MEDIA USE AND SATISFACTION PATTERNS AMONG ENGLISH-SPEAKING AUDIENCES IN MONTREAL

By Enn Raudsepp, Guy Lecavalier, Lindsay Crysler and David Yates

Concordia University

Since Tuesday, Sept. 25, 1979, the day *The Montreal Star* published its last edition, there has been only one English-language daily newspaper in Montreal. Considerable concern has been expressed since then about the extent to which the quality and quantity of news available to anglophone Montrealers have been affected. The Journalism Program at Concordia University undertook to gauge the views of the anglophone community on this issue by conducting a public opinion survey of 687 more-or-less regular users of the city's English-language media. Respondents were also asked for their views on some of the conditions under which newspapers operate, or should operate.

Methodology

The results of the population survey are based on telephone interviews made between Dec. 3 and Dec. 14, 1980, with 91% of the interviews made on Dec. 3, 4 and 5. The sample was drawn at random from the Montreal telephone directory, and excluded all numbers which were not west of Park Avenue. Also, all respondents who did not use English-language media for news and information were excluded. The screening question was as follows:

Do you use English-language newspapers, radio and television for news and information — always, often, sometimes, rarely or never?
Those who answered "rarely" or "never" were excluded from the sample. Consequently, we should not consider the sample to be representative of the whole Montreal English-speaking population, non-francophone population or users of the English-language media, but only of those (English-speaking or not) West of Park Avenue who use these media. Of course, this is the area where the English-language media users will be found in greatest concentration. This limitation of the sample was based on cost and time factors. However, one should be confident of the representativeness of the main trends.4

The final sample of 687, represents a size which provides a tolerated error of less than 4% at the 95% level of confidence and less than 5% at the 99% level of confidence. The precision of the sample might have been affected by a rate of response of 54%. However, this rate is not unusual for Montreal, where telephone survey rates almost never go beyond 60% and can be as low as 40%, especially among the non-francophone population.5

Demographic Data

Of the 687 respondents, 47% were male, 53% female. Forty-eight per cent were married, 40% were single, and 12% had "other" arrangements. The proportion of people who had jobs outside the home was 63% --84% of whom had white-collar jobs and 16% of whom had blue-collar jobs. The sample was almost evenly distributed between four age groups: 24 and under; 25 to 34; 35 to 54 and 55 years of age and over. Sixty-four per cent listed English as their primary language, 20% listed French and 16% listed some other language.

Thirty-nine per cent were university graduates, 22% had some technical or commercial or academic training beyond secondary school and 30% had a secondary school education or less.
Thirty-one per cent had family incomes below $15,000 a year; 28% earned between $15,000 and $25,000; 15% earned between $25,000 and $35,000; 13% earned between $35,000 and $50,000 and 12% earned more than $50,000.

Highlights of the Results

Media Use and Satisfaction

Slightly more than three-quarters of the respondents (78%) think the English-language community in Montreal is adequately served by the aggregate of all media outlets available to it.

Approximately half (48%) use an English-language newspaper as their major source for news and information. A much smaller number said they used television most (21%) or used radio most (19%). Only 1% said they used either magazines or weekly newspapers most for news and information.

Slightly more than one-third (37%) said they trust daily newspapers more than any other media source for news and information. Television was trusted most by 29%; radio by 15%; magazines by 5% and weekly newspapers by 4%. Only 5% said they trust no media source at all.

About three-quarters (73%) thought that The Gazette adequately reflects the concerns and interests of the English-language community in Montreal, and about the same number (76%) said they were personally satisfied by the amount and quality of the news and information provided by The Gazette.

However, when asked in a different context, only 18% said The Gazette news coverage was fine as it is:
38% said they did not get enough international news;
25% said they did not get enough news about the French community in Montreal;
19% said there is not enough news about local affairs;
18% want more news about national affairs;
15% want more editorials and news analysis;
12% want more entertainment news;
11% want more business news and 6% want more sports news

A strong majority (68%) said they believed The Gazette would be a better newspaper if it had English-language daily competition.

However, 39% thought that The Gazette's news coverage had improved since the Star died.

More than half (54%) thought that the Star, when it was publishing, had been the better paper in reflecting the concerns and interests of the English-language community in Montreal. Only 18% thought that it had been The Gazette.

Slightly more than half (53%) said they read The Gazette daily and only 7% said they never read it.

About one-third (35%) of those who read The Gazette daily also read another newspaper daily. Two-thirds (66%) of daily readers of The Gazette also read another newspaper at least once a week.

About one-quarter (26%) read one of the city's three French-language dailies regularly; 6% read The Globe and Mail regularly and 4% read The New York Times regularly.

About half (51%) said they used to read the Star daily.
When the Star was publishing, one-fifth (20%) read both the Star and The Gazette daily; 27% read only the Star and 5% read only The Gazette. Twenty-eight per cent read mainly the Star and occasionally The Gazette and 11% read mainly The Gazette and occasionally the Star. Seven per cent read neither.

Ninety per cent of Star readers said they switched to The Gazette when the Star closed. One per cent switched to some other English-language daily; 4% switched to a French-language daily and 5% said they stopped reading newspapers.

About one-quarter (26%) said they are watching more television since the Star died; and about the same (27%) are listening to more radio news since then.

