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globalmedia_enespanol@hotmail.com

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Gómez Rodríguez, Gabriela

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THE DOMESTICATION OF TERRORISM: 9/11 AND THE WAR IN IRAQ IN NEWSPAPERS FROM MONTREAL, CANADA.

Gabriela Gómez Rodríguez¹
Universidad de Guadalajara

Resumen

El trabajo presenta la domesticación del terrorismo en dos de los diarios más importantes de Montreal, Canadá: The Gazette (anglófono) y La Presse (francófono). A través del análisis de repertorios interpretativos mostramos cómo se domestica (se hace local) el terrorismo acontecido el 9/11 del 2001 y la Guerra en Irak (2003) en esos medios y cómo se articula al imaginario social. Esto nos permite explorar las apropiaciones culturales del terrorismo en dos grupos culturales, en una sociedad como la de Montreal.

Palabras Clave: terrorismo, domesticación, *The Gazette*, *La Presse*, periódicos, Canadá, repertorios interpretativos.

Abstract

This article analyzes the 'domestication' of terrorism in Montreal's¹ most relevant newspapers: The Gazette (Anglophone) and La Presse (French-speaking). Through the use of interpretive repertoires, the paper discusses how the terrorism acts of 9/11, 2001 and their aftermath (War in Iraq, 2003) were "domesticated" (turned into local issues) and articulated to a social imaginary. This allowed the exploration of the cultural appropriation of terrorism by two contrasting cultural groups in Montreal.

Key Words: terrorism, domestication, *The Gazette*, *La Presse*, newspapers, Canada, interpretive repertoires.

¹University of Guadalajara. Email: gabygomez79@gmail.com This work forms part of my doctoral thesis *Domestication of Terrorism in newspapers from Montreal and Guadalajara. A comparative study among three cultural groups*. University of Concordia, Montreal. Thesis defended on October, 2008. Communication Studies Department.

After 9/11, significations of terrorism have suffered a profound transformation on a global scale. Norris *et al* (2003) argue that these events can best be understood “as symbolizing a critical culture shift in the predominant news frames used by the American mass media for understanding issues of national security, altering perceptions of risk at home and threats abroad” (p. 1). The perception of threat of world terrorism changed, even if these “threats” were real or not. Thus, it is possible to argue that while terrorism was felt, before 9/11, as something ‘remote’ for many people throughout the world, it transformed itself into something ‘closer’, in many places of the world after that terrorist attack in the U.S. It is our contention that this closeness was constructed by and large by the mass media.

Through the media, especially television, we became witnesses of an event that, for some, marked a watershed in modern times. The Mexican intellectual Carlos Monsiváis, went so far as to say that, in September 11th, globalization was formally inaugurated. The social perception about terrorism underwent a significant change and from then on, our fears, the security policies, the economy and the social dynamics were reshaped.

Before 9/11 but particularly after that event, terrorism was a subject constantly covered by the media. Despite the increased popularity of digital media, printed newspapers are still important vehicles for the circulation of ideas in some cities, particularly in Montreal, where newspapers seem to still be important organs for their social and intellectual elites, their readers and their advertisers. The appropriation and interpretation of the 9/11 terrorism and its aftermaths by the newspapers was permeated by their editorial precepts and policies in the face of a conflict that impacted Canada because of its close relationship with the United States. This explains why Canadian media considered that terrorism had to be rejected and combated and their emphasis on the

consequences it had for their nation; as well as the relationship that this society have established with their own people, in particular the kind of representations they have about themselves with respect of terrorism and the “others”.

The first point of departure in this paper was to consider the mass media as institutions that circulate and construct social meanings. These social institutions are intertwined with and influenced by political, educational or other institutions and together they establish the way in which we understand and interpret the world. They work as social institutions that maintain the *status quo* of the society. The newspapers we analyze here certainly function differently from the electronic media. They reach different people and have different linguistic codes. However, most of the Canadian dailies belong to a conglomerate of media organizations and institutions that have a particular stance about the world or about terrorism.

The public get information and shape their opinion about many themes from the media; it has also been argued that the media establish the agenda of the public (McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 1997). As institutions, the media need to operate as organizations, with norms, rules, certain structures and routines of working, etc.

In newsmaking processes, the editors decide what to publish, what not to publish, how to say things, which experts or academics to invite to express their opinions or to collaborate with their ideas about specific subjects. However, their decisions are most of the time affected by institutional editorial lines, in other words, their ideology. There is evidently a relation and re-articulation between the institutional and the organizational levels of production of meanings.

At the organizational level, this meant, in our second point of departure in this paper, that we needed to identify the frames (news frames) organizations use to emphasize themes, which actors and subjects to talk about the most and the

relation these frames had with each other. Frames served in this work to contextualize terrorism.

The third phase of our analysis referred to interpretive repertoires: how things are said, evaluated or classified. Journalists express (micro level) through their writings and their texts, certain interpretive repertoires. We focused on how they talked about terrorism, how they evaluated or classified it, how certain metaphors were used, etc. It is precisely through these interpretive repertoires that we detected the domestication of terrorism in the selected dailies.

All these levels are related, articulated and reproduced by each other. Thus, this paper followed a three phase-step dialogical model of a domestic construction about terrorism.

In this article, we shall discuss the process of 'domestication' of terrorism in the selected Montreal newspapers through the analysis of news stories and opinion articles² concerned with terrorism published in *The Gazette* (Anglophone) and *La Presse* (French-speaking) about the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the aftermath (War in Iraq).

We intend to explore the 'domestication' of terrorism. This process studies the ways the media appropriate a global topic, to 'domesticate' it and make it a "particular" or "local" issue through news production practices. We establish that the closer a terrorist event is, the more the media increase their coverage. News contents on terrorism will mostly relate to those aspects that affect the community where the media circulate. Each society (cultural groups) has specific ideologies, values, beliefs, and social imaginaries. Despite the two newspapers being distributed in the same city (Montreal), their readers come from different cultural groups (Anglo and French) and the conglomerates that produce those

dailies have different ideologies and interests when portraying terrorism. How did these newspapers make terrorism closer to their readers? In this paper, we will show that they managed to do it through a process of domestication.

