

The Grass beneath Two Bears: News Flows in Eastern and Central Europe

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We are like the grass beneath two elephants.
We are doomed to be crushed under their feet
regardless of whether they fight or make love.

Popular Southeast Asian aphorism

One of the elephants referred to in the above aphorism is China. The other may be Japan or the United States (hereafter U.S.) depending on the situation. Whatever the case, Southeast Asians, especially Thais and Malaysians, refer to this when they talk about the need for integration or cooperation among Southeast Asian nations. A similar situation exists in Eastern and Central Europe (hereafter ECE) as well except that bears may be a more appropriate metaphor than elephants. One of the bears is obviously Russia and the other may be Germany, France, or again the U.S.

In 1995 a large-scale international collaborative research on international news flows was conducted. Using an identical codebook, national teams content analyzed

major newspapers and television news programs and finally a total of forty-six countries submitted their data to the project center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill¹. I participated in this project as a leader of the Japanese team. While analyzing the data, one of the findings that caught my attention was the large coverage devoted to the U.S. and Russia ("two bears") by mass media in the ECE countries. Not only that, the ECE mass media gave large shares of coverage to the seven "news powers": the five UN security council members plus the two economic powers, Germany and Japan, but gave relatively little coverage to the ECE countries other than Russia and Bosnia -Herzegovina, where the civil war was raging during our research period.

This was not necessarily a big surprise to me because I have participated in two research projects involving ECE countries (Poland² and Slovenia³) and an intellectual aid program for ECE countries sponsored by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁴. In the early 1990s, ECE countries were trying to learn from the major powers outside the region while at the same time carefully watching Russia's every movement.

Furthermore, I was reminded of the "invasion to purchase ECE companies by foreign financial interests" in the early 1990s. It was said at international conferences at that time that ECE had become like Latin America in the 1950s when the greater portion of mass media were owned and controlled by American media interests. In

Hungary, for example, "as of late 1992, Western investment actually accounted for 80 percent of press capital assets" (Downing, 1996: 159). "In 1990 the Socialist Workers' party sought to solve its financial problems by selling, or even giving away, its newspapers to Western publishers. Axel Springer took over seven provincial newspapers and 90 per cent of profits without paying a penny" (Splichal, 1994:37). In East Germany, West Germans "have simply bought up Eastern newspapers and installed West Germans in managerial and editorial positions." As a result, "in total 85 per cent of Eastern German press is owned by West Germans" (Hagen, 1977, Pfetsch, 1996). "In the Czech Republic 75 per cent of dailies and periodicals are foreign-owned" (Downey, 1998: 56). In Bulgaria, WAZ (a German newspaper company) "bought a controlling interest in the second largest Bulgarian publishing house to add to its 70 per cent ownership of the country's biggest publisher" (Downey, 1998: 56). Although I am not sure whether or not the purchase of ECE mass media by Western European countries has affected the news flows in the ECE region, we can look at our data and see the results of analysis.

THE PATTERN OF INTERNATIONAL NEWS FLOWS IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE

Table 1 indicates the rankings and shares of the top 30 "most important foreign

countries (hereafter MIFC) in the news" in the ECE region⁵. When the shares in the world or international regions were calculated, the primary data for individual countries were not used in order to avoid the influence of the difference in sample size. Instead, the average values of the MIFCs' shares in recipient countries were calculated.

Table 1. Top 30 "Most Important Foreign Countries (MIFCs)" in News and their Shares in Each Country

