Newspaper coverage of 1980 Quebec referendum a study of linguistic and regional agenda-setting in the politics of referenda.

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LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE NOUS L'AVONS RECUE
NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF 1980 QUEBEC REFERENDUM:
A STUDY OF LINGUISTIC AND REGIONAL AGENDA-SETTING
IN THE POLITICS OF REFERENDA

by: KAREN SPIERKEL

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of Communication Studies
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree
of Master of Arts at
The University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada
1981
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ABSTRACT

NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE QUEBEC REFERENDUM: 
A STUDY OF LINGUISTIC AND REGIONAL AGENDA-SETTING 
IN THE POLITICS OF REFERENDA

by

Karen Julliet Spierkel

The present study considers the role of the printed press in Canada in the reporting of the events of the 1980 Quebec referendum and the implications the referendum presented for Canada's future. The referendum became an excellent vehicle to study Canadian newspapers in action; particularly to examine trends of linguistic and regional agendas and patterns of referendum coverage.

In a society fractured by both linguistic and regional interests, is it possible for the press in Canada to promote a national agenda? Part of the aim of this thesis is to examine this very question.

The study employs content analysis to study referendum coverage in a systematic sample of 16 Canadian daily newspapers during the April 16 through May 19, 1980 campaign period. The theoretical framework for the analysis is based on the agenda-setting function of the press as they operate
under cultural macrogates of language and region. The hypo-
theses advanced attempt to pinpoint possible patterns of
newspaper coverage of political parties and referendary
issues based on the cleavages cited.

A discussion of the findings and summary attempt to
define the Canadian press in action on the referendary battle-
ground and it is shown that language and region do indeed
have a strong influence on newspaper content. Suggestions
for further research provide a focus for more extensive
study.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This writer wishes to thank Dr. Walter Romanow of the Department of Communication Studies at The University of Windsor for his guidance and patience on this project. An expression of heart-felt gratitude is also made here to Dr. Walter Soderlund of the Political Science Department for his understanding, encouragement, and research expertise, which were always offered so freely.

This writer also wishes to extend thanks to my family, especially my parents, and friends, whose constant encouragement and help were instrumental in the completion of this thesis.

Special thanks is also due to Sjef Frenken, Director of Policy Development at the CRTC, who made academic pursuits and work experience compatible.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1. **Statement of Purpose and general description of the study:**

The following study was undertaken with the observation that there is a distinct void in the area of Canadian press studies, particularly those which attempt to define the press in action. While Arthur Siegel's newspaper analysis of the 1970 FLQ crisis\(^1\) provides one of the best examples of such a study, his work has not occasioned many follow-up studies.

The 1980 Quebec Referendum, held early that spring (May 20), had the potential of fundamentally changing the Canadian political system. For those who wished to see the continuance of a genuine federal system in Canada, the Quebec situation could not but have had serious implications. This study then will consider the role of the Canadian press in reporting the details of the referendum debate and the serious implications the referendum had for the future of Canada.

It has been shown that mass media can act in such a way as to provide a unifying force within a nation. No one can neglect the role a nation's communication network is able to play in nation-building. Mass communication is necessary for a national consciousness, spirit, and concerted action. Canada's press as part of that mass communication system are
intrinsically tied to the process\textsuperscript{2}.

John Porter wrote in his work \textbf{Vertical Mosaic}\textsuperscript{3} that within nations, the problems of internal cohesion and maintenance of social values are so great that informal communication is not enough to create unity. The society's media are expected to perform that ideological function. The press in Canada, however, are marked by certain features of organization which inhibit this ideal function. Governed by such factors as economic interest, regional affiliation, and cultural and linguistic concerns, Canada's press inevitably fail to cover the same issues. In other words, Canada's press vary the issue agenda of the day both linguistically and regionally. Porter said: If different groups within the same social structure do not experience the same social goals and values because they are set off by geography, religion, ethnicity or language (as in Canada), it is unlikely that they will achieve national unity. Research has shown that Canada's press institutions, with their regional centers, emphasis on local issues, and parochialism fail to act as a unifying force\textsuperscript{4}.

In an era of constitutional controversy, so severe as to challenge national unity itself, the referendum debate in Quebec provides an excellent example through which to examine Canada's press in action. When Canadians in every province, not only in Quebec, are clamouring for "attention" and premiers blatantly demand more and more control over unclear
jurisdictional powers, which have traditionally been accorded to the federal purview, it is appropriate to examine how the press operate in such an environment.

Beset by demands in both the economic and the political arenas, the press systems in different parts of the country act in certain ways. Harold Laswell pointed out in his classic study, "The Structure and Function of Communication in Society\(^5\)\), that there are three political functions of communication: (1) surveillance (2) correlation and (3) transmission of social heritage. If the press are designed to inform, educate, socialize and criticize in the political forum, the purpose of this study is to examine the Canadian press to determine if different papers in one nation will operate as distinctly as past research has indicated they have.

2. **Theoretical Framework:**

The theoretical framework for the study is based on the concepts of agenda-setting\(^6\) and gatekeeping\(^7\). The agenda-setting focus stresses the order in which the media place issues before the public for discussion. Agenda-setting, then, deals with the role of the press in the selection of issues from the environment to be placed before readers. Through selection and emphasis, the media are able to organize and give sense to our world for us\(^8\). According to McCombs, "the priorities of the media are transferred largely intact onto the public agenda\(^9\)."
The process of gatekeeping in mass communication may be viewed within a framework of a total social system, made up of a series of subsystems whose primary concerns include the control of information, in the interest of gaining other social ends (Defleur, 1966). Gatekeeping then, includes various forms of information or knowledge control.

More recent thinking has redefined the "gatekeepers" as any social institution, social context, activity or thing which has as a consequence of its characteristics or behavior the effect of modifying media content. For the purpose of this paper the process by which news events flow from source to receiver may be broken down into two parts as described by Briggs, Romanow, Soderlund and Wagenberg in "Media Agenda-Setting in the 1979 Canadian Federal Election". First, the process intervening between the occurrence of and the media reporting of that event (gatekeeping) and second, the process intervening between the media reporting of the event and audience response to it (agenda-setting).

This study will attempt to focus upon the agendas developed in the press across Canada, related to the presentation of the 1980 Quebec referenda issues, political parties and leaders involved in the debate.

It is assumed that news events and issues in the referendum campaign will flow through two essential "macro" gates, that fall under a cultural purview; they are opera-
tionalized in this study by language and region, since in Canada, linguistic and regional considerations often philosophically equal cultural recognition\textsuperscript{13}.

By the press' selection of events, personalities and issues to cover, and the chosen method of presentation, reality is often slanted. It is assumed then, that the basic elements of what the referendum was all about will be different to someone reading about it in the \textit{Vancouver Sun} as opposed to someone perusing the \textit{Halifax Chronicle-Herald}.

If the press are to be viewed as agenda-setters -- as a consequence of gatekeeping activities -- making decisions about what the issues are and how to present them, important questions need to be answered: for example, what factors enter into the decision-making process in the selection of news, what are the results of this process and who decides what the issues are?

It is this author's contention that part of the answers lie in the operation of the macro-gates described: culture as operationalized by region and language. Because of the regional, parochial and linguistic nature of the press in Canada, agendas should be different. The principles of agenda-setting and gatekeeping in the analysis of referenda politics must be studied in light of the Canadian example. As cited earlier, Arthur Siegel conducted one such study of the Canadian newspapers and their coverage of the FLQ crisis.
The Quebec referendum, held May 20, 1980, provides yet another unique example within which to design a study related to a uniquely Canadian press system. The main thesis of this study then, as in the Siegel research, is this: in a society such as Canada, with cleavages such as those of language and region, there will be a significant difference in the flow of political messages.

The implications of this are crucial to political integration and without doubt instrumental in terms of the impact on national unity. It is anticipated that this study will answer the following type of question: for example, whether there were any linguistic or regional patterns evident in the press with respect to the amount of attention accorded to the major parties/political groups, or issues in the debate.

In answering this and related questions, it is hoped that a great deal can be revealed about the workings and policies of the press in Canadian society, particularly as agents of national unity.

It becomes almost certain that where such widely varying views are held, covering such a broad range of issues as was covered in the Quebec Referendum, newspaper coverage of the referendum will differ along the important cleavages mentioned.

If hypotheses can be advanced about the probable patterns of coverage based on these cleavages, much can be added to what is already assumed about the role and function of the press in Canadian society.
The main imperative then will be to test the hypotheses that such characteristics as language and region will reflect separate patterns of referendum coverage. In other words, press agendas will differ along such cleavages as language and region. While some earlier studies have implied that these types of hypotheses hold true, such studies have been few and limited in scope. This study will contribute towards filling that void, and offer a new dimension to any earlier literature: that of the treatment given to referenda politics in a Canadian setting by the press in Canada.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

1. Introduction:

Because of the relatively recent date of the referendum, there is a relative paucity of studies related to the broad area of the relationship between the operations of mass media in Canada and the evolution and results of 1980 Quebec referendum. Also, in the conventional periodicals there is little in the way of published material with respect to the role and function of the French language press in Canada.

There are several newspaper and magazine materials which are relevant to the central issue; yet, these tend to be in the nature of reports, opinions, and background material. In the main, they deal with such issues as: the referendum, nationalism, sovereignty-association and so on. But of these articles, featured in most Canadian papers and magazines, which represent analyses of the referendum and media coverage of the event, the literature is scanty at best.

However, several documents do fall into the category of research literature. These are either: a) Research related to the impact of region and language on the press in Canada (for example, the research by Arthur Siegel on the FLQ crisis)/or b) Research related to the referendum itself (for example, documents presented by the Parti Quebecois
following the election of the PQ in November of 1976 such as Bill 101 and the White Paper on Sovereignty-Association. Documents which are directly related to the referendum essentially offer a brief overview of relevant Quebec provincial documents (for instance, documents which formed the basis for the final referendum debate). These will be examined in chronological order, following an overview of research on the impact of region and language.

2. Research Related to the Impact of Region and Language on the Press in Canada

The major goal of the study, as pointed out in the introduction, is to focus on the agenda-setting function of the Canadian press with regard to treatment of the Quebec referendum. It is rather widely held in Canada that there is no "national agenda", no national pattern, and that the rank ordering of salient events by the press differs by region and/or language as is noted by Jean Bruce in research conducted for the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism. The research in the area is extensive, therefore brief mention is made to the more salient works here, but the reader is urged to note a list of such material in the endnotes. Frederick Elkin posits that a definite media agenda exists for each of the two language cultures in Canada, so much so, that sometimes the same events are treated differently. Donald Gordon and Arthur Siegel present much
the same evidence in empirically-oriented studies.

In his study for the same Commission cited above, Gordon emphasizes that linguistic cleavages are more pronounced than regional ones, though both are everpresent\textsuperscript{16}. In his examination of Canadian press coverage of the FLQ crisis, Siegel relates the nature of the Canadian press to their agendas. Because Canada's press are by nature non-competitive, concentrated, lacking in national newspapers, dominated by small daily circulations, and heavily represented by evening papers, Siegel argues that these factors will also contribute to the press' parochial agendas\textsuperscript{17}. His main findings indicate different norms in English and French press systems and different perceptions of reality, suggesting that language reinforces subcultural divisions, thereby causing social divisiveness\textsuperscript{18}. Siegel notes in his more recent study of French and English broadcasting that there are significant differences between news programming in the French and English languages\textsuperscript{19}.