The concept of terrorism

It is necessary to start by defining a central concept: terrorism.³ It has been labelled in different ways and as many authors would agree, terrorism is a polysemic term and it's hard to find a definitional consensus (Alali & Kenoye, 1991; Griset & Mahan, 2003; Henderson, 2001; Laqueur, 2003; Legare, 2002; Nacos, 2002; Peinares, 1998; Rodrigo, 1991; Sommer, 2000).

As Laqueur reveals, there is still not a generally agreed definition: "On the contrary, as far as the media are concerned, circumlocution has become the order of the day ... terrorism, perhaps more than other concepts, has generated widely divergent interpretations" (2003, p. 232).

Laqueur, explains some of the obstacles we need to overcome in the search for a definition of terrorism: "It is a very old phenomenon and it has changed its character and meaning over time and from country to country" (p. 232). We have found many other definitions of terrorism, but it was not our aim to arrive to an exhaustive and objective definition of it. If international organisations have not arrived at a common definition yet, we won't pretend to do so.

We agree with Beck (2003) when he asserts that we still act in terms of concepts that may be historically obsolete but that

² We are not showing the analysis to the editorials because of the limited space. However, their domestication on terrorism is very similar to what we have found in the total sample analysis.

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³ The term terrorism derives from the Latin verb *terrere*, "to cause to tremble or quiver". Retrieved from Kellner, Douglas. "Terrorism." *Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. Ritzer, George (ed). Blackwell Publishing, 2007. Blackwell Reference Online. 11 May 2008 http://0-http://0-www.sociologyencyclopedia.com.mercury.c.oncordia.ca:80/subscriber/tocnode?id=g9781405124331_chunk_g978140512433126_ss1-16.

nonetheless continue to govern our thinking and acting. There is significant distance between concepts and reality, and terrorism is not the exception. The use we have made of terror, terrorists, war, guerrilla, and so on are just a few examples of a linguistic use of terms.

Although terrorism exists with or without the media, it cannot be denied that there is a close link between them. We will define terrorism in this work as:

All reported acts of violence with political, ethnic or religious motives, and with unexpected consequences initially perpetrated by defined or undefined groups, whose actions hurt and kill civilians, politicians, organizational infrastructures, etc.

Global production local appropriation

Nowadays, news diffuses globally more than even before. Local media appropriate global discourses to present news and articles, along with the editorials about a specific topic. The cultural appropriations of terrorism in societies such as the Quebecois, however, may differ. Appropriations within this society will be different and contradictory (among the Anglo-Canadians and French-Canadians), as well as the relationships that these groups have established with their own people, in particular the kind of representations they have about themselves with respect to terrorism and the "others".

Native newspapers still play a relevant role in this locality. Some of the current local dailies in Montreal have existed since the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries, so they are tied to the communities since long time ago. In addition, we think there is a close connection between communities and their local dailies. Even though new kinds of digital media are emerging, we feel that a significant number of people still prefer to read newspapers in print or doing a combination of readings, namely in paper and in their digital form.

In Montreal, due to its particular bilingual as well as its multicultural

situation, there exist many print media in different languages (and ideologies) so there are different kinds of news constructions and approaches within them. In her study on the Quebec's Referendum, Robinson (1988) showed that language in Quebec determines the news agenda and thus the ideological point of view from which reports are written. This author also affirms that the difference between the English and the French news coverage styles was not a result of individual journalist decisions, but rather a complex interplay of resources and practices, guidelines and 'local' understandings about what types of events to select for covering.⁴

Thompson (1995) notes that while communication and information are increasingly spread on a global scale, these symbolic materials are always received by individuals who are situated in specific spatial-temporal locales.

The appropriation of media products is always a localized phenomenon, in the sense that it always involves specific individuals who are situated in particular social-historical contexts, and who draw upon the resources available to them in order to make sense of media messages and incorporate them into their lives. (1995, p. 174).

Thompson asserts that the globalization of communication has not eliminated the local character of its appropriation. On the

⁴ We assume that English newspapers readers in Montreal (such as *The Gazette*) are in the great majority native English speakers. However, we know that *The Gazette* is gaining French readers day by day and that the French community of Montreal use to read English and French media while the Anglophone community prefers to read mostly English ones. In the other hand, we also assume that immigrants or refugees in Montreal who are not English speaking people, with reference to the newspapers they read, must read French language newspapers like *La Presse*, since they are in any case obliged to learn French.

contrary, it has created a new kind of symbolic axis in the modern world.

News 'Domestication'

In her work "Localizing the Global: Domestication Processes in International News Productions", Clausen (2004) uses the notion of 'domestication', which was brought into news production by Gurevitch et al. in 1991. The term refers to the way global news, while mediated globally, is nonetheless domesticated and made particular through news production: "by casting far-away events in frameworks that render these events comprehensible, appealing and 'relevant' to domestic audiences; by constructing the meanings of these events in ways that are compatible with the culture and the 'dominant ideology' of societies they serve" (p. 206).

Therefore, different news services on the same set of stories should not necessarily be viewed as leading to a 'homogenization' of the news around the world "if the 'same' events are told in divergent ways, geared to the social and political frameworks and sensibilities of diverse domestic audiences, the 'threat' of homogenization might have little basis" (p. 207).

Francophone Canada: the Distinctiveness of Quebec's and Montreal Society

Identity has been the subject of heated debate during the last 20 years in Quebec and especially since the 1995 referendum. McClure (2003) argues that there has been a structural and symbolic transformation of the Quebecois identity in the past years. It is currently in the "throes of an exceptionally intense interrogation of its own identity" (p. 4).