Country	ECE		World		Bulgaria		Estonia		Hungary		Romania		Russia		Slovenia		Ukraine	
	Rank	Share	Rank	Share	Rank	Share	Rank	Share	Rank	Share	Rank	Share	Rank	Share	Rank	Share	Rank	Share
United States	1	14.06%	1	13.15%	1	18.67%	2	11.22%	1	14.71%	1	13.75%	1	10.17%	1	15.56%	2	14.34%
Russia	2	10.60%	6	4.65%	2	11.27%	1	15.37%	2	9.00%	2	8.93%	• @	• @	4	6.24%	1	23.36%
France	3	6.91%	2	7.61%	3	6.76%	3	10.00%	4	5.96%	3	8.39%	3	7.99%	5	6.01%	5	3.28%
Bosnia-Herzegovina	4	4.98%	5	5.86%	5	4.29%	5	4.63%	9	3.11%	6	4.46%	2	9.20%	8	3.85%	3	5.33%
Germany	5	4.70%	7	3.26%	4	5.47%	6	4.39%	3	7.61%	10	2.68%	7	3.63%	3	6.24%	6	2.87%
United Kingdom	6	4.40%	4	6.55%	8	2.68%	11	2.44%	8	4.69%	4	6.43%	4	4.84%	6	5.24%	4	4.51%
Italy	7	4.06%	10	2.18%	7	2.79%	17	1.22%	7	4.88%	5	6.25%	14	1.94%	2	9.32%	10	2.05%
China	8	2.64%	3	7.34%	9	2.68%	9	3.90%	13	1.84%	13	1.79%	8	3.63%	9	3.85%	22	0.82%
Japan	9	2.44%	8	3.02%	15	1.50%	10	2.93%	15	1.65%	12	2.14%	6	4.36%	14	1.62%	7	2.87%
Israel	10	2.41%	9	2.21%	10	2.47%	6	4.39%	11	2.09%	11	2.50%	38	0.48%	12	2.47%	9	2.46%
Spain	11	1.94%	12	1.35%	13	1.72%	12	2.20%	16	1.65%	8	3.04%	11	2.42%	13	2.16%	30	0.41%
Georgia	12	1.52%	26	0.66%	54	0.21%	33	0.49%	25	0.76%	20	1.07%	5	4.84%	38	0.39%	8	2.87%
Sweden	13	1.47%	19	0.87%	37	0.43%	8	4.15%	21	1.20%	19	1.07%	12	2.42%	20	1.00%	62	0.00%
Poland	14	1.43%	53	0.37%	17	1.18%	28	0.49%	12	1.90%	7	3.21%	24	0.97%	27	0.62%	15	1.64%
Slovakia	15	1.42%	54	0.37%	38	0.43%	24	0.73%	5	5.96%	28	0.71%	26	0.97%	26	0.69%	34	0.41%
Austria	16	1.37%	33	0.56%	18	1.18%	62	0.00%	10	2.54%	29	0.71%	16	1.69%	11	2.62%	23	0.82%
Finland	17	1.36%	37	0.52%	39	0.43%	4	7.32%	49	0.19%	82	0.00%	63	0.24%	74	0.08%	19	1.23%
Croatia	18	1.36%	66	0.25%	28	0.75%	16	1.71%	22	1.20%	30	0.71%	20	1.21%	7	3.93%	60	0.00%
Ukraine	19	1.16%	45	0.44%	40	0.43%	13	1.95%	14	1.71%	23	0.89%	10	2.66%	34	0.46%	• @	• @
Romania	20	1.08%	57	0.31%	16	1.29%	40	0.24%	6	5.07%	• @	• @	49	0.48%	36	0.46%	70	0.00%
Turkey	21	1.08%	22	0.86%	14	1.61%	27	0.49%	19	1.46%	14	1.79%	39	0.48%	18	1.31%	32	0.41%
Lithuania	22	1.04%	77	0.21%	69	0.11%	13	1.95%	59	0.13%	86	0.00%	9	2.91%	58	0.15%	11	2.05%
Greece	23	1.03%	43	0.45%	6	3.43%	38	0.24%	37	0.38%	26	0.89%	41	0.48%	31	0.54%	18	1.23%
Switzerland	24	0.97%	28	0.65%	41	0.43%	19	0.98%	17	1.59%	42	0.36%	35	0.73%	19	1.08%	14	1.64%
India	25	0.88%	13	1.34%	24	0.86%	21	0.73%	41	0.32%	21	1.07%	18	1.21%	16	1.54%	31	0.41%
Serbia	26	0.86%	30	0.63%	48	0.32%	73	0.00%	103	0.00%	27	0.89%	55	0.24%	10	2.93%	13	1.64%
Canada	27	0.79%	16	1.10%	42	0.43%	45	0.24%	24	0.82%	15	1.43%	52	0.24%	17	1.54%	24	0.82%
Yugoslavia	28	0.78%	39	0.49%	25	0.86%	43	0.24%	20	1.46%	24	0.89%	25	0.97%	28	0.62%	35	0.41%
Hungary*	29	0.72%	71	0.24%	70	0.11%	49	0.24%	98	0.00%	9	3.04%	73	0.00%	23	0.85%	26	0.82%
Czech Republic	30	0.72%	59	0.30%	20	0.97%	29	0.49%	18	1.52%	43	0.36%	22	1.21%	35	0.46%	69	0.00%

As shown in Table 1, the U.S. and Russia together account for one fourth of news flows in this region. Considering the geographical proximity, it was expected that major Western European powers such as Germany and France might account for larger shares in ECE, but actually the share of the U.S. in ECE (14.06 percent) exceeded not only France and Germany but even the world average (13.15 percent).