On the basis of such research, it is hypothesized that French language papers will have a distinct agenda as compared to English language papers, with regards to coverage of political groups and referendary issues.

Findings on the differences in outlook taken by regions were not as conclusive, yet they still indicate that regionalism acts as a negative factor in the development of Canadian unity. (In their study of newspaper coverage of issues affecting
political integration in 1976, Dr. Walter Soderlund et al.,
review much of the pertinent literature in this regard.\textsuperscript{20}

Arthur Siegel suggests in his FLQ study that there is
no uniform regionalism in the press system coinciding within
provincial borders\textsuperscript{21}, although Frederick Elkin identifies
provincialism and regionalism as factors that definitely
inhibit the development of a pan-Canadian identity\textsuperscript{22}.

From existing research on regional cleavages in the
press in Canada, this author contends that there is indeed
reason to believe that agendas will differ from region to
region regarding coverage of political groups and referendary
issues. It is therefore hypothesized that in terms of the
presentation of political groups and coverage of issues,
the press in the different regions in Canada will advance
different agendas\textsuperscript{23}.

(Note that for the purposes of this study Canada has been
divided into 4 regions: Atlantic Canada, Quebec, Ontario
and the West).

Popular as the separate linguistic and regional agenda
hypothesis may be, conclusive evidence that a French-English
difference is equally evident in TV coverage seems unsubstan-
tiated. In a comprehensive examination of Canadian mass
media coverage of the 1979 Canadian Federal election, Romanow
et al. found that the data point to the existence of an
English language TV agenda, with a French language agenda
significantly different from, but by no means entirely separate
from, that of the English agenda\textsuperscript{24}. The researchers go on
to posit that there seems to be evidence of the existence of a national TV agenda, with what might be called a French variation of that agenda\textsuperscript{25}. In a more recent report following up that analysis of the electronic media's treatment of the election, Romanow et al. found that much of the same tendencies held true with press coverage of the event\textsuperscript{26}.

Finally, of note is Carol Charlebois' paper on "The Structure of Federal-Provincial News". She concludes that Canada has one image of reality, based on the image that is presented in the Canadian Press (CP) wire service. She suggests that the image is one that exaggerates disparities between elite and non-elite provinces. Peripheral regions do appear in the image less often than do elite provinces. They also appear with less detailed treatment, with emphasis on leaders -- the image, therefore, is one of the federal system dominated by the activities of leaders\textsuperscript{27}. A cursory look at referendum coverage by the press indicates that at least one journalist believes this to be the case: e.g. in a May 19, 1980 Globe and Mail feature, "The Danger in Quebec's notions", writer Douglas Lepan notes: "Trudeau and Levesque are front and center in the Quebec referendum controversy".

Carol Charlebois also notes in her research that the further one travels from the "event" of concern, the greater the degree of parochialism\textsuperscript{28}. One can hypothesize then that the further one travels from Quebec the less press coverage
will be devoted to the referendum. By the same token the French language press would be more apt to cover the referendum issues and players to a greater degree than would the English language press. This is based on the fact that the three French language papers examined in this study are in Quebec.

3. Research Related to the Referendum:

Politics of Referenda

Referendum usually refers to a vote on a particular issue. It has its origins as early as the 13th Century in Switzerland, where elected representatives would make decisions "ad referendum", or to be referred to the people for ratification. The modern word "plebiscite" is often used as meaning a vote on leader's action rather than a specific decision.²⁹

In the Canadian debate it seems that the two terms are used synonymously. The two documents on referenda (Bill C-9) An Act Respecting Public Referendums in Canada on Questions Relating to the Constitution of Canada, and the Quebec 1978 Referendum Act provide for non-binding popular consultation.³⁰

In framing its legislation for referenda in Quebec, the PQ government copied some of the provisions and practices of the United Kingdom's referendum on the Common Market, even though this is not a parallel case.³¹ However, in a
study of media coverage in the 1975 British Referendum, Colin Seymour-Ure concluded that the contention that referenda tend to put in doubt the legitimacy of the press while at the same time giving them an even more central role than in election campaigns, is applicable to the Canadian situation\textsuperscript{32}. Seymour-Ure argues that while on the surface the British referendum seemed like an election, with the same personalities, the same polarity of choice, and so on, significantly more than in an election, the media were the referendum campaign\textsuperscript{33}.

General elections in the UK, as in Canada -- a parliamentary democracy -- are concerned with non-media institutions (parties, legislature, cabinet) which interact with the media in the election campaign. In the referendum, Seymour-Ure suggests that the media institutions were central\textsuperscript{34} to the campaign. When media institutions so "structure our world for us\textsuperscript{35}", questions of control by these institutions loom large.

In an examination of the Canadian mass media, federalism and the politics of referenda, Arthur Siegel argues that referenda have no legal status in Canadian constitutional practices which provide for representative government. In fact, he says: "referenda are alien to the spirit of our parliamentary system, that is modelled on the British Parliament at Westminster\textsuperscript{36}. He further postulates: "The politics of referenda are essentially addressed to the people and tend
to by-pass parliament. A referendum reflects the view of the majority only at a particular moment; a view that is subject to rapid change. In the politics of referenda, the mass media, and not Parliament or the National Assembly become principal forums of politics. Consequently the role of the mass media in Canadian politics will be profoundly affected. Essentially what results (and Colin Seymour-Ure's study cites the same tendencies) is an emphasis on personalities rather than issues.

Judging from the headlines following the PQ election in 1976, in the separatism duel in Quebec, the key actors seemed to be Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Levesque. Carefully staged media events in the form of public speeches were evident, e.g., Mr. Levesque's address to Economic Club in New York in which he predicted Quebec independence, and Trudeau's speech to U.S. Congress claiming that Canada would remain whole. The Quebec Charter of French Language (Bill 101) dealing with language and education, introduced by the PQ Minister of Cultural Development Camille Laurin made headlines across the country in August 1977. Again Trudeau countered with his remarks that the PQ language policy was a return to the "dark ages".

Siegels largest fear is that plebiscite politics become crisis politics, actively drawing the press into the events themselves as public opinion moulders. Freedom of the press could ultimately be threatened. He further suggests that
in their coverage of the news events, the French press would play a more active and powerful role in these events than would the English press, which are more fragmented. The French press, rich in their background of political involvement and being more homogeneous, would be more comfortable in this enlarged political role, as moulders of public opinion.

Relevant Quebec Referendum Events and Related political Documents:

In light of this discussion, it is best now to turn to a brief overview of the Parti Quebecois reign, the party's approach to the referendum, and related approaches by other political participants in the debate.

Parti Quebecois Election and Year 1

The P.Q. was elected to office in what was seen as one of the most unprepared for victories in Quebec election history. On November 15, 1976, a very proud Rene Levesque saw his party rise to take command of the pilot's seat that he had sought for 12 years.

In the party's first year of office, Quebecers saw such far-reaching policies as the Charter of the French Language, (Bill 101) and were introduced to the rhetoric of independence by a party in power. In particular, the groundwork for the proposed referendum on Quebec independence was drafted,
and the province and the rest of Canada came face to face with the P.Q.'s political ambition of separation.43

A New Deal

As the P.Q. term in office progressed and proceedings of the National Assembly turned more and more to the question of an anticipated referendum and imminent P.Q. action regarding separation, the polarization of "YES" and "NO" forces for a separate Quebec became evident. Basically, the P.Q. and staunch French Canadian separatists, even a minority of English Canadian pro-separation activists, made up the YES forces. Premier Levesque and his foremost Cabinet Ministers such as Camille Laurin and Jacques Parizeau made the case for separation, with Premier Levesque as "chef" of the YES UMBRELLA COMMITTEE. On the NO side was Pierre Trudeau and his federalist contemporaries in Ottawa, and Claude Ryan leading the Liberals in Quebec. Ryan acted as leader of the NO UMBRELLA COMMITTEE, but in political circles his strength as a leader was questioned. Often his role in the debate was second to that played by stronger federalist leaders such as Pierre Trudeau and Jean Chretien.

On November 1, 1979, the P.Q. released what was posited as Quebec's greatest long term security belt against tyranny, economic decline, and cultural assimilation: The White Paper on Sovereignty Association -- Quebec - Canada: A New Deal.44
Authored by Rene Levesque and his Ministers, the document outlines the very general principles of sovereignty-association; a proposed deal with Canada which would replace federalism with a new constitutional formula.

In it the P.Q. leader defined the type of sovereignty to which he aspired by stating that: the "only laws that will apply on Quebec territory will be those adopted by National Assembly, and only those taxes that will be levied will be those decreed by Quebec law". At the same time, he wanted to maintain economically advantageous associations with what the rest of Canada through a customs union and common currency.

In Chapter 5 of the paper, he revealed his plans for the then upcoming referendum and gave Quebecers a formal invitation to express themselves on a popular issue, saying that a referendum would allow the entire population to play an active role in the referendum debate. He stipulated that the purpose of the referendum was to open the doors for negotiation on independence, not immediately to separate from Canada: it was a stipulation that many Canadians felt was far from the truth.

Announcement of the Referendum Question

On Thursday, December 20, 1979, the proposed wording of referendum question was delivered to the National Assembly by Rene Levesque. Subject to a debate on the wording to follow from March 4th to 21st, 1980 in the National Assembly, the question was stated as follows:
The government of the Province of Quebec has made public its proposal to negotiate a new agreement with the rest of Canada based on equality of nations;

The agreement would enable Quebec to acquire the exclusive power to make laws, levy its taxes and establish relations abroad -- in other words -- sovereignty -- and at the same time to maintain with Canada an economic association including common currency;

Any change in political status resulting from these negotiations will be submitted to the people through a referendum;

On these terms, do you give the Government of Quebec the mandate to negotiate the proposed agreement between Quebec and Canada?  "YES"  "NO"

Claude Ryan Counters with the Beige Paper

Working to provide Quebecers with an alternative to the P.Q.'s White Paper and a counter argument with which to view the referendum question, Claude Ryan and the "NO" forces issued what came to be known as the Beige Paper, on January 9th, 1980. Ryan's proposal: A New Canadian Federation, not only prescribed a new deal for the province of Quebec, but insisted on a renewed federalism for the rest of Canada with constitutional reform far different from that of the Levesque paper.