Quebec is 'distinct' in the sense of being 'distinctive' or "different" (Mc Roberts, 2000; McClure, 2003; Rioux, 2005). In 1996, 82.8% of its residents spoke French at home. Overall this means 28% of Canada's population, but 80% within the province of Quebec. The Province of Quebec is composed of a national French-speaking majority, a national English-speaking minority, eleven indigenous nations, and a

multiplicity of Quebecois from other backgrounds. It is at once multinational, multicultural and hybrid (McClure, 2003, p. 3).

With regard to communication and cultural policies, Canada is a country where "protectionism is alive and well".⁵ Ownership and control of the means of distribution of culture (including popular culture) are important determinants of what ideas get transmitted to the general public (Bell, 2000, p. 275).

As Fletcher and Everett (2000, p. 381) establish, most Canadians spend a high proportion of their leisure time with the media, so this media helps to set the agenda for political debate and contributes to the "psychic environment" of everyday life in Canada. Therefore, mass media is an important definer of the social imaginaries and images that have political significance.

The Canadian, specially the Quebec media system, is composed in reality by two media systems (French-speaking and English-speaking systems). Fletcher and Everett indicate that there is relatively little crossover viewing, with English speakers rarely watching programs in French while French-speaking viewers of English programming most often watching American imports.

While the population of Quebec shares many common values (both English and French-speaking) the news coverage of important political issues has frequently differed significantly in the English-speaking and French-speaking media.⁶ "Concerning the reading of daily newspapers (according to a ComBase survey taken in November 2004), the results indicate that in the Quebec area, 67% of the

⁵ John A. Ragosta, "The Cultural manage Exemption From NAFTA - its Parameters" Retrieved February 11, 2004 from www.dbtrade.com/publications/nafta.htm

⁶ An example of this is the FLQ crisis in Quebec, during the 70's.

people interviewed read some sort of daily newspaper.⁷

Contrary to the rest of the mass media, the written press is not regulated by a governmental agency. Thus, private concentration of newspapers is very strong in Quebec. (Raboy, 1992, p. 3). One of the major factors in determining the shape of news coverage is the dependence of most news media on advertising revenues. There is an increasing concentration of ownership in the hands of a few large corporations (as with *CanWest Global Communications Corp.*⁸ and *Power Corporation of Canada*⁹). Many scholars see this concentration as a

threat for press freedom, quality and diversity of information.

Methodology

Corpus of Analysis¹⁰

For this study we selected *The Gazette*¹¹ (Anglophone) and *La Presse* (French-speaking). The criterion applied to select them was based upon information obtained with regards to its circulation in Montreal. The newspapers selected were the most well-read and consequently have the highest penetration in their own communities.

The Gazette

It was founded in 1778; It is one of the oldest newspapers in North America and according to the National Audience Bank

⁷ For more detailed information see <http://www.ccna.ca/files/news/NationalTables-November2004.pdf> Retrieved on November, 2004.

⁸ The company (through its CanWest Media Works division) is the country's largest media conglomerate, with coast-to-coast assets including television and radio stations, newspapers and books, multimedia production facilities, and Internet publishing operations. CanWest's TV station portfolio includes 16 stations (11 stations in its Global Television Network, and several CBC affiliates and independents) as well as specialty digital channels. Outside Canada, the company owns part or all of TV and radio stations in Australia, Ireland, and New Zealand.

⁹ *Power Corporation of Canada* is a diversified management and holding company. Power Corporation of Canada has holdings in leading financial services and the communications sector. Through its European-based affiliate Pargesa group, Power Corporation holds significant positions in major media, energy, water, waste services, and specialty mineral companies. Its affiliate Gesca owns the French Montreal daily newspaper, *La Presse*, as well as *Le Soleil* (Quebec City and east), and five other regional French-language newspapers. Gesca's holdings constitute Canada's largest French-language newsgroup.

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¹⁰ We decided to begin our analysis from September, 11th 2001 as we do consider that this was the time when global social imaginaries on terrorism changed. First, we had decided to analyze one compound week per year, starting from Monday September 16th (the next Monday after 09/11). However, later on we realized that the newspapers we take into account for this investigation, published an Extra Edition, on 9/11. This volume was included either, as well as September 12th, since we seek to portray the evolution of discourse from one day to another (as we exposed in previous chapters, the lack of information provoke confusions and misinformation).

In March, 2003, the War in Iraq began, as part of the US and coalition "War against terrorism", (now against the Axes of Evil).

¹¹ We have chosen to construct for our newspaper analysis a compounded week. That means that we start one Sunday and the next week one Monday and so on until we have completed one week. The size of our sample considers four compounded weeks from the years 2001 and 2003 (in 2001 the Extra and the 12th of September editions plus a compound week: September 16, 24; October 2, 10, 18, 26; November 3; 2003: March 20, 28; April: 5, 13, 21, 29; May 7).

Data (NAD) study of 2005,¹² had a weekly readership of 553 000, which means it reached 19% of Montreal's population, mostly English-speaking. Just 15-20% of *The Gazette* readership is French-speaking. Even though the newspaper is an English-speaking one, it seeks to reach more French-speakers and non-French and English first-language speakers.¹³ The newspaper's slogan, since 2002 is "*The Gazette is Montreal*"¹⁴ which seeks, in a way, to reflect a more local content. We will come back with this "locality" in the coming chapters.

La Presse

The French-language daily was founded in Montreal in 1884. Its direct competition in French language is "*Le Journal de Montreal*" ironically, considered a sensationalist paper. *La Presse* had a weekly circulation of 183,300 and 266, 000 on Saturdays.¹⁵ However, according to an NAD data study of 2005, it had a total readership of 84,700; 29% of the total population. *La Presse* was not the only French newspaper in Montreal. There were three other dailies in the city published in French: *Le Journal de Montreal* (which has the highest circulation figures in Montreal, meaning around a total readership of 1'189 700 and 41% of the total) and *Le Devoir* (231 600 and 8% respectively).

¹² Retrieved from www.nadbank.com/English/index.html on August 7th, 2006.