Another characteristics of this region is that the seven major "news powers" i.e., the five UN security members and the two economic powers of Germany and Japan, are all in the top ten list. It is true that ECE is not the only exception. In Asia and

Pacific, and North America, the "seven majors" are also in the top ten list. (See Ito [2003] for the rankings in international regions other than that of ECE). However, the impression we get, or its implications, are somewhat different because (1) China and Japan are core members of the Asia and Pacific and the U.S maintains that it is an Atlantic as well as a Pacific nation, and (2) geographically speaking, North America is right in the middle of the "seven majors", therefore, it is relatively close to all of them (even Russia is close from Alaska).

There are no countries in ECE's top ten list that are equivalent to Mexico and Argentina (4th and 5th in South America) or South Africa and Algeria (4th and 9th in Africa) that are not players of worldwide significance but are nevertheless important in the region. Bosnia-Herzegovina is obviously an exception. Its high ranking (4th in ECE and 5th in the world) was due to the civil war that was going on during our research period (September, 1995). The population of Bosnia-Herzegovina is less than half a million (420,000 in 1995) and cannot be considered as a stable regional power.

Let us look at the differences among the countries. In Estonia and the Ukraine Russia was the top MIFC in news whereas in the other five countries the U.S. was the top. Russia's share in the Ukraine was especially high. While France was ranked third in Bulgaria, Estonia, Rumania and Russia, Germany was third in Hungary and Slovenia. The rankings of China and Japan were higher in Russia than in other ECE

countries. These variations apparently reflect geographical, military, political, and economic conditions, which are to be discussed later.

The coverage of ECE countries other than Bosnia-Herzegovina (5th) and Russia (6th) was very scant throughout the world. The highest ranked was Serbia (30th), followed by Austria (33rd), Yugoslavia (39th), the Ukraine (45th), Poland (53rd), Slovakia (54th), Rumania (57th), the Czech Republic (59th), Croatia (66th), Hungary (71st), Lithuania (77th), Belarus (95th), Latvia (98th), and so on. (Other ECE countries including Bulgaria, Estonia, and Slovenia were below the 100th rating). As shown in Table 1, ECE countries were certainly covered by ECE mass media better than the world as a whole. And yet, the rankings of Estonia, Bulgaria, and Slovenia were 53rd, 57th, and 65th respectively even in the ECE mass media.

DETERMINANT FACTORS OF NEWS FLOWS IN EASTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE

In order to see the determinant factors of international news flows, multiple regression analyses were conducted. The focus of this research was news flows from the "most important foreign countries (MIFC) in the news" to each of the recipient countries. There exist more than 200 countries in the world that could qualify to become a MIFC in news. However, about 50 of them are too tiny to be regarded as a

"state". Some of them are just a city or a group of several small islands. If we treated them equally with giant states such as China, India, the United States and Russia, our results would be skewed. Therefore, we excluded the MIFCs whose populations are less than one million, except for one country, Bosnia -Herzegovina. Even though the population of Bosnia -Herzegovina was about 420,000 in 1995, the amount of news from there was so large during our research period that we could not ignore it so we did not eliminate Bosnia from our list.

The number of countries whose population was more than one million was 151. As the recipient country was eliminated from the list, the number of MIFCs for each country became 150 except for Cyprus. As the population of Cyprus was less than one million (708,000), it was not included in the list of eligible countries, but it was one of the 46 countries who provided us with their news flow data. In other words, because Cyprus was not on the list of 151 countries, all the 151 countries were used when Cyprus was the recipient country.

VARIABLES

The Dependent Variable

The dependent variable was (the logarithm of) the MIFC's frequency in each news recipient country. However, when country data were mixed to see determinant

factors in international regions or the world, the share of each MIFC (each MIFC's frequency divided by the total number of frequencies in each recipient country) was used in order to avoid the influence of the difference in each individual country's sample size.