In his editorial for the January 14th issue of Macleans, Peter Newman described the document as he saw it:

The 145-page position paper contains little dogma, cant or doctrine. It is nothing less than a perfectly workable, rational and supremely adoptable master plan for resolving the French-English dilemma that has plagued this country for more than 100 years. In the precise prose that once adorned Le Devoir's editorial page, Ryan blueprints the revised division of powers that would
finally institutionalize the obvious fact that Quebec is not (and never has been) a province like the others.\textsuperscript{49} Some of the policies outlined in the Ryan document include:

- the constitutional right to education, social services and judicial proceedings of French Canadians in their own language.
- the constitutional entrenchment of equalization payments
- the formation of regional administrative services for smaller provinces
- the stipulation that every government, federal and provincial, would be sovereign in its fields of competence
- the stipulation that Quebec have the right to opt out of programs desired by the rest of Canada and that it have a veto on constitutional change and cultural destiny.
- a detailed redivision of federal/provincial powers.\textsuperscript{50}

The Debate on Wording

With the preparation of formal policy papers and polarization of the sides complete, the debate on the wording of the referendum question itself was to take precedence in the National Assembly. The referendum question debate covered a three-week span from March 4th to 21st, in which both the YES and NO forces made embittered and strategic pleas for their views. The debate, to last 35 hours, was theoretically
supposed to be about the wording of the referendum question, not about the future of Quebec. But Levesque knew that Quebec and Canada wanted to see the beginning of the referendum debate. So on March 4th the Premier gave a defense of sovereignty-association and of voting YES in the referendum. Claude Ryan, on the other hand, debated the question.51

On day two of the debate, Bernard Landry, P.Q. Economics Minister, opened with economic arguments for separation; the theme essentially of the week's debate being that Quebec was economically mistreated in Confederation.52 Parti Quebecois strategy was to concentrate on economic issues in the first week of debate, switching in the second week to the obsolescence of Canada's existing constitution and ending with a crescendo of cultural arguments for voting YES.53

By the second week of the debate it was clear that the beginning of the referendum campaign was in process. The debate, carried live on TV, provided, free of charge, extensive exposure.

The P.Q., with twice the number of members as all other parties, got far more opportunity to be heard than others. Rather than concentrating on the referendum question, accent was on the referendum itself.54

Globe and Mail Quebec columnist William Johnson noted at the close of the debate that the P.Q. had put on a stunning performance — winning the debate in the National Assembly.
He said that because Liberals made the "disastrous mistake of attacking the P.Q.'s question rather than defending federalism, and responding to the P.Q.'s rhetorical offensive on independence, the NO forces lost badly."

The wording of the question, slightly changed from its December unveiling, was officially adopted, and the members of the National Assembly signed up on pro-YES and pro-NO rosters, assigning umbrella committees to run an actual referendum campaign.

The revised question was made public on March 21, 1980:

The government of Quebec has made public its proposal to negotiate a new agreement with the rest of Canada, based on the equality of nations; this agreement would enable Quebec to acquire the exclusive power to make its laws, levy its taxes and establish relations abroad -- in other words, sovereignty -- and at the same time to maintain with Canada an economic association including a common currency. Any change in political status resulting from these negotiations will be submitted to the people through a referendum.

**ON THESE TERMS, DO YOU GIVE THE GOVERNMENT OF QUEBEC THE MANDATE TO NEGOTIATE THE PROPOSED AGREEMENT BETWEEN QUEBEC AND CANADA?  YES  NO**

---

**The Referendum Date Set**

On April 15, 1980 Premier Levesque announced to the National Assembly the official date of the Quebec referendum on sovereignty-association. It was the last chance for the two leaders to reach their fellow citizens from the solemn forum of the National Assembly. Quebec would vote on May 20, 1980 he said, and within moments the 35-day campaign was...
officially underway\textsuperscript{57}.

Calling for a YES vote from all sectors of Quebec society, Premier Levesque emphasized the people's direct role in choosing a path for Quebec. Opposition leader Claude Ryan once again reiterated what he had stressed in the referendum question debate -- that Quebec's place in the Canadian federation was "that of a major partner and not a permanent minority\textsuperscript{58}".

For his part, Prime Minister Trudeau warned Quebeckers that neither the federal government nor the other provinces would negotiate sovereignty-association even if they voted YES in the May 20 referendum. In a speech to the House of Commons, he said such negotiation would lead to a "political and legal" dead end\textsuperscript{59}. He went so far as to say the P.Q. were the "enemy within", stressing the need for a strong central government to combat the regional divisiveness in Canada\textsuperscript{60}.

The actors had, by this time, studied their roles; the leadership of the NO forces was divided between Ryan and Trudeau, and in the YES camp a very determined Rene Levesque and the Parti Quebecois were prepared for the 35-day campaign. The mass media machines were operative, fresh from their coverage of the debate on the referendum question in the National Assembly (March 4-21). It has already been shown
that the referendum campaign was very much in progress with the debate in the National Assembly, as the issues discussed there were more at the heart of the referendum debate than any debate on the wording of the question.

The P.Q. had always defended the proposal of a referendum on the grounds that, while a general election personalized issues, a referendum did not. Yet, it was clear the campaign was going to be complicated by the personalities of Trudeau, Ryan and Levesque. This historical review leaves one on the doorstep of the campaign itself. The essence of this present study is as follows: To examine how the press treated the political groups and issues, set up agendas, and analyzed the debate during the April 16–May 19 referendum campaign.

The Referendum Campaign — "A 35-day Tug-of-War"

The campaign started off as an emotion-packed debate over the merits of the referendum question, but ended up as a choice between Quebec and Canada. Opinion polls showed the YES forces as well ahead following their overwhelming victory in the National Assembly March 4th to 21st debate on the referendum wording. A call went out to Ottawa for Trudeau to help face a challenge many felt Ryan could not handle alone.

Two weeks after the first opinion polls in early April, an unexpected incident changed the nature of the campaign. Lise Payette, Minister responsible for the "Condition Feminine"
referred to Mrs. Ryan as an "Yvette", the submissive little girl used widely in a Quebec grade school primer. This provoked a massive backlash by housewives who felt a 'NON' vote was not a submissive one. 14,000 women filled the Montreal Forum to protest. Opinion polls showed 10 percent of P.Q. women had changed their voting intentions from YES to NO.

Ryan concentrated his campaign on the wording of the question, as he had in the debate in the National Assembly, surrounding himself at rallies with a team of "NON" forces. From Ottawa, Energy Minister Marc Lalonde told Quebecers they needed Canadian oil. Justice Minister Jean Chretien talked about Canadian pride.

Meanwhile, Mr. Levesque was staging small rallies so as not to frighten off the undecided vote on which he was concentrating, particularly that of the Anglophones and ethnic minorities. He was usually the sole speaker at these rallies. Only in the final two weeks of the campaign did the YES forces bring out the "full troops" in massive rallies throughout Quebec. Mr. Levesque talked to several small groups -- farmers, construction workers, public servants -- distributing certificates to those who supported the YES option.

During the second week of the campaign, Ryan began to unleash his offense, lashing out at the P.Q. government,
using rhetoric as an effective weapon. He raised the
spectre of fascism and the threat of violence if the P.Q.
won.

The "NO" side increased media advertising in the final
two weeks, cutting back on the big rallies, while the "YES"
side did exactly the opposite. When polls showed the NO
side had pulled ahead, Levesque launched an attack on the
federal government and suggested it has mis-used campaign
funds in its federal advertising blitz. Ryan proposed a
Media Council to oversee bias reporting in the press as a
result of an issue of the Journal de Montreal which gave a
full front page coverage of an interview with Levesque.
Levesque appealed to the entire French population⁶³.

In the historic vote on their future, Quebecers chose
on May 20th to cast their lot with Canada by overwhelmingly
rejecting the sovereignty-association option of Premier Rene
Levesque and his P.Q. government.

One hour after the polls closed at 7 p.m. that day the
"NON" forces were ahead 60 per cent to 40 per cent. The
voting turn-out was high -- close to 90 per cent.

The final vote:  

<p>| | |</p>
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<tr>
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<td>59.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>40.6%</td>
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- 26 -
Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a content analysis approach examining (1) the front pages, (2) the editorial pages, and (3) the feature (op. ed.) pages of 16 Canadian daily newspapers, for material dealing with the referendum. A list of the newspapers analyzed is shown in APPENDIX A.

These newspapers were chosen on the basis of regional and linguistic criteria. The sample consisted of four English language papers from Atlantic Canada, one English and three French language newspapers from Quebec, four English papers from Ontario, and four English papers from the West. Great attention was given to assuring that the newspapers selected were among the prominent, highest circulation papers in the particular regions, as it is assumed these papers will set agendas more than will lower circulation papers.

In coding the newspapers, only the final editions were coded when more than one edition of a particular paper was published on a given date. In terms of coding, only front page, editorial, and editorial and feature op. ed. page stories were studied. The rationale was that topical agendas would be set on these pages, rather than on the interior news
pages of the paper. Front page news is seen as the most important news of the day, so in terms of agenda-setting, the front page items were signaled as the "agenda of the day". In the same vein, material on the editorial and op. ed. pages reflect evaluative comment on the hard news stories found on the front pages. All items on the front page were included for potential coding. A photo appearing by itself, without a story, was counted as one item, but where a photo was attached to a particular story, the two were counted as one item. News briefs also counted as separate items, though they may have been boxed along with 10 other news briefs. Lead stories were those whose headlines were boldly slashed across the page and which obviously led off the items of the day as front runners in the news. Non-leads were those other items not so prominently displayed on the content analysis pages. Usually there was only one lead story per page, though sometimes double leads were found.

Only those stories which were obviously related to the referendum were coded: this would include stories with reference to Rene Levesque, Quebec separatism, or national unity. On the editorial page, those items specifically noted as editorials dealing with the referendum were coded. Usually these appeared in bolder print and remained unsigned, except for the French language papers, where they are traditionally signed. On the editorial page, as well as the
features on the referendum were coded also. Intercoder reliability of the study was established at 86.76.

Given the volume of the content generated from the analysis of the 16 dailies, it was necessary to sample the newspapers during the campaign. The starting date of the 35-day campaign was April 16th, and this date was selected as the starting date of the study. Consecutive dates were selected at intervals of three days (excluding Sundays) until a sample consisting of 11 dates during the 35-day referendum campaign period was chosen.

The content of the selected stories was recorded on a coding sheet devised by Dr. Walter Romanow, Dr. Walter Soderlund and their co-researchers for a study that group conducted on the role of the media in the Quebec referendum.

The stories were systematically analyzed for thematic content such as economic, political or socio-cultural issues; for evaluative material on political parties and leaders, as well as for such variables as source of content, photo/non-photo accompaniment, and lead-non-lead status. The stories rarely reflected only one theme, and therefore each theme which appeared in a given story was coded. Other themes which were not listed on the coding sheet, but which appeared frequently, were noted under the "other" sections of the coding sheet and added at the time of coding for computer
analysis. A copy of the coding sheet which includes all themes coded is submitted as APPENDIX B.

Since agenda-setting theory is based on the idea that by the selection and presentation of material, the media, though they may not be successful in telling us what to think, they (the media) are stunningly successful in telling us what to think about, the concept of media salience will be operationalized by frequency of mention; that is, the number of times in the course of the campaign particular issues, political parties, and leaders were featured in stories.