¹³ According to 2001 Montreal census, 29% of this city population are non-French or English first-language speakers. Three quarters of immigrants to Quebec settle in Montreal. But since 1977, *Bill 101* has required that all children of Quebec immigrants enter into the French school system and made French the prerequisite language of government and business.

¹⁴ Before that slogan, it was "The English Language Daily".

¹⁵ Retrieved on April 5th, 2004 from <http://www.canoe.ca/CNEWS/MediaNews/2003/02/19/39356-cp.html>

The methodological proposal was that through the three levels or phases of analysis discussed in the literature, we could answer *how* a global topic as terrorism was domesticated by the newspapers analyzed.

What enabled us to detect the "domestication" of terrorism in the newspapers were precisely the interpretive repertoires, in their articulation with the frames and the social imaginaries. To be clearer, we divided this articulation in three phases, from a macro level to a micro one.

This method derives from post-structuralist theory, which is concerned with the relationship between human beings and the world, as well as the practice of making and reproducing meanings. These are being reproduced and re-interpreted as texts that are circulated and produced in newspapers (symbolic forms).

Potter and Wetherell are both recognized scholars that have made wide use of the "interpretive repertoires" in their studies. They define an interpretive repertoire as, "recurrently used systems of terms used for characterizing and evaluating actions, events and other phenomena" (in Hermes Joke, 1995). Interpretive repertoires are general discursive resources that can be used by speakers and writers to construct versions of events, actions, persons, internal processes, and so on and to perform a variety of other actions (Wood and Kroger, 2000).

Repertoire analysis, though grounded in post-structuralist theory, differs from other forms of discourse analysis in that the social subject is theorized not just as an intersection of discursive structures, but also as an active and creative language user. This may be a micro-sociological approach, but it is also a tool that "helps to lay bare what underlying structures of meaning look like and thus to explain how culture as a whole is organized" (Hermes, 1995, p. 26).

As Potter and Wetherell (1987) assert, one of the most striking things about an account of this kind is its familiarity, as "it conforms to a standard pattern and we could probably give a reasonably detailed

speculation about both the events leading up to those described and how this story will continue" (p.5).

Some of the terms of the story presented above appear as already evaluated. "Gunmen", "hijackers" and most especially "terrorists": All these terms are used with negative associations in texts and these negative connotations are generated by repeated associations of the term with horrific events.

The 'interpretive repertoire' consists then in organizing pieces of meaningful structures (work to be done by the researcher) looking to different and recurrent statements (in discourse or conversation) which lead to the formulation of different repertoires.

Repertoires are available to people with many different group memberships, and patterns of accounting may not be the neatest way of dividing up society, or confirming a conventional group's categorizations (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, p. 156).

This methodology allowed us to detect recurrent themes in discourse and statement "repertoires" on terrorism, found within the newspapers. This let us to delimit and understand media (newspapers) repertoires on terrorism.

We believe that recognizing and constructing these recurrent themes or interpretive repertoires, permit us to determine the domestication on terrorism by the newspapers.

Results

On 9/11, *The Gazette* and *La Presse* published a special edition a few hours after the events unfolded. They distributed their versions free among the Montreal community. Something that both newspapers had in common in regards to the format was the fact that the entire *Extra* edition contained 16 pages, surely due to technological factors involved.

The Gazette, in its special edition, focused on the immediate impact that the attacks had on the people of Montreal and

Canada, in the overall question of their safety. *The Gazette*, in total, published (in the week under analysis) 262 information and/or opinion units, of which 195 (74%) were news items and 67 (26%) were of opinions. *The Gazette* published mainly news items originating in its own writing staff, drafting the items, providing the information obtained from unquoted news agencies or other unspecified sources, or from its team of correspondents. From the total of published news items (195) in our sample, 76 (38.97%) came from the same source (*The Gazette*). As Rodrigo (1991) argues, with this, the newspapers legitimized themselves as the principal source of news production, and institutionalized themselves as the means of social awareness in daily life.

In relation to the articles and columns, we found that the op-ed contributions came mostly from *The Gazette* columnists, expert opinions (mostly academics from McGill University) and other former analysts, the Canadian Ambassador to Israel, letters from its readers and finally the institutional editorials.

The opinions of the columnists and the feature stories of *The Gazette*, concentrated fundamentally on the effects of the 9/11 attacks on the Canadian people, in particular with the ones on Montreal itself, as well as on some of the measures implemented immediately after the events; the perceptions of fear among the citizens and their feelings about the war against terrorism from Montreal's distant standpoint; the need for legislation to combat terrorism; the importance, especially in respect of Canada, of the relationship between this country and the United States and the expression of support that came from its status as an ally.

The proximity of terrorists to Canada was emphasized, as well as the confirmed existence of terrorist cells in the country. Some of the opinions published by *The Gazette* argued that although Canadian citizens assumed the war was far away from their city, there was a connection between the terrorists and Montreal, since it was

well-known that “terrorists” lived in the city. A large part of the news and opinion articles coincide in relating how the terrorist acts in New York affected Canada, in particular the cosmopolitan Montreal. It was definitely of great interest to *The Gazette* to publish information, graphics, photographs, editorials, columns, etc. in regard to this argument. Some political and official voices also raised the question of a “real” risk of a terrorist attack on Canada, whereas the Canadian people did not perceive such an attack being imminent and saw the war as being far away from the city. However, they accepted that terrorist networks existed in Montreal.

Perhaps due to the multicultural character of Montreal, the newspapers provided access to voices of the Muslim community in Montreal concerning their fears of being the subjects of acts of discrimination, as well as the association of terrorism with Islam due to the lack of knowledge surrounding this religion.

The newspapers also published their preoccupation for their relatives, their criticism of how the media portrayed the Muslims, the misinformation about the nature and content of Islam, and the assumptions about what Muslims think about terrorists, etc. One of the most relevant frames repeated in the coverage was the connection terrorism had with Canada: “many terrorists are living in this country, especially in Montreal, due to its proximity to the American border and the facilities and tolerance of its immigration policies.”