Independent Variables

Independent variables included in the model were as follows: (Hereafter, labels for independent variables are expressed by capital letters.)

1. The logarithm of the MIFC's POPULATION.
2. The logarithm of the MIFC's GDP (gross domestic product).
3. The logarithm of the MIFC's PER CAPITA GDP.
4. The logarithm of the MIFC's annual DEFENSE BUDGET.
5. The logarithm of the number of ARMY SOLDIERS in the MIFC.
6. The existence of an INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCY (0. no, 1. yes).

It is generally agreed that international news agencies in the strictest sense exist only in the U.S., the U.K. and France. Major international news agencies are the AP (U.S.), Reuters (U.K.) and l'Agence France-Presse (France). Most of the other smaller and specialized international news agencies such as the UPTIN exist either in the U.K. or in the U.S. Therefore, only these three countries were given 1 and

the rest 0.

7. The official language, or one of the official languages, of the MIFC is the ENGLISH LANGUAGE (0. no, 1. yes).
8. The official language, or one of the official languages, of the MIFC is the FRENCH LANGUAGE (0. no, 1. yes).
9. The official language, or one of the official languages, of the MIFC is the SPANISH LANGUAGE (0. no, 1. yes).
10. The official language, or one of the official languages, of the MIFC is the ARABIC LANGUAGE (0. no, 1. yes).
11. The official language, or one of the official languages, of the MIFC is the RUSSIAN LANGUAGE (0. no, 1. yes).
12. The official language, or one of the official languages, of the MIFC is the CHINESE LANGUAGE (0. no, 1. yes).
13. The official language, or one of the official languages, of the MIFC is the GERMAN LANGUAGE (0. no, 1. yes).
14. COLONIAL RELATIONSHIP ---- the recipient country was once a colony of or was ruled for more than ten years by an MIFC after the 15th century (0. no, 1. yes).

Although some people might disagree, we regarded ECE countries that were under the rule of the ex-Soviet Union as "ex-colonies" of Russia.

15. Existence of COMMON RELIGION --- The recipient country and the MIFC share the same religion (0. no, 1. yes). For this judgment, coders used the unified manual made using Dougall et al. (1994), in which "major religions" in each country are listed.
16. COMMON IDEOLOGY --- The recipient country and the MIFC are either capitalist or socialist countries (0. no, 1. yes). For this judgment, coders used the same manual just mentioned in which all countries are classified as either "capitalist" or "socialist".
17. GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE --- The logarithm of the direct distance between the capital of the recipient country and that of the MIFC. (The data was obtained from the World Atlas, Ver. 4, 1991-1994).
18. TRADE --- The logarithm of the amount of trade between the MIFC and the recipient country. Trade statistics were often provided using local currencies as a unit, which caused no problems in cases of individual country analysis. However, when country data were mixed for the analysis of international regions or the whole world, the data needed to be standardized, and each MIFC's share in the total amount of trade with the recipient country was used.
19. INCIDENT ---- In order to minimize the effects of unusual incidents during the research period, this dummy variable was used. During our research period, i.e., in

September, 1995, unusual incidents occurred in the following countries: France (a nuclear test in the South Pacific), China (the Fourth World Conference on Women by the United Nations), Russia (the Chechnyan conflict), and Bosnia-Herzegovina (a civil war). These four countries were given 1 and the rest 0.