The reader should note that the findings incorporated in the data do not illustrate the full range of themes in the referendum campaign, nor do they represent what the major parties or Canadians in general considered as the more salient issues in the referendum debate. What the data do reveal, are the respective agendas of the various newspapers across Canada, on the particular sample dates -- in essence reflecting what press media set up as the issues of the day. What this study does reveal is what the press in Canada allowed through the "gates" while operating within their linguistic and regional environments. With this consideration in mind then, let us go on to examine the findings in light of this macro-gatekeeping and agenda-setting framework.
Chapter 4

THE IMPACT OF LANGUAGE

Overall, the most striking observation of the data is represented by the similarity among the three types of newspaper content (front page stories, editorials, and features) in the importance accorded to the major parties.  

(TABLE 4-1 APPROXIMATELY HERE)

Table 4-1, showing party coverage in all categories of content, found the P.Q. placing first, the provincial Liberals second, followed by the federal Liberals, except in the feature coverage where federal Liberals took precedence over their provincial counterparts. Also in the editorial content the two Liberal parties tied for second place in rank order. In fourth and fifth order of coverage across the three types of content, are the NO umbrella committee and YES umbrella committee. It is interesting to note the high percentages of frequency of mention attributed to the Parti Quebecois in the three types of content: front page stories 71.9%, editorials 75.0%, and features 70.9%, relative to the other parties. It becomes clear that the Parti Quebecois was viewed by press organs as front and center in the referendum debate -- and by a clear margin. It is
equally interesting to note that the combined percentages of frequency of mention of the provincial Liberals and the federal Liberals in all types of newspaper content exceeded the percentages attributed to the P.Q. This clearly indicates that while the NO forces were split between federal and provincial parties, the NO forces were also at the forefront of the referendum debate. Both these observations would lend some credibility to the notion that rather than political parties setting the standards for their relative importance in a political campaign, the media tend to dictate who the principle actors and issues shall be, otherwise we might have seen the other parties scoring higher in the frequency of mention table.

(TABLE 4-2 APPROXIMATELY HERE)

Table 4-2 presents the rank ordering of the 15 most frequently mentioned issues in the referendum campaign for the three types of newspaper content.

The most striking feature the data on referendum issues indicate is that there is considerably less similarity among the three types of newspaper content. The Spearman rank-order correlation between front page and editorials is + .66, while between front page stories and features is + .58. Issue coverage in all types of newspaper content found sovereignty-association in the number one position with
national unity and constitutional reform following in the front pages and editorials as the major issues. The blatant importance of the sovereignty-association issue is boosted by high frequency percentages -- front pages: 73.0%, editorials: 75.0%, features: 73.2%. Coupled with the importance attributed to sovereignty-association as an issue, is the more pertinent observation that the most frequently mentioned issues tend to fall into identifiable categories.

The issues covered with highest frequencies tend to be more philosophical and emotional than economic or practical. In the top fifteen issues for front page content, for example, ideological political issues dominate: sovereignty-association, constitutional reform, federal/provincial relations, renewed federalism. These are married with a strong socio-cultural type of issue category, closely tied to emotional appeal: socio-cultural issues (general), historical reasons (for French Canadian political and social unrest) French culture, language (general) and societal conflict.

Following these more flag-waving issue categories, there are token fundamental political issues such as campaign spending, campaign strategy, and the possibility of a second referendum. The only hard-core economic issue which rears its head is economic prosperity. Some themes are blatantly overlooked (in terms of frequency of mention) such as trade and customs, economic development, agricultural policy, natural resources, unemployment insurance, inflation, and relations with other countries.
What the domination of socio-cultural types of issues reveal about agenda-setting, at least in the newspaper media, is that emotional, ideological and political issues are the issues which tend to be covered. Strictly fundamental, political and economic issues are more difficult perhaps to define -- it is always easier to wave the flag than to quote facts and figures. The question arises as to whether these issue agendas reflected what political parties decided to be the more salient issues or whether they were the product of the gatekeeping activities of newspaper institutions. Without doubt one of the functions of the press in Canadian society is to report what is being talked about, but another function is to report on what is not being talked about; the press' role as political watchdogs is clear and the observed glaring over-emphasis on more colorful issues is cause for concern. Carol Charlebois' contention that the political image of Canada is that of a federal system dominated by the activities of leaders would hold true here. Note the high frequency of mention of leadership as an issue in two of the three types of content. If this is true, and the press are merely repeating the agendas clearly designed by political organs to win votes, serious questions are raised about the function and role of the press in Canada.

That Canada is a country of two official languages is a sometimes debated concept, but it is clear that there exist
definitive cultures in Canada operationalized by language; one English, one French. Specifically, what much of the literature on the differences between French and English press coverage of events indicates is that there are separate agendas for the two linguistic cultures.

(TABLES 4-3 to 4-5 APPROXIMATELY HERE)

Tables 4-3 to 4-5 present data on the linguistic variation of coverage of the three major parties and two umbrella committees in the three categories of newspaper content. First, in Table 4-3 one should note that of the total number of front page stories (N = 196) dealing with the referendum, the French language press averaged approximately 2 stories per day while the English language press averaged less than 1 story per day -- actually, .94 stories per day for the 11 sample dates.

For editorial page content (N = 84) Table 4-4, the French press again averaged higher than the English press in terms of coverage. Notably, the French press had on the average .99 editorials a day which commented on the referendum campaign, while the English press averaged .36 editorials per day.

If one examines the feature material, Table 4-5, however, there is no difference in terms of coverage; both language press averaged 1.2 features per day related to the referendum (N = 213). This data would support the hypothesis
that the closer the press organizations are to the center of the "news event" the more coverage they will accord to the salient issues and parties. (Note that the French language press all worked out of the Quebec region.)

Another pattern which the data reveal is the strong similarity of rank ordering of the Parti Quebecois, provincial Liberals, federal Liberals, NO umbrella and YES umbrella committees respectively, in the three types of newspaper content.

In terms of language, however, these rank orderings change in front page material. While both French and English language press coverage of the major parties gave overall top priority to the Parti Quebecois in their front page content, the French press rank ordered the YES and NO umbrella committees directly after the P.Q., with 51.6% of total number of referendum front page stories commenting on the YES and NO committees. The variation indicated here between French and English press coverage of the YES and NO committees reflect the strongest correlations. Front page comment on the NO committee in the English press is found in 23.1% of the total referendum stories, while in the French language press coverage it is considerably higher, 51.6%; this produces an eta of .28 illustrating a high degree of variance between the French and English coverage. Similar findings are observed with coverage of the YES committee in front page material. An eta of .35 here indicates the
even higher degree of variance between French press coverage of the YES group (51.6% of referendum stories comment on the YES group) and English press coverage (17.2%). In the other two types of newspaper content this general pattern holds true, with more coverage of the YES and NO committees in the French press than in the English press. Note especially the high eta (.28) indicating a correlation between language and press coverage of the YES committee in editorial content.

Also in editorial content there is a strong correlation between language and press coverage of the provincial Liberals. The provincial party is mentioned 20% more often in French referendum editorials than in English ones. This correlation is represented by an eta of .22.

In the feature content the only striking variance in French and English press coverage of the major parties is indicated by the relatively higher frequency of mention in the English press of the federal Liberals (54.9%) as opposed to the French press (27.5%). Here the eta is .21.

Overall the French language press are most party-oriented, especially in front page and editorial coverage, as percentages of the total number of referendary stories in these categories are considerably higher than those in the English language press. In all categories of content more attention was given to the YES and NO umbrella committees by the French press.
Finally of note is the strong emphasis by both English and French language press on the Parti Québécois which is reflected by the high percentages of frequency of mention in all three content categories.

(TABLES 4-6 TO 4-8 APPROXIMATELY HERE)

The data in Tables 4-6 through 4-8 portray the treatment of the major issues (15) in the referendum campaign as reflected by the English and the French language press in the three categories of newspaper material.

The clearest trend the data reveal is the dissimilarity in the importance accorded to the various issues in the three types of newspaper content. In terms of front page stories (Table 4-6) the highest correlations are found in the issues of leadership, social conflict and a second referendum with etas, of .14, .17 and .13 respectively. All three issues found considerably more coverage in the English press by about 10%, while the other issues covered on the front pages do not produce high or even moderate correlations. However, frequency of mention percentages indicate possible patterns of coverage. For example the issues of sovereignty-association, constitutional reform, and national unity receive higher percentages of mention in front page content in the English language press. These ideological political issues tend to dominate the English language press front page coverage of the referendum campaign, along with economic prosperity, the one economic issue, and more strategic or fundamental political issues such as
campaign spending, and a second referendum.

This general pattern is virtually the same for the other two types of newspaper content as well. Overall, English language press coverage of sovereignty-association, constitutional reform, national unity, economic prosperity, social conflict, language, campaign spending and the second referendum are represented by higher percentages than in the French language press.

In front page and editorial coverage the French language press have higher percentages than the English language press on the issues of campaign strategy, federal/provincial relations, French culture, renewed federalism, and socio-cultural issues in general, and it is these issues which tend to be stressed.

The highest correlation in editorial material is represented in the issue of campaign strategy, with an eta of .36. Campaign strategy receives considerably more press treatment editorially in the French language press. Another striking variation in editorial treatment is the higher mention of national unity in the English press (53.8%) as opposed to the French press (25.0%). The eta in this case is also moderately strong, .28. Also of note in the editorial content is the issue of sovereignty-association which receives over 20% more treatment in the English press. This is supported by an eta of .22. A final variation
that commands attention is that of the presence of French
culture, with an eta of .20. The French press treat this
issue significantly more than do the English press in their
editorials. This is illustrated by the frequency of men-
tion of this issue in the French press (37.5%) as compared
to the English press (18.2%). Though represented by a rela-
tively low correlation score, constitutional reform again
receives more treatment in the English feature press content
(25.4%) than in the French counterpart (17.5%).

Economic prosperity receives more coverage by about
4% in the English press, consistent with its treatment in
the English press' front page and editorial content. Again
social conflict received relatively extended coverage in
the English press, but not to the same degree as in the other
two types of newspaper content. One would deduce from the
high priority placed by the English press on coverage of
the social conflict issue that the English press were far
more concerned with the possible negative social consequences
of the separatist movement than the French press. Coupled
with their overall extensive treatment of national unity
and constitutional reform, the English press went beyond
the French press in terms of attempting to stress cohesiv-
ness or national identity. The French press on the other
hand looked toward the French culture, campaign strategy
and renewed federalism, clearly issues which stressed a
French fact rather than a Canadian one.
Another fairly strong eta is noted with the issue of language. In front page and editorial content, the English press covered language as an issue significantly more than did the French press. In the case of feature material the difference is over 18%, represented by an eta of .16.

