factor analysis of binary data can be a risky business, the purpose of the present analysis is simply to replicate an earlier result.

Table 6 shows the pattern matrix. The predicted factors are all present. The structure matrix is similar and indicates a small degree of cross-loading for one item: “Government is responsible for the issue” loads .781 on the intended Attribution of Responsibility factor and cross-loads .351 on Conflict.

Table 6. Pattern matrix

	Component			
	1	2	3	4
Conflict				
Disagreement among parties, individuals	0.848			
Story refers to two or more sides	0.833			
One party, individual, reproaches/criticizes another	0.720			
Finance				
Financial losses or gains		.755		
Economic theory or predictions or statistics		.663		
Economic consequences		.635		
The costs involved		.545		
Human Interest				
Human example or human face on the issue			.797	
Adjectives or vignettes that generate emotional response			.751	
Private or personal lives described			.629	
Attribution of responsibility				
Solution(s) are mentioned				.880
Government has the ability to alleviate the problem				.742
(Loadings <.30 suppressed)				

The factors are largely uncorrelated (Table 7). Conflict shows a moderate positive correlation of .296 with Attribution of Responsibility.

Table 7. Component Correlation Matrix

Component	1	2	3	4
1 Conflict	1	0.069	0.092	0.296
2 Economy	0.069	1	-0.085	0.103
3 Human Interest	0.092	-0.085	1	0.045
4 Attribution of responsibility	0.296	0.103	0.045	1

Correlations of frame scores and tone

Conceptually, frames and tone are independent measures. Consider the frame measure, “Some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem”. An intro to a story on government responsibility could be phrased equally well in positive or negative terms, for example:

- The Prime Minister announced that aid will be sent to Haiti; vs.
- The opposition criticized the government's aid plan for Haiti.

Still, it is important to measure the degree of relationship between tone and frames. Does tone in stories with strong Conflict frames tend to be negative? Does tone in stories with strong Human Interest frames tend to be positive?

As Table 8 shows, three of the frames have near-zero correlations with tone (Attribution of Responsibility, Human Interest and Economy). Conflict and Ethics have weak negative correlations with tone: as Conflict and Ethics scores increase, tone becomes more negative. The association, however, is minimal. A general rule is that correlations in the .40 to .50 range are moderate and those greater than .60 are strong. The observed associations between tone and the frame measures are well below this range and are not of practical importance.

Table 8. Correlation of frame and tone measures

Frame	Correlation with...	
	tone of intro	tone of extro
Attribution of Responsibility	.019	.030
Conflict	-.202	-.198
Human Interest	.020	.040
Economy	.032	.009

Appendix C: Examples of tone

Health, medicine

Positive: UN approves more troops, police for Haiti

In the city's Bourdon area, a large team of French, Dominican and Panamanian rescuers using high-tech detection equipment said they heard heartbeats underneath the rubble of a bank building and worked into the night to try to rescue a survivor.

Negative: Wrongful mastectomy victim to sue

Hartwell has since been suspended, reported to the College of Physicians and Surgeons, and has ceased performing surgery. Hotel-Dieu Grace suspended pathologist Williams on January 4, and reported her to the College of Physicians and Surgeons.

Police

Mountie pulls woman from burning home

An RCMP officer is being credited with saving an elderly woman from a house fire in Cochrane, Alberta on Saturday morning.

Negative: Afghan border police mistakenly kill 7 civilians

Afghan border police mistook a group of villagers gathering wood near the Pakistan border as insurgents and opened fire, killing all seven of them, police officials said Saturday. All six officers involved in Friday's pre-dawn shooting have been arrested, and the incident is under investigation, said General Abdul Raziq, the commander of the border police patrolling Southern Afghanistan.

Sports players

Positive: Canada's Bilodeau wins gold in men's moguls

Alexander Bilodeau carved his way into Canadian History Sunday at the Vancouver Winter Olympics. The 22 year old from Rosemere, Quebec became the first Canadian to win an Olympic gold medal at home, finishing first in the men's moguls skiing final at Cypress Mountain.

Negative: Tiger Woods apologizes

Accenture was the first company to drop Woods as a spokesman after news of his sex scandal broke.

Negative: Grabovski arrested, released in Vancouver

Belarus's first Olympic hockey victory since 2002 on Saturday night was overshadowed by the news that injured Mikhail Grabovski was taken into custody following a bar fight in Vancouver.

Military

Positive: US resumes Haiti medical airlifts

Members of Canada's military mobile medical unit spent Sunday in the small community of Tom Gato. The 13 member group from Canada's Disaster Assistance Response Team treated between 130 and 140 patients for fractured arms, broken hips, a broken pelvis and other injuries.

Captain Rob Ennis a doctor based at CFB Gagetown, New Brunswick, said the thanks the Canadians received were equal to the medical care dispensed, calling Sunday "a fantastic day for all of us".

Negative: Iraqi photographer freed by U.S. military

The U.S. military freed a Reuters photographer in Iraq on Wednesday, almost a year and a half after snatching him from his home in the middle of the night and placing him in military detention without charge. The U.S. military has never said exactly why it detained Ibrahim Jassam Mohammed – who worked for Reuters as a freelance TV cameraman and photographer – and locked him away for so long, saying the evidence against him was classified.