RESULTS

Table 2. Determinant Factors of International News Flows

	World		ECE		Bulgaria		Estonia		Hungary		Romania		Russia		Slovenia		Ukraine		
	Rank	Beta	Rank	Beta	Rank	Beta	Rank	Beta	Rank	Beta	Rank	Beta	Rank	Beta	Rank	Beta	Rank	Beta	
INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCY	1	.376**	1	.502**	3	.212**	3	.214**	6	.170*	3	.311**	3	.260**	4	.135*	4	.216*	
TRADE	2	.330**	2	.422**			2	.235*							2	.306**	3	.274**	
POPULATION	3	.101**																	
CHINESE LANGUAGE	4	.098**																	
INCIDENT	5	.076**					4	.177**								6	.126*		
GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE	6	.056**			2	.261**	5	.176*	1	.399**	2	.322**	2	.278**	4	.207**			
RUSSIAN LANGUAGE	7	.052**	3	.245**	4	.198**			7	.144*	5	.175*							
COMMON RELIGION	8	.041**																	
DEFENSE BUDGET	9	.039*							3	.259*								1	.350**
ENGLISH LANGUAGE	10	.038**													5	.126*			
COMMON IDEOLOGY	11	.037**			5	.177**			5	.173**									
FRENCH LANGUAGE	12	.032*																	
SPANISH LANGUAGE	13	.032*																	
COLONIAL RELATIONSHIP							6	.175**										2	.314**
GDP			4	.132**	1	.609**	1	.356**	4	.267*	1	.359**	1	.507**	1	.535**			
ARMY SOLDIERS			5	.058*															
ARABIAN LANGUAGE					6	.152*			2	.273**	4	.178*	4	.199**					
PER CAPITA GDP															3	.209*			

** p<.01 * p<.05

As mentioned above, the number of MIFCs in each country was unified at 150, with the exception of Cyprus (151), and the amount of news about a MIFC and the amount of trade between each country and the MIFCs were standardized in the way already mentioned. Then the data for 46 countries were mixed and multiple regression analysis was conducted ($n = 150 \times 45 + 151 = 6901$). The result is shown in Table 2. The sample sizes indicated in the table are the number of effective samples actually used for the calculation. "Beta" in the table is the "standardized partial regression coefficient" which is almost the same as the "partial correlation coefficient". It indicates the degree of "genuine or pure correlation" between the dependent variable

(the MIFC's frequency) and each independent variable (determinant factor).

As shown in Table 2, the most important factor in ECE was found to be the existence of an INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCY (the same as in the world). The definition of "international news agency" is not necessarily clear because large "national news agencies" do provide news to foreign customers. It is generally agreed, however, that "international news agencies" (as well as "international news media" in general) in the strictest sense exist only in the U.S., the U.K., and France. There are two reasons for this: (a) News media in these three countries sell news on a multinational basis; for example, they sell news about third countries irrelevant to the host country whereas the international activities of those in other countries are limited to bilateral flows only (flows between foreign countries and the host country). (b) The share of revenues gained from international activities is much larger in the news media of these three countries than in the news media of other countries. Therefore, as mentioned above, these three countries were given 1 and all the other 148 countries 0 in our multiple regression model. Although this dummy variable was labeled INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCY, it may be considered to include international news media other than news agencies such as CNN, the BBC, the New York Times, the International Herald Tribune, the London Times, Newsweek, Time magazine, and so on.

Because regression analyses results show the existence of INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCY as the most important factor, it does not automatically mean that news flows from the U.S. the U.K., and France to other parts of the world including ECE. Technically speaking, it means that the amount of news coming from these three countries is more than the amount of news predicted from these three countries' other attributes such as POPULATION, GDP, PER CAPITA GDP, DEFENSE BUDGET, the number of ARMY SOLDIERS, and so on; or the "relational factors" between these countries and ECE countries such as GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE, COMMON IDEOLOGY, the amount of TRADE, and so on. Simply speaking, these three countries are spreading news about themselves more than they should (or beyond the "fair" or "proper" level). This is not a problem limited to ECE but a problem for the whole world (as further elaborated in Ito, 2003).

The amount of TRADE (2nd) is one of the most "natural" factors that can be easily predicted from precedent research and theories. This was the second most important factor in the world as well (as shown in Table 2). Unlike the first two most important factors, the third most important factor, RUSSIAN LANGUAGE, is peculiar to this region. This dummy variable technically indicates that countries with RUSSIAN LANGUAGE as (one of) the official language(s) tend to be covered better than the amount of news predicted by other factors. Actually, however, this seems to

mean that much news flows from Russia to other countries in this region.

It should be noted that GDP (4th) was considered important in ECE while it was not statistically significant, in other words not so important, in other parts of the world. This was probably because all the "seven major powers", most of whom have large GDPs, are in ECE's top ten list. The number of ARMY SOLDIERS (5th in ECE) and the amount of DEFENSE BUDGET (9th in the world) were statistically significant but their rankings were relatively low in ECE as well as in the world.