In terms of agenda-setting with regards to language cultures then the data indicate that there are striking variations in the overall salience of issues in the agendas put forth by the French language and English language press. The French press gave considerably more coverage to the socio-cultural types of issues such as historical reasons, French culture, and general socio-cultural issues. The emphasis on these issues tends to illustrate an inward or regional focus. The French press also dealt to a greater degree with such issues as campaign strategy and federal/provincial relations. These fundamental political issues were inclined to be the name of the game in the French press whereas the English press generally dealt with the more emotional political issues such as ideological treatments of sovereignty-association, unity, and constitutional reform. The only hard-core economic issue -- economic prosperity -- was dealt with more in the English press, but not to any significant degree. Clearly the English press covered the campaign with an emphasis on the issues which were more emotionally illustrative and politically integrative -- the kinds of issues
such as leadership and national unity which cause chest pounding and vehement philosophical arguments. The French press looked to these emotive issues as well, but to a greater degree emphasized the nuts and bolts issues such as campaign strategy and federal-provincial relations, these being politically integrative and then only from the Quebec point of view. Another facet of the data which invites comment is that while leadership was seen in the three types of newspaper content as a major issue and received especially high percentages of mention in English language press' front page and editorial treatment, it was clearly not one of the issues most talked about. Colin Seymour-Ure's contention that, because of the nature of referenda politics, leaders rather than issues become the focus \(^{74}\) would not seem to be supported by the data presented here.

Perhaps it is not so much that personalities become the focus, but that because issues are subject to the organizational gatekeeping activities of the media, it is the more emotional flag-waving issues which receive most coverage. Both because politicians know what issues they can build platforms on and media organizations realize that emotion-packed issues are more appealing than facts and figures, these are the issues which receive the most coverage. As a result, the agendas we are presented with reflect the overall nature of that organizational "gate".

Overall, the data support the hypothesis that separate
linguistic agendas exist for each of the two language cultures in Canada. While it can be argued that these agendas are not diametrically opposed, they do nonetheless reflect agendas which result because of the cultural (as operationalized by language) macrogate. It is also true that the closer one is to the center of the referendum event the more parochial the treatment of the campaign, as Carol Charlebois has suggested. The French press, it would appear from an examination of the data, presented a more parochial agenda than did the English press, which presented the pan-Canadian view. It should be noted that unlike a federal election campaign which takes place across the country, the referendum was in itself a very parochial event that was center stage in Quebec. Though the potential ramifications of the referendum outcome were present for the rest of Canada, the referendum campaign was mostly viewed as an Quebec-oriented event. Perhaps this is part of the reason for a more parochial variation of the agenda presented by the French press, but it should only be a minor consideration, given the implications the referendum had for the rest of Canada.

The English press supported national integration at least as in evidenced by the coverage of national unity and constitutional reform, while the French press presented more the view that "what Quebec wants" should be at the fore; not "what Canada wants." For this reason issues such as renewed federalism, campaign strategy, and federal/provincial rela-
tions were highlighted. At this point then let us turn to an examination of the data which study the regional agendas set up by the regional press in Canada.
TABLE 4-1

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FEATURING

EDITORIALS

STORIES

FRONT PAGE
|   |   | 15. ISSUE |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| **1.** | Campaign Spending | 14.8 | 14.7 | 14.6 | 14.5 | 14.4 | 14.3 | 14.2 | 14.1 | 14.0 | 13.9 | 13.8 | 13.7 | 13.6 | 13.5 | 13.4 | 13.3 | 13.2 | 13.1 | 13.0 | 12.9 | 12.8 | 12.7 | 12.6 |
| **2.** | Language (Gen) | 17.3 | 17.4 | 17.5 | 17.6 | 17.7 | 17.8 | 17.9 | 18.0 | 18.1 | 18.2 | 18.3 | 18.4 | 18.5 | 18.6 | 18.7 | 18.8 | 18.9 | 19.0 | 19.1 | 19.2 | 19.3 | 19.4 | 19.5 | 19.6 |
| **3.** | Renewed Federalism | 17.9 | 17.8 | 17.7 | 17.6 | 17.5 | 17.4 | 17.3 | 17.2 | 17.1 | 17.0 | 16.9 | 16.8 | 16.7 | 16.6 | 16.5 | 16.4 | 16.3 | 16.2 | 16.1 | 16.0 | 15.9 | 15.8 | 15.7 | 15.6 |
| **4.** | Social Conflict | 19.4 | 19.3 | 19.2 | 19.1 | 19.0 | 18.9 | 18.8 | 18.7 | 18.6 | 18.5 | 18.4 | 18.3 | 18.2 | 18.1 | 18.0 | 17.9 | 17.8 | 17.7 | 17.6 | 17.5 | 17.4 | 17.3 | 17.2 | 17.1 |
| **5.** | French Culture | 19.4 | 19.3 | 19.2 | 19.1 | 19.0 | 18.9 | 18.8 | 18.7 | 18.6 | 18.5 | 18.4 | 18.3 | 18.2 | 18.1 | 18.0 | 17.9 | 17.8 | 17.7 | 17.6 | 17.5 | 17.4 | 17.3 | 17.2 | 17.1 |
| **6.** | Historical Reasons | 20.4 | 20.3 | 20.2 | 20.1 | 20.0 | 19.9 | 19.8 | 19.7 | 19.6 | 19.5 | 19.4 | 19.3 | 19.2 | 19.1 | 19.0 | 18.9 | 18.8 | 18.7 | 18.6 | 18.5 | 18.4 | 18.3 | 18.2 | 18.1 |
| **7.** | Economic Prosperity | 21.4 | 21.3 | 21.2 | 21.1 | 21.0 | 20.9 | 20.8 | 20.7 | 20.6 | 20.5 | 20.4 | 20.3 | 20.2 | 20.1 | 20.0 | 19.9 | 19.8 | 19.7 | 19.6 | 19.5 | 19.4 | 19.3 | 19.2 | 19.1 |
| **8.** | Federal - Provincial Relations | 24.5 | 24.4 | 24.3 | 24.2 | 24.1 | 24.0 | 23.9 | 23.8 | 23.7 | 23.6 | 23.5 | 23.4 | 23.3 | 23.2 | 23.1 | 23.0 | 22.9 | 22.8 | 22.7 | 22.6 | 22.5 | 22.4 | 22.3 | 22.2 |
| **9.** | Campaign Strategy | 25.5 | 25.4 | 25.3 | 25.2 | 25.1 | 25.0 | 24.9 | 24.8 | 24.7 | 24.6 | 24.5 | 24.4 | 24.3 | 24.2 | 24.1 | 24.0 | 23.9 | 23.8 | 23.7 | 23.6 | 23.5 | 23.4 | 23.3 | 23.2 |
| **10.** | Leadership | 27.0 | 26.9 | 26.8 | 26.7 | 26.6 | 26.5 | 26.4 | 26.3 | 26.2 | 26.1 | 26.0 | 25.9 | 25.8 | 25.7 | 25.6 | 25.5 | 25.4 | 25.3 | 25.2 | 25.1 | 25.0 | 24.9 | 24.8 | 24.7 |
| **11.** | National Unity | 27.0 | 26.9 | 26.8 | 26.7 | 26.6 | 26.5 | 26.4 | 26.3 | 26.2 | 26.1 | 26.0 | 25.9 | 25.8 | 25.7 | 25.6 | 25.5 | 25.4 | 25.3 | 25.2 | 25.1 | 25.0 | 24.9 | 24.8 | 24.7 |
| **12.** | Constitutional Reform | 27.6 | 27.5 | 27.4 | 27.3 | 27.2 | 27.1 | 27.0 | 26.9 | 26.8 | 26.7 | 26.6 | 26.5 | 26.4 | 26.3 | 26.2 | 26.1 | 26.0 | 25.9 | 25.8 | 25.7 | 25.6 | 25.5 | 25.4 | 25.3 |
| **13.** | Sovereignty Association | 73.0 | 73.1 | 73.2 | 73.3 | 73.4 | 73.5 | 73.6 | 73.7 | 73.8 | 73.9 | 74.0 | 74.1 | 74.2 | 74.3 | 74.4 | 74.5 | 74.6 | 74.7 | 74.8 | 74.9 | 75.0 | 75.1 | 75.2 | 75.3 |

Table 4-2: Frequency of mention and rank ordering of the 15 major issues in the referendum.
Table 4-3: Data Representing Linguistic Variation of Coverage of the Three Major Parties and

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N: 196

Significance: PHI PHI ETA ETA

Major Parties: English French
Table 4-4 Data representing linguistic variation of coverage of the three major parties and

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Major Parties | English | French | Total | PHI | Total |
---|---|---|---|---|---|
Significance
A table showing the linguistic variation of coverage of the three major parties and their translations into English and French.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Party</th>
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<th>French Total</th>
<th>PHI ETA</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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Note: The table data represents the linguistic variation in the coverage of the three major parties and their translations into English and French.
Table 6-46 - Data Representing Linguistic Variation of Coverage of the Major Issues In the Referendum

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**Significance**

\[ \text{Cramer's } V = \frac{196}{62} = 3.14 \]

\[ N = 62, \quad N = 1.96 \]

**English**

**French**

**Total**

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Chapter 5

THE IMPACT OF REGION

The first point to be considered in evaluating the data on regional variation of the press coverage of issues and parties in the referendum debate is the relative percentages of the total referendum material found in the newspapers of each of the four regions, in the three types of newspaper content.

Of the total number of front page stories by region (N = 196), 27.0% of these stories were found in newspapers of the Atlantic region, a majority of 40.3% from Quebec papers, 20.4% in Ontario newspapers, and 12.2% in Western papers.

With regard to editorials, (N = 84) 8.1% appeared in the Atlantic region, an overwhelming 52.5% in Quebec papers, 20.3% in Ontario papers, and 19.1% in papers of the Western region. And finally, when one examines the total feature content (N = 213), 17.4% of this total was found in the Atlantic region press, 28.2% in Quebec, 24.4% in Ontario, and 30.4% in Western Canada. In all types of newspaper content, except feature content where Western Canada had a higher percentage of coverage than Quebec, Quebec clearly held the top spot with most concentrated coverage of the
parties and issues in the referendum campaign. Again the
evidence here clearly supports Carol Charlebois' thesis,
and this researcher's hypothesis, that coverage of the news
event is proportional to the proximity (distance) to the
center of the event. One cannot argue the regional fact
in Canada. The literature in this regard has been reviewed
in Chapter 2, and is extensively footnoted at the end of
this study.

(TABLES 5-1 THROUGH 5-3 APPROXIMATELY HERE)

Tables 5-1 through 5-3 present data on the regional
coverage of the five major parties and/or political committees
in the three types of newspaper content.

At once, the reader is struck by the overwhelming
importance attributed to the Parti Quebecois in terms of
frequency of mention (P.Q. places first in all regions for
all types of newspaper content). Examining the front page
data (Table 5-1) the P.Q. claims over 25% more coverage
than the next party, namely the provincial Liberals. An
eta of .12 on coverage of the P.Q. shows us that only slightly
more attention is paid to the P.Q. by the press in Quebec,
and that this is followed by Ontario, Western Canada and
finally Atlantic Canada. More impressive correlations
however can be noted in front page coverage by region of
the YES and NO umbrella committees. An eta of .35 represents
a strong variation regionally for coverage of the NO umbrella
committee, where frequency of mention for this group is highest
in Quebec (50.6%) and lowest in Atlantic Canada (13.2%). Interestingly the press in Quebec gave more coverage to the NO umbrella committee than to either the provincial or federal Liberal parties. This is the same pattern as was evidenced in the data on language, where the French press treated the YES and NO groups to a greater degree than the traditional Liberal parties.