2003: War in Iraq

Before the United States decided to occupy Iraq, *The Gazette* had already dedicated much attention to whether Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction, and to the UN resolution authorizing the United States entry into that Middle Eastern country.

In regards to the information agencies from which the newspaper obtained its information about the war, its principal source was the *CanWest News Services* agency (with almost 30% of the total), a part of the media conglomerate that owns *The*

Gazette.¹⁶ The company sent correspondents to Iraq, this being one of the characteristics that distinguished its information from the other agencies, emphasizing first-person accounts and reflections on the human side of the war, while on other occasions, concentrating on military aspects.

In total, *The Gazette* published 76 news items and 19 articles (columns and op-ed pieces, for a total of 95 items, plus 3 institutional editorials).

The Gazette, as its own source of information, published news items related to the effects of the war in Iraq on the community in Montreal, the perceptions of the Muslim community in the city in regard to the “conflict”, and the protests by some pro-Iraqi and pro-Palestinian groups against the war; in other words, how the war was fundamentally affecting the Arab community. We found then, as expected, that the local news pieces were covered and written by the own newspaper staff.

The news or opinion articles about the community in Montreal or the effects of 9/11 and the Iraq war on the city came, almost in their entirety, from the same journalists of the newspaper, its columnists or from *The Gazette*.

The majority of the news and opinion articles about the multiethnic community in Montreal published by *The Gazette*, reflected the feeling of its Iraqi community in respect of what they felt about the war, as well as a continual complaint from them regarding the coverage on the part of the Arab media they could watch via cable or satellite TV. They expressed the need for real “images” about the war in which one could “watch” the impact on the Iraqi citizens.

Similarly, *The Gazette* expounded the probable effect of the war on the elections that would take place on 4th November in Montreal. It also called upon the leader of the Muslim community to pray but, more than anything, *The Gazette* highlighted the opinions of this leader on the reasons that

¹⁶ CanWest Global Communication Corp

provoked the war; that the Muslims prepared the way for the crisis by accepting dictators over the last two decades, especially those that stood against the United States.

From the outset, *The Gazette's* first coverage of terrorism focused on its effects on the local community. As Gurevitch affirmed, global news are domesticated and "localized" through the process of news production, by focusing on those aspects that are compatible with the culture and the society which they serve.

Therefore, the domestication process of *The Gazette* concentrated on 9/11, 2001 and the War in Iraq highlighting *the connection of terrorism with the city of Montreal*. However, the domestication in *The Gazette* was not based on the in coverage of Montreal's multicultural ethnic community. At the very beginning of the assaults, the daily published the direct effects of 9/11 in Montreal and part of its community. In the days that followed, it concentrated on the impact on the city, particularly the national security measures put in place on the border between Canada and the United States in order to protect both countries.

This vulnerability was linked to the connection of terrorism with Montreal city, confirming that terrorist cells were established in the metropolis. In order to combat terrorism, according to the newspaper, a coalition was formed between the United States and its allies; the "good guys" that would fight against the "bad guys".

On the other hand, *The Gazette* gave space to op-ed pieces and articles in which the importance of the bilateral relationship of Canada and the United States was manifested. It constructed a frame that outlined *the dependence of Canada on the United States*, especially in the security and protection this country would need in the face of any event that could present itself – the worst-case scenario being a terrorist attack.

The Gazette constantly published op-ed pieces and articles arguing that Canada should support its ally and best friend, the

United States. However, by 2003, when Canada did not support its southern neighbor invasion of Iraq, the paper openly criticized the posture taken by Jean Chretien (who later gave in, in the face of petitions from the United States), criticizing him and manifesting that Canada should support, not turn its back on the United States.

La Presse, 9/11

This newspaper published a total of 45 news items (information and columns), aside from the photographs. The great majority of the pieces were from a variety of journalists who, in the main, were drawn from staff writers of the newspaper.

This daily also gleaned its information from the French news agency AFP and other informative articles from the Canadian news network *Presse Canadienne*. The front-page headline on 9/11 was "Etats Unis attaqués" (United States was attacked) included the same image that was published on the front page of the newspaper *The Gazette*.¹⁷

The newspaper clearly presented an informative balance. It gave voice to the secretary of the Canadian Arab Organization for Human Rights, for whom the attacks were a work "certainly of the Americans themselves". In its special edition, the main frame was *United States was vulnerable and insecure*.

La Presse was balanced, measured and included more opinion pieces in which it criticized and evaluated the events. Furthermore, in its special edition, *La Presse* was more "local" than *The Gazette* since it published articles about how 9/11 affected the people of Québec and included three times as many op-ed pieces as the Anglophone newspaper.

A large part of the coverage was dedicated to the consequences of the attacks around the world, paralyzing financial activities in the United States and in several financial organizations; the impact, the coverage argued, was on the symbols of the world economy. A certain feeling of fear arose within various sectors of society.

¹⁷ From the AP Agency.

Horror in the face of the events and the fear and uncertainty that came about as a consequence of the destruction of the symbol of capitalism at a global level was the take of the newspaper on the attacks. *La Presse*, in contrast to *The Gazette*, concentrated more on the effects of the attacks on the Quebecois.

The vision with which *La Presse* published the events of 9/11 reflected a more critical attitude than *The Gazette*. We found a diversity of local voices expressed in the daily, answers to many of the questions that the reader would surely have in respect of the attacks: why did it happen in this way? For what reason? Who were the perpetrators of the deed? Etc.

This francophone newspaper seemed to present the events in a more comprehensive way and tended to contextualize facts with data, history, and extracts of published books. Moreover, it invited experts to write op-ed pieces in certain areas related to terrorism, exteriorizing a variety of viewpoints in regard to the events. It even published pieces and commentaries from different media sources from around the world: *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Economist*, *Chicago Tribune*, from Paris, London and English-language Canadian papers.