Foreign politicians

Negative: Life imitates art in Northern Ireland political scandal

A political scandal that has riveted Northern Ireland has a certain cinematic ring, involving, as it does, an affair between an older woman named Mrs. Robinson and her young lover – much like the plot of the movie "The Graduate". Northern Ireland's First Minister, Peter Robinson, a man known as a cool, sometimes ruthless tactician, went before the cameras this week to say that his wife of 40 years, Iris Robinson, 60, also a British MP, confessed to having an affair. The confession drove her to attempt suicide.

Artists, performers, writers

Positive:

Michael Bublé is the one to beat at the upcoming Juno awards, after the West Coast crooner nabbed a leading six nominations for Canada's most prominent celebration of popular music.

Ordinary citizens

Positive:

Canadians dug deep into their wallets Friday night, raising more than \$16 million dollars – not counting matching federal funds – for victims of the Haitian earthquake, at the Canada for Haiti telethon and its French counterpart, Ensemble Pour Haiti.

Negative:

Court documents filed in Vancouver say a Quebec couple made a "deliberate choice" to ski out of bounds at a British Columbia ski resort last February and cannot blame the police and others for the fatal consequences.

Criminals

Negative: Colonel Williams makes court appearance

Clad in orange prison garb and appearing downcast, the Canadian air force colonel accused of committing a horrifying string of murders and sex attacks appeared briefly in court here by video link and had his case put over for another month.

Negative: Manitoba teen guilty of 3 murders

A 17-year-old boy who walked into a Winnipeg house party and opened fire with a handgun for no apparent reason has been convicted of three counts of first-degree murder and three counts of attempted murder.

Federal and provincial politicians

Negative: Charest to Harper: Go to Copenhagen

The province has criticized the “meager” federal target to cut emissions by three per cent over 1990 levels.

Negative: Budget full of gimmicks: Ignatieff

Liberal leader Michael Ignatieff blasted the federal budget for being full of “gimmicks” that ignore important issues, but reaffirmed he won’t bring the government down over it. “The throne speech and the budget let Canadians down. They expected vision and got gimmicks. They deserved ambition and got drift.”

Positive: Dispute reveals Quebec’s hardening line on religious displays

But the Muslim Canadian Congress, which has called for a ban, applauded Quebec’s attitude toward the niqab and burka.

Big stories

H1N1 flu

Positive, about government

A priority list has been established for H1N1

Province expanding the list of those who can receive the H1N1 vaccine

Negative, about government

BC strike creates a divisive tone on flu strategy

Shortage of vaccine: Ottawa admits limited supply for the next two weeks

Positive, about public health and the medical community

H1N1 vaccine safe after millions of doses: WHO

Small shipment of H1N1 vaccine received

Soon able to get your H1N1 shot at local doctor's office or pharmacy

Negative, about public health and the medical community

Lineups overwhelm H1N1 vaccine clinics. Alberta Health Services considering more staff, hours and sites to ease wait

H1N1 vaccine-health worker fired over giving Calgary Flames players vaccine

Positive, about citizens and victims

People in Fort St. John are rallying to help a northern woman hit hard by swine flu

Negative, about citizens and victims

Health predictions from Ottawa: Canadians are letting their guard down against swine flu

Climate Change

Positive: India's shift to cut back emissions raises hope for climate agreement

Word that India will soon roll out emission reduction targets signals an emerging consensus toward a climate change agreement next month at Copenhagen, despite the Canadian government's much-noticed ambivalence.

India, one of the last holdouts in the fight against global warming, will announce the move within the next few days, French president Nicolas Sarkozy revealed yesterday.

Negative: Himalayan glaciers warning not backed up

A U.N. warning that Himalayan glaciers were melting faster than other places in the world and may be gone by 2035 was not backed up by science, U.N. climate experts said Wednesday – an admission that could energize climate change critics.

Haiti

Negative:

This was supposed to be an information meeting in a north end Montreal community centre. Two Immigration Canada bureaucrats are squirming in front of about 50 Haitians. The Haitians want to know why things are moving so slowly.

Positive:

The federal Government has allocated \$113 million so far to match individual donations made by Canadians to the Haiti relief effort, International co-operation minister Bev Oda said Monday. “This amazing response reflects the true values of Canadians,” she said.

Haiti will lead rebuilding, Canada says. Haitian PM thanks other countries

Haitian Prime Minister Jean-Max Bellerive offered thanks to the international community Monday for its support since the January 12 earthquake, adding that his country will need “more and more and more aid” to complete reconstruction.

Montreal family opens its home to 8 orphaned relatives

At a time in life when many couples contemplate empty nests and quiet retirement, Eric and Nicole Pauyo are embracing parenthood all over again. So many kids are overrunning their Montreal home these days that the household has been compared to a reality TV show.

The family has been called Pauyo Plus 8 – the number of kids who have suddenly showed up in their home in the last few weeks. This story is born out of tragedy, however. The couple’s eight new charges are nieces and nephews left orphaned by Haiti’s earthquake.

PM tours Haitian town

He announced that Canada will donate \$12 million to build a temporary headquarters to house government departments whose buildings were destroyed in the earthquake. The Canadian-funded base will include tents and hard-shelled temporary buildings. It is expected to be used for as long as a year, and will be installed after the Haitian government chooses a location.