On the other hand, while POPULATION and CHINESE LANGUAGE were important in other parts of the world, they were statistically insignificant in ECE. The following two reasons are conceivable: (1) The interest in China (and probably India as well) is weaker in ECE (except in Russia) than in other parts of the world. (2) As mentioned before, the Fourth World Conference on Women by the United Nations was held in Beijing during our research period. The coverage of this conference was less in ECE than in other parts of the world.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE was found to be insignificant in ECE as a whole. However, it was significant in six of the seven countries (except the Ukraine). These results are somewhat contradictory. The sample size is naturally larger in the case of ECE as a whole, which suggests that the result obtained from the regional analysis may be more reliable. On the other hand, however, logarithm data used in individual

country analysis is more desirable than share data used for regional analysis. Share data are problematic especially in the case of the amount of TRADE because its variance is very large. However, in order to standardize the country data, share had to be used for MIFC's frequencies and the amount of TRADE (as mentioned before). Considering these technical complexities, I am not sure at this stage which result is more reliable. Therefore, let us here reach the following understanding: The "law of GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE", that is, the amount of information flow is a negative function of GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE ("Zipf's law"⁶, for example), was not necessarily contradicted in ECE. However, the power of this "law" is weaker in ECE than other parts of the world. The reason may be that, compared to other parts of the world, mass media in ECE tend to give greater space and time to distant countries (such as the U.S.).

COMMON RELIGION was significant as a determinant of news flows in the world (8th). However, it was found to be insignificant not only in ECE as a whole but also in any individual country in this region. In this survey Christianity was divided into: (a) Western Christianity (Catholic and Protestant) and (b) Eastern Christianity (Russian, Greek, Serbian, Rumanian, and Bulgarian Orthodoxies). In other words, most ECE countries share the same "Eastern Christianity". However, COMMON RELIGION was found to be irrelevant to news flows in ECE, meaning that compared

to other parts of the world, mass media in ECE tend to cover countries of different religions (including Catholic and Protestant) rather than countries of the same religion. This finding is consistent with that of GEOGRAPHICAL DISTANCE just mentioned.

As mentioned before, all the ECE countries that were under the rule of the ex-Soviet Union (including the six countries in Table 2) were coded as ex-colonies of Russia. In the Ukraine and Estonia, COLONIAL RELATIONSHIP (in the past) was found to be statistically significant. This is consistent with the fact that only in these countries did Russia surpass the U.S. as the MIFC in news.

DISCUSSIONS

What are the problems peculiar to ECE? Let me answer this question by comparing ECE with Africa and Latin America, the two regions that have often since the 1970s been mentioned as typically "problematic" in discussions about international information flows.

(1) As already mentioned, there are no countries in ECE equivalent to Mexico and Argentina in South America or South Africa and Algeria in Africa that are not worldwide players but receive large shares in regional news flows.

(2) In South America SPANISH LANGUAGE was found to be a significant determinant factor of news flows. It seems to indicate that South American countries

exchange news among themselves. In ECE, RUSSIAN LANGUAGE was found to be a significant factor. Is the role of SPANISH LANGUAGE in South America the same as that of RUSSIAN LANGUAGE in ECE? Maybe not. The latter case seems to indicate a one-way flow of news from Russia to other countries in ECE.

(3) The share of news about the U.S. in ECE (14.06 percent) is larger than that of Africa (10.26 percent). The second ranking in Africa is the U.K. but its share is only 6.96 percent whereas the second ranking in ECE is Russia and its share is 10.50 percent. It is possible to argue that ECE's dependence on the U.S. and Russia is more conspicuous than African dependence on the U.S. and the U.K..

The share of the U.S. in South America was 19.85 percent, which was larger than in ECE. However, considering the geographical proximity and historical links, this is understandable. Furthermore, it should be noted that the top MIFC in South America was not the U.S. but China (19.96 percent). Why China? This question leads to the fourth point.