While it may be guessed that coverage of the YES and NO groups would be greater in Ontario than in the Western region because of Ontario's proximity to the "event", this did not hold true. In each case the Western Canadian press treated the YES and NO groups more than did their Ontario counterparts by margins of over 13%.

A final correlation is noteworthy here, and it is represented by the variation in front page coverage by region of the YES umbrella committee. A high eta of .33 points to a striking regional variation in coverage of this group. Again the press in Quebec feature the YES umbrella committee over 20% more than do papers of the other regions.

If one looks at the data in Table 5-2, representing the editorial coverage of the major political parties, the most interesting feature is the relatively high etas for each of the regional variations. Again the P.Q. took the top position in terms of frequency of mention in all regions. An eta of .22 is attributable to the high coverage the P.Q.
received in Western Canada. Of all the editorials dealing with the referendum, 93.8% of them treated the P.Q. The least treatment of the P.Q. was delivered in the Ontario press (64.7%) though this percentage is considerably higher than coverage of any of the other political parties or groups.

It is interesting to note that while in the front page treatment the press in Quebec favoured the YES and NO umbrella committees, editorial comment in this province treated the four remaining political groups to the same degree. This is not the case with Atlantic Canada and Ontario however which treated the four remaining groups in varying degrees. For example, both Ontario and Atlantic Canada afforded comparatively greater editorial coverage to the federal Liberals and the NO umbrella committees than to the provincial Liberals.

In Atlantic Canada for example, coverage of the federal Liberals was exactly twice that of the provincial Liberals and the NO committee, while in the sample, the YES committee received no attention. Similarly in Ontario the federal Liberals outshone the provincial Liberals and NO committee by margins of 5.9% and 11.8% respectively. In Western Canada the provincial Liberals received greater attention than the three remaining groups, which were all dealt with equally—(25.%).

An eta of .35 is the highest correlation in Table 5-2. It represents the regional variation in coverage of the YES committee on the editorial pages. Commentary is high in
Quebec (40.9%), followed by Western Canada (25.0%), Ontario with scant coverage (5.9%), and absolutely no coverage in the Atlantic region.

Coverage of the provincial Liberals also produces a moderately strong eta of .20. Again coverage of the provincial Liberal party is strongest in Quebec and weakest in Atlantic Canada. Regional coverage of the federal Liberals also sports a moderately strong correlation of .17 while the regional variation for the NO umbrella committee is illustrated by a similarly moderate eta of .18. Editorially speaking it would appear that the press in the Quebec region are most party-oriented, followed by the West and Ontario, and lastly by the Atlantic region.

If one proceeds to Table 5-3, one is immediately struck by the comparatively low etas in feature coverage of the political parties. The feature material that varies most in regional coverage is that dealing with the federal Liberals, which is represented by an eta of .20. This party receives most coverage in the Ontario region (63.5%), followed by the Atlantic region (59.5%), the Quebec region (41.7%), and the Western region (40.6%).

Also of note is the regional variation in feature treatment of the provincial Liberal party. Again treatment is highest in Quebec. The feature treatment of the major parties follows the very noticeable trend, in that the P.Q.
take the largest slice of the pie in terms of coverage across the regional board, and substantially (anywhere from 20.0% to 30.0%) more than the next party in the rank order.

The next part of the chapter will deal with regional variations in terms of the more salient issues in the referendum campaign.

(TABLES 5-4 THROUGH 5-6 APPROXIMATELY HERE)

The data in Tables 5-4 through 5-6 represent the coverage of the major issues in the referendum as it was handled regionally in each of the three types of newspaper content.

A quick overview of the three tables will reveal the emphasis accorded to the issue of sovereignty-association by all regions, in terms of percentage of comment in the total number of referendum stories. While this statement may have held true across the board for sovereignty-association, in the main the percentage of mention of issues by the various regions varied considerably.

In Table 5-4, presenting data on the front page coverage of issues by region, the greatest variation is noted on the issues of socio-cultural (general) and social conflict, both with etas of .25. Looking at the socio-cultural (general) issue one can note the high percentage of referendum front page stories which mentioned this issue in the Ontario region (40.0%). The West and Quebec shared the middle road
on this issue with approximately 20% each and the Atlantic region drew in far behind with 9.4% of referendary comment mentioning socio-cultural issues. In the examination of the variation by language, it was found that the French press dealt less with social conflict as an issue than did the English press. This pattern holds for the variation by region, where comment on social conflict is lowest in Quebec (where three of the four papers sampled were French) at 10.1%. It was highest in Ontario with comment in 37.5% of the total number of referendary stories.

Another interesting correlation is found in the issue of language in general. Oddly enough, as was shown in the issue variation by language data, the Quebec region deals with this issue the least (10.1%) while Western Canada comments on the language issue more than three times as often (33.3%)! Ontario region papers found the issue relatively more important than did Quebec papers with a percentage of 25%. An eta of .21 shows the considerable degree of variation here.

Two political issues are worthy of comment here due to their relatively high etas. Both the issues of constitutional reform and national unity had an eta of .20, denoting some variation regionally. The issue of constitutional reform received the greatest front page treatment in the Atlantic region (37.7%), followed by the Western region (33.3%), Quebec (26.6%), and lastly Ontario (12.5%). Constitutional reform
was viewed in Atlantic Canadian papers as a more important issue in the solution to the referendum debate than any of the other regions. More noteworthy, is the issue of national unity which received relatively the same tame coverage in all regions except Quebec where it was treated in a restrained 16.5% of all the front page referendum material.

A final issue suitable here for analysis, is that of campaign strategy, with an eta of .15. The issue was treated more in the Quebec region (32.9%) with almost half that in Ontario (17.5%).

Directing one's attention to Table 5-5, presenting regional variation of the issues agenda in editorial material, some of the patterns set in the front page material remain. Once again sovereignty-association emerges as the dominant issue. An eta of .24 shows a strong variation regionally. Both Ontario and the West had the highest coverage of the issue editorially with 88.2% and 87.5%, respectively. Unexpectedly Quebec had the lowest treatment (only 65.9%) while the Atlantic region mentioned the issue in 71.4% of the editorial comment dealing with the referendum.

The issue of national unity is represented in editorial coverage with the greatest eta of .45. Again the issue is treated substantially less in Quebec (22.7%), than it is in the Atlantic region, (85.7%) the West (68.8%), or Ontario (52.9%) which treat national unity more than four times, three times and twice that of Quebec, respectively. Other
high etas are found with the issues of campaign strategy (\(\eta = .31\)) and French culture (\(\eta = .33\)). Regarding campaign strategy, the bulk of the treatment is found in Quebec (29.5%), with no editorial treatment in the West or Atlantic regions, and only moderate treatment by Ontario editorialists (17.6%). On the issue of French culture, the papers in the Western region considered French culture quite important, with 43.8% of editorials commenting on the issue. This percentage was more than 10.8% beyond that of editorialist comment in the Quebec region. The issue received little or no comment in the Ontario and Atlantic Canadian press.

Coupled with the Western press' editorial attention of the French culture issue was their extensive coverage of the historical reasons for French cultural unrest, as 50.8% of all referendary editorials in the Western press commented on the issue. The Ontario press followed suit with 35.3%, while the Atlantic Canada and Quebec press treated the issue to an almost equal degree, 14.3% and 13.6% respectively. This intense regional variation is supported by an eta of .34. Social conflict produced yet another high eta of .23. While the issue received no comment in Atlantic press editorials, it received the most in the Ontario press at 35.3%. These data correspond to that based on language variations in Chapter 4 which show the English press to be more concen-
trated on the issue of social conflict than the French press.

A final noteworthy regional variation in editorial data can be found with the issue of economic prosperity. The issue finds its highest treatment accorded by editorialists in the Atlantic region press (57.1%) while it receives considerably less and the least attention by Quebec region editorialists (27.3%). The eta here is .18.

Table 5-6 represents regional variation of the major issues in the feature type content. As might be expected, sovereignty-association takes the top priority across the regional board as the most salient feature issue, and once again receives the least treatment in Quebec (65.0%) with more than 15% more coverage in each of the Atlantic and Ontario regions' press.

The issue of national unity yields the highest eta (.26) in this table. This strong regional variation has the feature writers of the Ontario press discussing national unity the most (65.4%), followed by the Western feature journalists (59.4%), the Atlantic region (51.4%), and lastly the Quebec region feature writers (31.7%).

The issue of social conflict is represented by an eta of .23, highlighting the most substantial feature treatment of the issue in the Ontario region (38.5%) with less in the Quebec region (31.7%), the Western region (23.4%), and Atlantic region press (8.1%), respectively.
In the language variation data, it was found that the French language press treated the issue of federal/provincial relations to a more significant degree than the English language press. Yet the evidence in the data on variation by region indicates that the issue is treated least in Quebec features (16.7%) and most in Ontario region features (38.5%). The regional variation here is represented by an eta of .19, clearly indicating region to be the stronger of the two independent variables.

The issue of language once again rears its head most prominently in Western Canada's press (37.5%), and least in the Quebec region (18.3%). This same pattern holds consistently for this issue in the three types of newspaper content. An eta here of .18 denotes the moderate regional variation.

Lastly of note in this table is the issue of campaign strategy which remains quite high in terms of coverage in the Quebec press (35.0%), and the Atlantic region (35.1%), while at least 15% less in each of the Ontario and Western press regions. This regional variation has an eta of .18.

Other issues such as renewed federalism, leadership, campaign spending, economic prosperity, and French culture show very low regional variations in feature newspaper material.

In the main then, the evidence points to the overwhelming importance in all regions, in all three types of newspaper content, of the sovereignty-association issue, but that is as far as the similarity goes. The percentages of mention
on the bulk of the issues varies widely in each of the regions as the foregoing discussion has indicated. It would seem that Ontario and the West are more ideological political issue oriented than either the Atlantic or Quebec regions. The focus for Ontario centers around the issues of constitutional reform, national unity, and sovereignty-association, married with a strong emphasis on societal conflict. This latter issue also rings loud in the Western press, but is eclipsed by language and cultural concerns such as historical reasons and French culture. Also in the West is an intense dialogue on constitutional reform, national unity, and sovereignty-association. In the Atlantic region similar political issues are widely addressed, but economic prosperity comes to the fore to a greater extent than the other regions. In the three foregoing regions there was considerable attention devoted to national unity whereas in the Quebec region, overall newspaper content handled this politically integrative issue only minimally. The focus in the Quebec region was based on sovereignty-association, federal/provincial relations, and campaign strategy. Clearly these issues stressed a Quebec fact rather than a Canadian one, much as the individual agendas of the other regions expressed the more local concerns of those regions. What these examples indicate is not only that the different regions have specialized and parochial agendas, but also and particularly, that where the other regions seem to show some similarity of
coverage on certain issues, the Quebec region consistently exhibits variations on these.

Thus the hypothesis that the flow of political messages will differ regionally is supported by the data. The evidence indicates this hypothesis to be true to a greater degree in the examples cited for regional variation on the major issues, and to a lesser degree for regional variation in coverage of the major parties.
Table 5-1: Data representing regional variation of coverage of the three major parties and two

government committees in the front page category of newspaper content.