In the composite week we analyzed for 2001, *La Presse* published a total of 279 news and opinion. Of these, 206 were information pieces and 73 were op-ed pieces (columns, reports and opinion articles). Coincidentally, *La Presse* employed the same percentage of news and opinion pieces as *The Gazette* did but differed substantially in respect of the content and the news agencies from where it derived the information distributed. *La Presse* was its own main source of information; of a total of 279 items, 53% came from its own sources, namely, its staff reporters and associates. The agencies that primarily used to garner information were *Agence France-Presse*¹⁸ (AFP) with 16% of the total (46

items), followed by *Associated Press* (AP) with 10% (29 items).

La Presse printed information about the impact of 9/11 on various Canadian cultural events that would have taken place in the USA, such as *Québec-New York*, which was finally cancelled. Moreover, on Canadian companies or workers who had given their accounts in respect of their survival of the attacks.

One of the most relevant themes repeated was that of *a more insecure world*. What have changed after 9/11 was the perception of fear, safety, the vulnerability of the United States, the latent feeling of being at risk of a terrorist attack, -not only in the American Nation, but in other countries-. *La Presse* expressed in a primordial way, the threat of a chemical or biological attack. The psychosis was shown primarily in the United States but was also present in Canada. It was viewed, in *La Presse*, that terror had acquired a new form: bioterrorism.

La Presse, through various opinions and facts, brought to attention the connection that Canada had with terrorist groups and the fact that the country was considered to be a point of entry or planning site for terrorist activities against the United States. However, it was also considered that Canada could have been the object of a terrorist attack for being the neighbor of the United States. The need for new counter-terrorist legislation was discussed, such as the much-criticized C-36 Bill. Likewise, it was proposed that the country was ill prepared to deal with a terrorist attack.

It was considered that, at the very least, Canada was a probable target for terrorist attacks in the first few weeks after 9/11. Canada being a neighbor and ally of the United States, its government implemented various security measures on its borders and its prisons, etc. The Canadian Prime Minister, Jean Chrétien, declared the country to be in a state of alert. The country was not

and third at a world level in general, just after the US *Associated Press* (AP) and the British *Reuters*.

¹⁸ The AFP is considered the most important news agency in the French-speaking world *Global Media Journal México*, Volumen 12, Número 23 Pp. 49-68.

considered to be ready to face a terrorist attack.

La Presse was definitely more international than *The Gazette*. It published diverse opinions from various parts of the world. It was obvious looking at the diversity of information sources and its content. Editorials and articles originated in different news media, mainly in Great Britain, France and the United States were published. A more balanced vision with an international flavor could be found, maybe a little more European in its tone, in which not only opinions were proffered, but also historical events.

La Presse being the most prestigious French-language newspaper in Montreal was far from being solely focused on the cosmopolitan English and French speaking population of this metropolis. Little was published in relation to the effects of terrorism at the community level. It concentrated more on what happened at a world level. If Montreal was a cosmopolitan city where diverse national backgrounds merge, it did not reflect these ethnic differences. Nevertheless, opinions of international leaders and the press from other countries were presented. Thus, its international position about terrorism, mostly compatible with the Europeans' position (France and Great Britain) was affirmed.

La Presse did not publish a great quantity of editorials as *The Gazette* did but it included (in the samples analyzed), in its FORUM editorial pages, the opinions of various experts from different fields. They offered their vision of events in accordance with their specialized areas. The newspaper reproduced extracts of certain books whose authors contextualized and explained the causes of 9/11.

Print media reporters are not experts on all subjects; therefore it was necessary to give voice to academics, management staff, writers, etc. *La Presse* published the opinions of academics of UQAM, of the deputy minister of British Columbia, as well as the Canadian ambassador to Israel, of

psychologists, political and journalistic writers about Islamic integration, and criminologists, etc. These sustain what Fabrice Bocteur affirms about a French tradition of intellectual opinion journalism (see Jean-Sébastien Rioux, 2005).

Invasion to Iraq, 2003

A Human Catastrophe Product of US "Bush Doctrine"

La Presse had a network of correspondents in other countries: it published the collaborative efforts of its special envoys in Iraq, Jordan, Washington, London, Egypt, Paris, etc.

In the journal, the war in Iraq was compared with great global events, classifying it as the greatest urban battle after Berlin in 1945. This was considered as marking the post-Cold War era. Furthermore, it was put on the same level, in some stories, with the Vietnam War and other important world conflicts.

In regard to the number of news and opinion items, *La Presse* published a total of 127 pieces, of which 72% (92) corresponded to news and 28% (35) to opinion. Out of the total of information sections, 21.26% was obtained from the special correspondents in different cities around the world. While 20.47% from *La Presse*; that's to say, from their staffers on the paper. *La Presse* highlighted further, as in previous years, the preference for presenting the information obtained from the French AFP channel, from which 23 news items were published (18.11%) from the total.

In relation with the opinion articles, the amount of experts who participated in diverse areas stood out. *La Presse* invited researchers from UQAM, the University of Montreal and McGill University to lend their opinions, as well as political specialists from the Arab and Muslim world, among others. Most of the columns and opinion pieces were inserted, as we mentioned earlier, in the editorial section of the daily, called FORUM.

By granting a wide coverage to the informative items of the AFP Agency, another perspective of the events was

presented. In view of the fact that *La Presse* procured the majority of its items from this agency, a particular vision of the world was thus offered. However, by also including editorials and commentaries in respect of what was published in international papers, such as in New York, Washington and London, different viewpoints were offered up.

We shall now see the frames that arose out of the analysis of 2003. In the first place, the newspaper established the *human and ecological consequences of the occupation of Iraq*, qualifying and predicting the events that would result, considering it a catastrophe and furthermore comparing it to Vietnam.

Since the possibility of an invasion of Iraq arose, Canada manifested its stance against such a determination arguing it would lend its support when the UN sanctioned the resolution after it was proved Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. The editorial in *La Presse* expressed its position against the intervention. Similarly, we found this stance also expressed in the news and opinion items published in the newspaper, being strongly linked to the defense of Canadian sovereignty.