(4) As mentioned before, the Fourth World Conference on Women by the United Nations was held in Beijing, China during our research period (September, 1995). Many governments in the world sent delegates to Beijing and mass media crews followed them. This is why the coverage of China during our research period was more than usual. China's share in South America (19.96 percent) may be unusual (highest in

the world), but why was China's share in ECE (2.64 percent) so low? Some Arab countries boycotted and some Arab mass media ignored that conference, reacting against criticisms of women's status in Islamic countries. Even so, the Middle East (4.06 percent) was not at the bottom. China is farther from Africa than from ECE and we have not heard that Africans are particularly concerned with women's issues. Even so, Africa (4.33 percent) was not at the bottom. Why was ECE at the bottom? Was that because ECE countries were so worried about the "two bears" (Russia and the U.S.) that they could not afford to pay attention to the problems of women?⁷

CONCLUSION

This paper deals with only a small part of the large-scale international collaborative research project on internal news flows. My plan was to deal first with worldwide, universal problems and then move on to regional and individual country problems. I have already published a paper dealing with worldwide, universal problems (Ito, 2003). This is the first paper focusing on a specific international region and individual countries. The reason why I chose ECE as the first international region to study was because, while analyzing the data of the 46 countries, I was surprised to realize that news flows in ECE seemed to be more "problematic" than any of the other regions in the world. Because of the arguments over the New World Information and

Communication Order (Boyd-Barrett, 1980, Galtung & Vincent, 1992, Giffard, 1996, Straubhaar, 1997, Wilkins, 2000, and many others), if asked, I would have conjectured that Africa or Latin America would be the most problematic area. However, our findings indicated that Africa and Latin America seemed to be "healthier" than ECE. Based on data analysis, this paper identified four "problems" (that I thought).

In order to connect those problems with the problems discussed by scholars in ECE, I read several articles by ECE scholars such as Anelia Dimitrova of Bulgaria (Dimitrova, 1999), Karol Jakubowicz of Poland (Jakubowicz, 1994, 2001), Slavko Splichal of Slovenia (Splichal, 1994a, 1994b, 2001), and Zassoursky of Russia (1998, 1999). However, I soon realized that to incorporate their points and arguments into my paper is beyond my ability. Reading these articles, however, I noticed that the kind of research that I was doing was almost non-existent in ECE (partly because of the delay in computerization?). Actually, Splichal (2001, p. 40) writes as follows: "Since so much has happened during the past decade in this region, which has not been systematically scrutinized by social scientists, empirical evidence is largely derived from non-scientific secondary resources such as newspapers." Therefore, it would make more sense that I provide ECE scholars with serious scientific research data and analyses to help them think about their own problems rather than incorporate their arguments into my paper.

And yet, I would like to close this paper with a couple of comments and suggestions. Reading articles by ECE scholars, I wondered if they are not too pessimistic. I am afraid that the title as well as the contents of this paper might make them even more pessimistic with "more scientific reasons". First, I wondered why Africa and Latin America looked healthier than ECE in terms of international news flows? My answer is that, since the 1970s, these two regions have been cited so much and argued about so often as typical problematic areas that governments, mass media, and other intellectual leaders made efforts to change the situation. On the other hand, until the collapse of the Soviet bloc, ECE people had been unaware of the growing gap between them and some other parts of the world. All of a sudden, however, they realized that their economic and technological levels were about the same as those of Latin America or Southeast Asia and were so disappointed and frustrated that they became even more pessimistic. However, I believe that once the problems are identified or specified, appropriate measures will be taken and the situation will improve. Or, this research based on the data collected in 1995 may be outdated by now and the situation may have already changed for the better.

Second, rather than trying to "imitate Western Europe" (Splichal, 2001), I think ECE people should pay more attention to the countries and areas with the similar international environment such as Scandinavian and Southeast Asian countries. In

this sense, I was interested in the “official proposal” made in January 2001 by the “conservative Austrian government” that “Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia --- to form a sort of Central European ‘Commonwealth’ with leading role of Austria --- an alliance clearly resembling the old-time Habsburg Austro-Hungarian Empire that perished in World War One” (Splichal, 2001:38). I don’t know to what extent this proposal is viable. However, this kind of efforts will certainly increase the amount of news flows within the ECE region and the pattern of news flows will become healthier.

NOTES

1. The data used in this research are the product of the large-scale international collaborative research project initiated and led by Robert L. Stevenson of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in the U.S. and Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi of the University of Leicester in the U.K. It was planned in the fall of 1994. Participants at this stage, including me, sent comments on their basic plans, schedules, content analysis code books, and methods of analysis, including samplings, sample size and so on. Preliminary surveys were conducted in May for 41 countries. After some modifications were made, the final survey was conducted in September, 1995 and the data for 46 countries were obtained as a

result.