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<td>2.7%</td>
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</table>

% of coverage:
- 2.7% for one category
- 4.9% for another category
- 12.2% for another category
- 20.4% for another category

Significance:

- Cramer's Eta
- Total Canada
- Ontario
- Quebec
- Atlantic
- Major Parties
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Legend:
- **N**: Number of observations
- **S**: Number of significant
- **E**: Number of expected
- **T**: Number of total
- **A**: Number of Atlantic
- **O**: Number of Ontario
- **Q**: Number of Quebec
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- **R**: Number of Regina
- **T**: Number of total
Table 3-4 - Data Representing Regional Variation of Coverage of the Major Issues in the Referendum Campaign

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<th>Ontario</th>
<th>Western Canada</th>
<th>Total ETA</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>National Unity</th>
<th>Leadership</th>
<th>Constitutional Reform</th>
<th>Sovereignty - Association</th>
<th>% of Coverage</th>
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**Second Referendum**
- Campaign Spending
- Language (General)
- Renewed Federalism
- Social Conflict
- Presence of French Culture
- Historical Reasons
- Economic Prosperity
- Federal - Provincial Relations
- Federal Strategy
- Leadership
- National Unity
- Constitutional Reform
- Sovereignty - Association

**Significance**
- **ETN**
- **TOTAL**
- **EAST CANADA**
- **WESTERN CANADA**
- **ONTARIO**
- **QUEBEC**
- **ATLANTIC**
- **ISSUES**
Table 5-6: Data Representing Regional Variance of Coverage of the Major Issues in the Referendum

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% of Coverage: N = 213

EQA CAMERAS SIGNIFICANCE
Chapter 6

CONCLUSIONS

1. Discussion:

In terms of the questions and hypotheses raised at the outset of this study, the evidence presented in the analysis of the findings clearly emphasizes support for those hypotheses.

Taking into account the linguistic cleavages, there are discernible patterns to be found in both the French language and English language press agendas. The most obvious characteristic of the French press' agenda is the trend towards coverage of all the major parties. Whereas the English language press concentrated most heavily on the P.Q. and provincial and federal Liberal parties, the French press poured more effort into presenting the YES and NO umbrella committees along with the P.Q. to the public view. In terms of the presentation of issues, the cleavages based on language are less noticeably apparent, however they do arise. It would seem that these agenda variations accrued as a result of the cultural (as operationalized by language) macro-gate. 75

The French language press seemed more concerned with the socio-cultural issues and concentrated most heavily
on the mechanics of the referendum campaign such as strategy and federal/provincial relations. The English press varied significantly with an emphasis on the hard-line political issues and a concern with potential societal conflict which might result.

In the main it can be said that the French press were more inwardly-focused. Being that all French papers in this sample were based in Quebec, this may have been the result of the proximity of these French language papers to the event, supporting another of the hypotheses advanced in this thesis that parochialism increases with proximity to the event; or, it may simply be that the referendum was a cultural event more closely tied to the French fact than to English culture. Regardless of the reason, it remains that the English press covered issues which spanned a wider purview than simply French Canadian socio-cultural concerns. The English agenda could be said to advance a more pan-Canadian view supporting a heavier attention towards national integration and unity, as is evidenced by high percentages of mention on such issues as national unity, economic prosperity and constitutional reform. This pattern reflects the same findings in the Siegel FLQ study which illustrated that the French press system had a more regional focus (i.e. towards Quebec) than did the English press system. Siegel contended in his thesis that the implications of this were such that they had an unsettling effect
on Canadian integration; reinforcing subcultural differences, rather than contributing to the unification of society.\textsuperscript{76} Also as a consequence of this, the French and English press systems thereby reinforced the bicultural characteristic of Canadian federalism.\textsuperscript{77}

Shifting our attention to regional agendas, the data strongly support the hypothesis that separate regional agendas existed for coverage of the referendum campaign. The high correlations found in the tables speak for the widely varying coverage of both parties and issues across the four regions examined. Consensus among the regions seemed strong in the coverage of the P.Q. and the issue of sovereignty-association. If anything can be said about a national agenda here, it is that in terms of the major party and major issue under scrutiny, the press in all regions of Canada were strongly united.

Clearly though, especially in the treatment of the major issues, and to a lesser extent that of the major political parties in the debate, regional agendas emerged. In fact, contrary to Donald Gordon's thesis that language cleavages are more pronounced than regional ones\textsuperscript{78}, the data in this study indicate that regional agendas are indeed more enunciated than are the linguistic ones. Supportive of this contention are the higher etas in regional data stemming from the greater differences in percentages of mention of the various parties and issues.
Expectedly, the Quebec region press treated the parties and issues to a far greater degree in all three types of newspaper content than did all other regions. The further one travelled from the actual home base of the referendum event itself, the less coverage was undertaken, thereby re-affirming the parochialism of the regional press, cited in the review of the literature. Most striking of the regional variations concerning the coverage of the major parties was the treatment of the YES and NO umbrella committees across the nation. This is coupled with wide variations in provincial and federal Liberal parties, particularly in Atlantic Canada and Ontario. What can be concluded from these variations is that the press in the various regions across Canada operated within the framework of a regional macro-gate in their coverage of the major parties. Thus the relative importance of each of the parties was represented differently in each of the regions. Quite notable in Quebec for example, was the orientation towards the political committees rather than the parties. In the other regions an orientation to the traditional political parties was stressed. The degree of regional variation among the major issues in the debate is even more apparent. It is in the high etas observed with such issues as federal/provincial relations, campaign strategy, French culture, historical reasons and sovereignty-association that one can confirm the inward focus of the Quebec press. While this focus
is to some extent so pointed because the referendum took
place in that province, it nonetheless speaks to the regional
nature of the press in Canada.

The Ontario region dealt overwhelmingly with the more
political issues and one economic issue, only strongly em-
phasizing societal conflict as a socio-cultural issue. The
issue of language clearly was part and parcel of the Ontario
press agenda, but not to the same extent as in the Western
region, where socio-cultural issues and language in general
were at the forefront of the debate. French culture and
historical concerns were strong in the West, accenting a
regional French fact in that region. The Atlantic region
also dealt with more socio-cultural issues, but held the
one economic issue (prosperity) in high regard. Again paro-
chialism is evident in this region's scant coverage (note
the low percentages) of issues which could not be said to
affect the provinces in the Atlantic region. As a consequence
of the linguistic and regional macro-gates then, observable
variations surfaced in the press in Canada.

The notion that leaders rather than issues become the
focus in a referendum is only somewhat supported in this
thesis. From Tables 4-1 and 4-2 in Chapter 4, one can
assess the relative frequency of mention attributed to each
of the five major actors in the campaign and the fifteen
major issues. Percentages indicate that the parties tended
to be dealt with more heavily than the issues in general,
though such issues as sovereignty-association, national unity, constitutional reform and socio-cultural issues (general) vied for close press attention with the political groups. Can it be said the extensive coverage of political parties is the same as a focus on leaders or personalities? Perhaps not; but if one looks at the relatively high percentage of treatment by the three types of newspaper content of the leadership issue in Table 4-2, the equation is justifiable.

What are the political implications of the observed "we - they" perceptions of federalism in the press in Canada? Do the linguistic duality and regionalism exhibited in the findings lead to social divisiveness and a lack of political integration?

Could it not be that the bicultural and regional fact in Canada are as much a part of a Canadian identity as are the Mounted Police or the CHC? Given that assumption to be true, perhaps the press in Canada have merely reflected the Canadian cultural mosaic in their coverage of the Quebec referendum. That press agendas differed both linguistically and regionally goes uncontested; what demands attention is what such variations mean for Canadians.

From the analysis, it is evident that Canadians of different regions and of different languages were presented with distinct views of the referendum event. In the English
and French press systems the bicultural nature of Canada was reinforced. In the regional press systems, the Canadian regional fact was accented. It would be correct to say then that the individual, linguistic and regional cultures were expressed in Canada's press treatment of the referendum. But Canadian identity, given its linguistic and regional cleavages, does little for political integration. Increasingly, it becomes clear that cultural identity and national unity are less compatible than they are mutually exclusive. It should be stressed that one is not necessarily better than the other, yet because the press operate within specific cultural environments (that is languages or regions), the individual identities (or agendas) of these environments are those which take precedence over the more global cultural environment (that is Canada as a national entity).

From this analysis it is noted that political integration at the national level is not well supported. However, the press have proven themselves in this study to be quite able in promoting political integration in the regional and linguistic environments in which they operate.

However revealing and indicative of the foregoing patterns the data have proven to be, it remains that considerable research is still necessary to understand the workings of the press in Canada. In that regard, this author wishes to look to some recommendations for further research, outlined in the following and final section of this thesis.
2. **Recommendations For Further Research**

a) Referendary Issues

Colin Seymour-Ure, in his study of the British press coverage of the U.K. referendum in 1975, regarding that country's possible exit from the European Economic Community, posits that referenda tend to put into doubt the legitimacy of the press while at the same time giving them a more central role than in election campaigns. 79

It would be interesting to compare the present study to the Romanow et al. study on the 1979 and 1980 Federal elections. Such comparisons might shed light on the relative importance of the media for different events, and it would put Seymour-Ure's contention to the test. Seymour-Ure noted that the press coverage of referenda politics confirmed two relevant factors: 1) events are given meaning by the mass media through being placed in their contemporary context, and 2) the strong preference of media for projecting ideas through the vehicle of personalities, means that any "issue", however isolated, is given wide connotations by being associated with particular persons. 80

Opinion leadership 81 is not a new idea; neither is the media's ability to confer status on personalities 82. But, the concept that media choose which issues should or will be expressed through particular leaders is truly novel.
The implications of the media's ability to structure an issue needs to be examined, not only in light of possible distortions which might arise as a result, but also in terms of how exclusively the media act to decide how a campaign is projected to the electorate.

What evolves as a particularly important area in this study is that the media had no known "touchstone" with which to pattern their coverage of the referendum campaign. Unlike elections, which have been covered by the press innumerable times, the Canadian press had yet to come face to face with the referendum monster. What of previous referenda? What coverage would be balanced? How would the press be fair in "reportage?" The distinction between 'news' and 'comment' in the referendum -- or in media coverage of any event for that matter, needs more attention. Because the press ranked and defined the issues central to the referendum, even hard news stories (essentially found on the front page) contained in them a comment -- and this simply because they were chosen as important issues by the press.

b) Media Issues

Shifting attention to the limitations of this study, further suggestions for research arise. Given the fact that the present work deals only with the press coverage of the P.Q. referendum, a media-wide analysis might provide further insights to how media shape our worlds for us -- especially
with regards to political socialization. Radio, TV, magazines -- should all be looked at to bring to the fore the characteristics of media coverage. Did all media interpret the referendum similarly? Did TV concentrate on issues or personalities and so on? How did media interact? Perhaps an even wider newspaper study could be done -- one including more papers and the weekly press.

As well, a study in which it is hypothesized that group owned papers will reflect similar attitudes and treatment of the referendum across regional lines, thereby resulting in a thwarted view of the political situation in Québec, might provide interesting clues to the workings of a press which supposedly provides a marketplace of ideas.