The Latinos and noirs are the "American" soldiers going to war frame illustrates the human side of soldiers, letting us know more about their nationalities (many of them being Latinos and Negros). *La Presse* tended to show up the human side of war, devoting space to the faces of the soldiers and their nationality or ethnicity; by and large, immigrants or women who had had to adapt in order to comply with their duties.

During 2001, *La Presse* devoted a great part of its contents to opinions of specialists that expounded on, in large part, the psychosis that 9/11 caused among the people and how it was confronted at a medical level. It also published various items that manifested Canada and the rest of the world's risk of suffering a biological attack. In the sample analyzed for 2003, this fear was raised again, but overall it was considered to

be a problem stemming from 9/11, linked to the war in Iraq; the increased risk of terrorist attacks.

As *The Gazette*, the Francophone newspaper manifested the opinions of the community that could be affected directly from the war. The news items showed war would have little effect on Montreal; nonetheless, it was expected to impact the elections in Quebec.

As we had pointed out for the analysis of the year 2001, *La Presse* opted to offer an international vision (which is its characteristic) of the conflict (centered more on the European vision, particularly the French one). The impact of the intervention of the American coalition in Iraq on the local multicultural community of Montreal was not reflected, at least, in the newspapers that we analyzed.

It only reflected the feeling of the Iraqis living in the largest city in the Quebec region. The social imaginary that *La Presse* constructed was, therefore, that the intervention would have little direct consequences on the local community, but would do so at the international one. It was not assumed the war in Iraq would have direct repercussions on Canada, save for the relation with the United States and the support the southern neighbor was expecting from Canada. It was considered that the war was directly affecting, overall, the division of Eastern Europe. In 2003 *La Presse* was already predicting that the invasion of Iraq would provoke a global catastrophe, as well as a war that would be difficult to end. Comparing it with the Vietnam War, it was viewed that it could be a war without end and reason.

Conclusions

The Gazette is not Montreal

We cannot forget that the media, especially in this era of global conglomerates, is linked to power groups. One cannot ignore these economic and political aspects and set them aside from the published content. It is said that those who really control the media are those who are promoted in them. What is

certain is that *The Gazette* appeared to emphasize the ideas congruent with the cultural group to which they aimed, its elite; those social imaginaries in which the community feels participative as a cultural group, afford it the ability to revamp their cultural significance. As we can see, that “community” is far from being the community of Montreal as a whole, with all its multifarious differences, contradictions, aspirations and ways of seeing the world.

We would argue that the domestication constructed in *The Gazette* could have diverse repercussions at the individual and community levels. Those that received most emphasis on the paper, at a general level, were those that affected, economically and politically, the community (at least their readers) in Canada, but also, how the events affected North American society overall.

The Gazette partially portrayed the feeling of a small part of the cultural diversity of Montreal. It reflected, above all, those ethnicities that could feel directly affected by the events, but on occasions pointing out that they were also citizens of Québec and of Canada; that’s to say, Canadian citizens. Would this then give them immunity versus the Muslims living in the Middle East and other countries?

The few informative and/or opinion pieces of the Arab and/or Muslim community in Montreal manifested its fear of denial and of xenophobia from 9/11. What about the rest of the population of Montreal, however?

In 1998, in an analysis of the paper’s content, headed by John Miller, *The Gazette* was considered to be a journal that covered a large percentage of the ethnic representation. Nonetheless, at least in this investigation, this paper did not consider that other ethnic minorities were adversely affected by the terrorist acts.

Because of this, we consider that despite *The Gazette* being a newspaper that seeks strategies to reach more readers, it continues to be a daily aimed mostly at the anglophile community and in no small measure, we could argue, to the Jewish one.

As part of the Anglo-Canadian social group, *The Gazette* took the policy of supporting the United States after 9/11, as well as in the War in Iraq.

In some documents we found that it was seen that *The Gazette* did not publish negative information in regard to Israel. It seems the newspaper’s line has been to support American policies in the Middle East and Israel. This is, in our view, the “domestication” side of *The Gazette*. It is its main interest to portray and circulate the ideas it shares with its elite and not the ones of the Montreal diverse community as a whole.

Therefore, the stance adopted in the construction of the social imaginaries about terrorism in *The Gazette* is, to a certain extent logical. However, what about the “ideal” informative function of the journal, its ethics, its objectivity? Where does that leave the slogan *The Gazette is Montreal*? Evidently, from what we have observed and understood in these pages, Montreal is not *The Gazette*.

La Presse: Internationalist View of Terrorism

The domestication on terrorism propounded in *La Presse* varies substantially from those in *The Gazette*.

Rioux (2005) points out that the English and French Canadians have differing views on security and defense issues, with French Canadians being more dovish, isolationist and anti-militaristic than their English counterparts.

The prime difference in *La Presse* was in its sources; the news agencies from which it got its international news. The majority of news stories in *La Presse* were from the AFP and the *Presse Canadienne*. The selection of information agencies and the news the dailies published and selected from them, portrayed different takes on reality. As Fletcher (2000) explains, the French and English news media carry relatively little common material.

Besides this, a lot of news originated in correspondents, as Wu (2000, quoted by Rioux) argues: “the major French media in

Quebec focus on Quebec provincial politics and generally report on Ottawa and the rest of Canada primarily in the context of Quebec interest, much as foreign correspondents would report on a neighboring country”.

We would add this was also the case in *La Presse*’ coverage of the United States. However, for the War in Iraq, *La Presse* sent journalists, which presented a different account of the facts.

On the other hand, the daily proposed that the 9/11 affected the world economically, not only Canada and Québec. The perceptions among the population were concentrated on security/vulnerability; the feeling of there being a latent risk. If the attack succeeded in the most powerful and heavily-armed country in the world and its intelligence system –the CIA – had failed, a similar event could happen in Canada.