2. This research project entitled "The Global Market Economy and Society in the Twenty-first Century" was initiated by Andreu Kozminski (Warsaw University, Warsaw, Poland) and Donald Cushman (State University of New York at Albany, New York, U.S.A.). The conference was held in Plock, Poland in June, 1990 and the papers presented at this conference were published in Kozminski and Cushman (1993).

3. This research project entitled "Information Society and Civil Society" was initiated by Slavko Splichal (University of Ljublijana, Ljublijana, Slovenia), Andrew Calabrese (Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana, U.S.A.), and Colin Sparks (University of Westminster, London, U.K.). The conference was held in Piran, Slovenia in August 1990 and the papers presented at this conference were published in Splichal, Calabrese, and Sparks (1994).

4. This was a part of the larger program called "TIDE (Telecommunication, Information and InterDependent Economies) 2000" and was launched in 1985 commemorating the 20th anniversary of Japan's membership in the OECD

(Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development). Conferences and symposiums were held every year from 1985 through 1993. The sixth conference was held in Budapest, Hungary in 1990 inviting many experts from all over the ECE region.

5. The original "raw data" are the results of content analyses of selected newspapers and television news programs during the first and third weeks of September, 1995. Using the standardized manual (throughout all the research teams), coders identified "international news" in (two or three) selected newspapers and (two or three) television news programs. The definition of "international news" in this international collaborative survey was rather complicated. It referred not only to news about a foreign country that took place in the foreign country, but included the following: (a) News about a foreign country or foreigners that took place in the recipient country, e.g., the arrest of German radicals in France reported in French mass media. (b) News about the recipient country that took place in a foreign country, e.g., Mrs. Clinton's speech at the World Conference on Women in Beijing reported in the American mass media. (c) News about international regions and international organizations such as Africa, Asia, Europe, the United Nations, the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), and so forth. As a

result, the data for 46 countries became available. The sample size differed from one country to another. The smallest was Gambia (94) and the largest was Germany (10,249). The total sample size of this set was 66,186 and the average size was 1,439. However, as the focus of our research was news about foreign countries, we eliminated the "news about the recipient country that took place in a foreign country" (b) mentioned above and the "news about international regions and international organizations" (c), and included the "news about a foreign country or foreigners that took place in the recipient country" (a) in addition to the "common sense meaning" of international news; that is, news about a foreign country that took place outside the recipient country. Naturally, the sample size became smaller than the original "raw data" set mentioned above. The total size became 44,066 and the average size 958.

The ECE mass media sampled in this survey were as follows:

Bulgaria: (1) Bulgarian National TV, (2) Bulgarian National Radio and (3) 24

Chassa/Demokratsia.

Estonia: (1) Postimees (Postman), (2) Eesti Pevaleht (Estonian Daily), and (3)

Broadcaster ETV (Estonian TV).

Hungary: (1) Napszabadsg, (2) Magyar Hirlap, (3) Magyar Nemzet, (4) Blikk and

(5) TV Hiradc 19.30.

Russia: (1) Izvestiya, (2) Pravda, and (3) Russian TV news.

Slovenia: (1) Delo (newspaper), (2) Republika (newspaper), (3) Jana (magazine for women), (4) Mag (elite news magazine), (5) Mladina (intellectual magazine), and (6) TV Slovenija.

Ukraine : (1) Voice of Ukraine (daily newspaper), (2) Mirror of the Week (national weekly), (3) Ukrainian TV news (UTN), (4) CIT-30 (private TV news), (5) Interfax (national agency), (6) UNIAN (national agency), and (7) UNIAR (national agency).

*Information regarding Rumanian mass media has not yet been available.

6. Zipf's law (Zipf, 1946) is expressed as follows:
$$V = \frac{P_1 P_2}{D}$$

V --- The amount of information flow between the two communities.

P₁ --- Population of the community 1.

P₂ --- Population of the community 2.

D --- Distance between the communities 1 and 2

7. One of the members of the Japanese team, Lisbeth Clausen (then a doctoral candidate and visiting researcher at Keio University, Shonan Fujisawa), compared Japanese and Danish television news programs specially focusing on the Beijing

Conference on Women by the United Nations and published a book entitled Global News Production (Clausen, 2003).

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