Further coverage of daily political events in Canadian papers, in this author's mind, has always reflected a strong interest in the elite actors (i.e. Trudeau, Clark, Broadbent, etc.) regardless of the vacuum inherent in some of the stories. Also, press coverage across Canada, as in broadcasting, seems to accent the image that all Canadian business emanates from the Toronto-Montreal-Ottawa triangle, thereby accenting one image of reality. (Incidentally, the same problem is hypothesized as inherent in concentration of ownership.)

What is the effect on Canadians, both elites and blue collar citizens, of a press which emphasizes leaders, and personalities, which exaggerates the importance of Quebec
and Ontario, for example? How does this in turn affect national identity and unity or political integration? This study has attempted to assess the recent referendum situation. Further research must include its effect on Canadians and the democratic process.

Finally, considering the current constitutional debate, the need to understand the inner workings of the political process looms larger. Canadians are facing some of the most trying times of their lives in terms of nationhood. A country torn by regional and linguistic cleavages and beset by the incessant demands of powerful provinces, Canada seems, at best, a country without a home. How Canadian media interpret the current state of constitutional controversy will do much to help Canadians understand the issues. What issues are the "real" issues should be a matter of public consensus; for Canadians too, not only the Canadian media, have a right to interpret the constitutional debate.

An examination of Canadian media agenda-setting with respect to the above matters, and to others, continues to be required to help fill the void of Canadian media research. The purpose of this study has been to contribute, in small part to filling that void. But, even at this concluding point in the study, one becomes aware of how much research activity is still demanded of Canadian scholars.
APPENDIX A

NEWSPAPERS USED IN NATIONAL STUDY

The papers examined for the study of the press coverage of the 1980 Quebec referendum were selected on language and regional lines. Their representativeness along these lines is clear: -- (province, language, and ownership are cited)

ATLANTIC REGION

1. **Charlottetown Guardian** - Prince Edward Island
   - English
   - Thomson Publications

2. **Halifax Chronicle-Herald** - Nova Scotia
   - English
   - Independent

3. **St. John's Evening Telegram** - Newfoundland
   - English
   - Thomson Publications

4. **St. John Telegraph Journal** - New Brunswick
   - English
   - Irving Industries

QUEBEC REGION

5. **Le Devoir** - Montreal, Quebec
   - French
   - Independent

6. **Le Soleil** - Quebec City, Quebec
   - French
   - Demarais Group

7. **La Presse** - Montreal, Quebec
   - French
   - Desmarais Group

8. **Montreal Gazette** - Montreal, Quebec
   - English
   - Southam Press
APPENDIX A (continued)

9. **Toronto Globe and Mail** - Toronto, Ontario
   - English
   - Thomson Publications

10. **Toronto Star** - Toronto, Ontario
    - English
    - Toronto Star Ltd.

11. **Ottawa Citizen** - Ottawa, Ontario
    - English
    - Southam Press

12. **Windsor Star** - Windsor, Ontario
    - English
    - Southam Press

WESTERN REGION

13. **Edmonton Journal** - Alberta
    - English
    - Southam Press

14. **Winnipeg Free Press** - Manitoba
    - English
    - FP Publications

15. **Regina Leader-Post** - Saskatchewan
    - English
    - Sifton Family

16. **Vancouver Sun** - British Columbia
    - English
    - FP Publications
### APPENDIX B

**NEWSPAPER COVERAGE OF THE QUEBEC REFERENDUM:**

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ENDNOTES


3. Ibid., pp. 130-6.


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid., pp. 7 - 8.

14. The relevant literature in the area of agenda-setting patterns in terms of region or language in Canada is wide. Overall patterns in regional and linguistic differences can be recognized by brief perusal of any of the following citations. See particularly Jean Bruce, "A Content Analysis of Thirty Canadian Daily Newspapers Published During Period January 1st to March 31st, 1965, With a Comparative Study of Newspapers Published in 1969." Unpublished report for Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, 1965.

W.C. Soderlund, et al., "Regional and Linguistic Agenda-Setting in Canada," op cit, P.349


18. Ibid., p. 230.


25. Ibid., p. 15.


28. Ibid.,


30. Ibid., p. 3.


33. Ibid., p. 603.

34. Ibid., p. 615.


37. Ibid., p. 18.

38. Ibid., p. 19.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., p. 20.

42. Ibid.

43. For an in-depth review of the Parti Quebecois' first year in power and a discussion of the policies set forth by the party see Graham Fraser, "Quebec: End of Year One," in Macleans, November 14, 1977, pp. 30-48.

44. Gouvernement du Québec, Quebec - Canada: A New Deal; The Quebec - Government proposal for a new partnership between equals: Sovereignty-Association (Quebec: Editeur Officiel du Québec; 1979).


46. Quebec Government, A New Deal, op cit., p. 70.


50. For a complete summary of Ryan's proposed renewed federalism, see A New Canadian Federation -- The Beige Paper.


52. William Johnson, "PQ Lament - Out of Tune With History," Globe and Mail, March 6, p. 8. For a detailed and on-going discussion and report of the referendum debate in the National Assembly (Quebec) during the March (4-21st) period see William Johnson's daily column in the Globe and Mail -- "William Johnson in Quebec" -- during that period.


58. Ibid.


60. Ibid., p. 2.

61. For a complete, concise recapitulation of the events leading up to and comprising the 35-day referendum campaign see Richard Cleroux, "Quebec Votes for Canada," in Toronto Globe and Mail, May 21, 1980, pp. 1-2.


63. Ibid., p. 2.
64. Ibid.

65. R.H. Wagenberg, W.C. Soderlund, W.I. Romanow, E.D. Briggs, "The Politization of an International Dispute: The Case of the Canadian-American Fish War," paper prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Political Science Association, University of Saskatchewan (May, 1979): p. 32 (Figure 1 on this study illustrates the interrelationship between the front page stories, editorials and feature articles.)


67. The 11 selected dates were:

Wednesday
Saturday
Tuesday
Friday
Monday
Thursday
Wednesday
Saturday
Tuesday
Friday
Monday

April 16th
April 19th
April 22nd
April 25th
April 28th
May 1st
May 7th
May 10th
May 13th
May 16th
May 19th

Though May 19th was part of the original sample, this date fell on Victoria Day, consequently, several newspapers did not publish on that date. This being the case, the latest date prior to the May 19th date was selected and coded. Thus if papers had a Sunday edition, May 18th was coded; if not, Saturday May 17th was coded in lieu of May 19th.

68. Their study is essentially a two-city comparison of the French and English media (broadcast vs print) in Toronto and Montreal with regards to coverage of the referendum campaign. This present national study of the press coverage of the referendum is an outgrowth of their work and this researcher is deeply indebted to Dr. Romanow and Dr. Walter Soderlund of the Communications Studies and Political Science departments of the University of Windsor for their research contributions to this project.
69. These recurring themes were:

1. Yvette Movement
2. Women's Movement (gen.)
3. Education
4. Fascism/Fear tactics
5. Auto Industry
6. Use of Media by YES/NO groups
7. Media bias in referendum coverage
8. TV debate
9. Advertising Campaign
10. Media Council, proposed by Ryan
11. Canadian Absorption into U.S.
12. Ontario Legislature debate
13. Status Quo


71. The term "major parties" here refers to the Parti Québécois, the Liberal provincial party, Liberal federal party, the No umbrella committee and finally the Yes umbrella committee. The latter two political groups were included in the list of major parties as the data indicates their importance in terms of frequency of mention.


73. Ibid.


75. New thinking on the process of agenda-setting as a consequence of gate-keeping activities arises out of the research of Dr. Walter Soderlund, and Dr. Walter Romanow et al., in their recent study of the 1979 federal elections. The concepts of macro- and micro-gates are advanced and substantiated. For a more detailed treatment of these concepts see: Soderlund, et. al., "Media-Agenda-Setting in the 1979 Canadian Federal Election: Some Implications for Political Support," *op. cit.*; pp. 5-10.

76. Siegel, "Canadian Newspaper Coverage of the FLQ Crisis", *op. cit.* pp. 239-40.

77. Ibid. p. 240.


80. Ibid., p. 611.


82. John P. Robinson, "Mass Communication and Information Diffusion," in F. Gerald Kline and Phillip J. Tichenor (eds.) Current Perspectives, p. 83. (Note: Robinson notes particularly the work of Lazarsfeld and Merton (1948) on "status conferral," that is: persons, issues, or objects to which media pay attention which have increased status conferred on them merely by being exposed to media attention.)

83. In the fall of 1980, Tom Kent was appointed to head up a Royal Commission into the investigation of the impact on concentration of ownership in the newspaper industry. The Commission was established when the Winnipeg Tribune and the Ottawa Journal both ceased and desisted operations. Both papers stated the reason for the closings was that their markets could not sustain competitive newspapers. As a result both Winnipeg and Ottawa were left in an essentially monopoly newspaper situation.
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Books


Holsti, Ole R., **Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities.** Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1969.


**Journal Articles**

Elkins, David J. and Simeon Richard, "Regional Political Cultures," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* II:3 (September, 1974)


Unpublished Papers


"Media Agenda - Setting in the 1979 Canadian Federal Election: A Case Study for the Critic of Mass Media." paper prepared for presentation at the meeting of the Association for Education in Journalism, Boston, August 1980.


Government Documents


Newspapers and Magazine Articles

Magazines

Bibliographical Note:

Soon after the election of the Parti Quebecois victory in 1976 and its subsequent term in office, Maclean's' coverage of the Referendum debate and the Quebec political arena took on a special focus.

Weekly columns were devoted to the PQ controversy, from about December 1976 to May 1980.

At first the column was called The Referendum Debate and featured opposing views and opinions of the YES and NO forces. Towards the actual referendum date itself, May 20, 1980, the column, usually found on page 4 of Maclean's, became known as Backstage: Referendum.

Throughout the period of the Referendum debate Maclean's' coverage and analytical reports are extensive. The reader is urged to peruse back issues of Maclean's for a broad overview of the issues.


Newspaper Articles

Bibliographical Note

While only specific articles are cited here a broad perusal of newspaper literature was undertaken. Most Canadian newspapers, following the election of the Parti Quebecois, stepped up coverage of Quebec's political scene -- essentially because of the implications separation holds for the rest of Canada.

While a perusal of any major Canadian newspaper will reveal wide and varied reports, analyses, and discussions regarding the Parti Quebecois and the referendum debate, the Toronto Globe and Mail has proved an invaluable source for this author.

A search of feature articles, editorials and front page news stories from November 1976 to May 1980 supplied the necessary chronology of the current political situation in Quebec.

Also important were the Globe's full reprinting of the White and Beige Papers following their public release.

What follows is only a bibliographical notation of those articles specifically referenced in this thesis.

"Levesque Looks Like a Big Leader in Big Debate." Toronto Globe and Mail, March 5, 1980, p. 8.


"PQ Approach to Debate Shows Hipocrisy." Toronto Globe and


VITA AUCTORIS

Personal

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Occupation