This fear focused on, more than anything, a bio-terrorist attack. The perception of fear of a terrorist attack began to weave its way into society after 9/11. As it was pointed out, one of the main things that changed from 9/11 onwards was precisely this awareness of having a terrorist assault (Roy, 2002). Parallel to this, was the idea that terrorism was connected to Canada. It was reminded, for example, that the city of Montreal was a target for terrorist attacks in 1998. Besides this it suggested that Canada was not prepared to protect its citizens in the case of an attack; confirming the imaginary that Canada was a country of opportunity for the terrorists, an easy mark for them.

There was an interesting point about the “domestication” of terrorism in *La Presse*. Although the newspaper manifested a plural voice in its coverage of the effects that 9/11 had had on the Quebecois (especially on the community that had been present in New York), it afforded very little column space to the ethnic diversity in Montreal. Maybe it decided to focus primarily on those people who had been affected the most by the events. For instance, the Islamic community expressed its fear of experiencing racism

after 9/11. Furthermore, it insisted there had been an erroneous interpretation what Islam was about. However, as we shall see later, the aspect of “domestication” in *La Presse* portrayed a more internationalist and humanistic posture than the Anglophone newspaper and did suggest the foreign policy that Canada should have in the face of the events.

In relation to the invasion to Iraq, the main social domestication of the event referred to the fear instilled into everyday life (principally in the United States and partly into Canadian society) and the idea that Iraq constituted a threat for the United States due to its possession of weapons of mass destruction that would imply greater risks of terrorist attacks for that country in the world.

In 2003, when the war in Iraq began, *La Presse* decided to present the other face of war, not focusing only on the military strategies, or publishing mainly the American official discourses. It decided to highlight what the war in Iraq would provoke among the civilian population: a human and ecological catastrophe. This is a relevant distinction with *The Gazette*, which during 2003 mainly focused on the fury and force of the US coalition in Iraq, reinforcing the idea of its superiority. Another difference is that *La Presse* manifested a posture against the war in Iraq and decided to concentrate more on the coverage and opinions of the effects of War.

La Presse constructed the frame that the war in Iraq was a human catastrophe; a consequence of the American foreign policy (the so-called Bush Doctrine) in the Gulf Region. This US policy in Iraq, according to the daily, was creating a catastrophe, starvation and a huge exodus of Iraqis to neighboring countries.

These differences between *La Presse* and *The Gazette*, according to Rioux, posit that there are historical reasons for Quebec’s distinct military culture. We consider this last asseveration to be one aspect that could help us to understand “why” these attitudes appeared in the Quebec media. Mainly, it is

the gradual formation of a unique French-Canadian culture in opposition to a dual loyalty among English-Canadians with its exaggerated loyalty to Britain (and to the United States).

In this respect, *La Presse* portrayed a discourse that was very much in tune with the public opinion of its francophone readers (Rioux, 2005). In addition to this, we need to add the pre-existing social imaginaries, which evidently affect social practices in each cultural group. This composition of framings in both newspapers reflect the cultural division in the québécoise society.

In opposition to what *The Gazette* expressed, the French-Canadian daily supported the United Nations. Some studies have shown that French-Canadians have generally been supportive of the United Nations (see Rioux, 2005) in its international role on conflicts. Evidently, this newspaper had an ideological position that confirmed it. We consider that it leaned towards the French position in regard to conflicts such as Iraq. What stand out, in the events that we examined in this study, was the anti-US, anti-imperialist, and pacifist positions (supporting the avoidance of the use of military forces) and its constant agreement with international resolutions.

We consider *La Presse*, overall, as a reflection of the Québec identity, of its French origins and roots. In this sense, this is the most local emphasis and the crux of the newspaper. *La Presse* spread and defended Québécois identity along with its values; in other words, the Franco-Canadian or Québécois social values, and not only the cosmopolitanism of Montreal (and its diversity of beliefs); social imaginaries on terrorism were very different from the Anglo-Canadian ones like *The Gazette*, which is more pro-United States and Israel and which supported the conflict in Iraq, etc. Hence, domestication in this daily is the French-Canadian vision of the events.

The role of the media in this new millennium seems to be more protagonic than ever. They act as builders of the definitions of local, national and global

issues. One of these issues is terrorism which, since 9/11, has acquired a worldwide relevance as we have seen since 2001.

Global Terrorism: Merchandise of Local Appropriation

This study allowed us to conclude that the media continued publishing those news which it considered to be profitable merchandise and, furthermore, that it tried to be “close” to the readership community through their own ideology and editorial lines.

News surrounding terrorist acts contain all the qualities considered to be newsworthy, therefore, “sellable” to the people that “buy” it. We should not forget that newspapers are also commercial products; although, as mentioned on various occasions by some journalists, good content should not be in opposition with business.

As we put forward throughout this study, each daily developed its particular focus on the terrorist acts of 9/11 and the war in Iraq. Each one afforded greater space to some protagonists than others, focused on different aspects of the war and assumed distinct positions. In reality, they exhibited some similarities but greater differences and this is precisely what we expected to find.

The results of this investigation tended to confirm that the media pursue an editorial line that help them identify with certain groups, ideologies, countries, religions and/or identities; They do this through a multiple, interpretative process.

The readers might not be in agreement with many of the opinions expressed, but it is our contention that their general viewpoints coincide with that of the newspaper. It seems evident that the social imaginaries spread by the print press can function at a deeper level than other media. The print media showed how they perceived themselves and society in respect to terrorism.

The newspapers on which we focused in this study were clearly linked to the readers in the community it belonged to. In spite of the technologies that exist today and the

multitude of resources in the so-called Information Society, it would seem social groups prefer to keep reading “its printed newspaper”.

Also, however, the media seem to function as a communication organ between the “elite”. We feel that the role of this “local” media in the construction of social meanings in respect of terrorism is a subject that must be continued to be discussed.

We believe that the printed media has been a key vehicle for the propagation and defense of the discourses that try to define

what is the New World Order; what is good and what is evil; what are the ills of this world; how are they to be combated; what stance do we adopt as society and as a specific cultural group in the face of conflicts; wether we include or exclude ourselves as individuals or as a society from those conflicts. How do we bear real or invented fears or rather, how do we act and advance in order to construct, at least, a better world.

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