Nearly one-fifth (18%) said they would buy another English-language newspaper daily in addition to The Gazette, if one were available. Thirty-six percent said they would buy it occasionally in addition to The Gazette. Seven per cent said they would buy it rather than The Gazette, even sight unseen.

General Issues

Nearly half of the respondents (46%) don't think it matters in terms of community coverage that a newspaper's head office is outside the city, while 37% do think it matters.

Slightly more than half (55%) believe that the quality of news and information is adversely affected in one-newspaper towns. Only 11% think it is better.

Nearly half (47%) believe that the concentration of ownership by two newspaper chains is a real threat to freedom of the press. Twenty-
eight per cent see it has not much of a threat and only 8% don't see any threat in this.

Nevertheless, slightly more people (46% to 41%) think there is no need for the federal government to regulate the conditions under which newspaper companies operate.

But when asked specifically if there should be a law limiting the number of newspapers any one company can own, about the same number of people want such a law (46%) as those who don't (45%).

An overwhelming majority (79%) said there should be some form of independent commission or ombudsman to keep an eye on the press and to deal with complaints from the public. Sixteen percent said it wasn't necessary. Finally, 83% of the respondents did not know what the Quebec Press Council is.

Analysis and Discussion

Media Use

First of all, it is clear from the survey that, despite McLuhanesque predictions about the demise of the print medium, daily newspapers remain — and convincingly -- the public's major source for news and information. Not only that, but they are trusted much more than any other medium. These results hold true for every age group, through every level of education, and for language and sex breakdowns as well; although McLuhan fans might be encouraged by the fact that use and trust of television, in particular, is highest among those under 24 years of age. (See Tables 1 and 2)
Table 1

MEDIUM MOST USED FOR NEWS AND INFORMATION (IN PERCENTAGES) ACCORDING TO AGE GROUPINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th>Under 24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-54</th>
<th>Over 55</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English daily newspapers</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French daily newspapers</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>television</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>radio</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>magazines</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weekly newspapers</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Number of respondents) (160) (163) (172) (151) (646)
Table 2
MEDIUM MOST TRUSTED FOR NEWS AND INFORMATION
(IN PERCENTAGES)
ACCORDING TO AGE AND SEX GROUPINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th>AGE GROUPINGS</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF TRUST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Under 24</td>
<td>25-34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>daily</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>newspapers</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>television</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>radio</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>magazines</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weeklies</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>don't trust</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>any medium</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Number of respondents) (148) (143) (150) (125) (566) (266) (309)
As far as overall media use is concerned, there is a significant divergence between the youngest and the oldest age groups in the frequency with which they use the English-language media. Whereas 70% of those over age 55 always use English-language media for their news and information needs, only 47% of those under 24 years of age do. (See Table 3) This seems to suggest that the youth are more bilingual and thus more flexible in their choice of media, a surmise supported by the fact (see Table 1) that a larger percentage of those under 24 used French-language daily newspapers than do those in any other age group. Alternatively, it may suggest youths use the media much less regularly than their elders, perhaps because of a less fixed lifestyle. Other indications that those under 34—and under 24 in particular—use media least regularly can be found in the fact that only about 40% of those in these two age groups read The Gazette daily, as compared to 63% of those over 34 and 66% of those over 55. (See Table 4)

Table 3

FREQUENCY OF USE OF ENGLISH-LANGUAGE MEDIA (IN PERCENTAGES) ACCORDING TO AGE GROUPINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use English Media:</th>
<th>Under 25</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-54</th>
<th>Over 55</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Always</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Number of respondents) (161) (164) (174) (151) (650)
It can be said, therefore, that frequency of media use for news and information rises with age.

Table 4

FR\'QUENCY STAR AND GAZETTE WERE READ (IN PERCENTAGES) BY AGE GROUPINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read Gazette:</th>
<th>Under 24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-54</th>
<th>Over 55</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than once a week</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At least once a week</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Number of respondents) (158) (162) (171) (146) (637)

Read both Star and The Gazette daily

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Under 24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-54</th>
<th>Over 55</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Read neither at all</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Number of respondents) (152) (151) (165) (146) (614)

Although men and women tend to use the various media in roughly similar numbers, women seem to trust the electronic media, especially radio, much more than men do. (See Table 2)
Table 5

PATTERNS OF MEDIA USE AND TRUST (IN PERCENTAGES) ACCORDING TO LANGUAGE GROUPINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% using English media always for news</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who read The Gazette daily</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who use English dailies most for news</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who use French dailies most for news</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who use TV most for news</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who use radio most for news</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who trust dailies most for news</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who trust TV most for news</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who trust radio most for news</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% who trust no medium for news</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Number of respondents) (115) (361) (93) (570)
The explanation for this may have something to do with women's heavier exposure to daytime radio. (Radio is the only medium women use more frequently than men for news and information, according to this survey.)

In the particular context of Montreal's two cultures, it appears that francophones cross over to the English media much more frequently than vice versa. Fully 24% of the francophones surveyed said they always use English-language media for their news and information needs. (This result is corroborated by The Gazette's own circulation surveys, which indicate that 22% of The Gazette circulation goes to French-speaking homes.) Furthermore, 17% of the francophones in this survey said they use English-language dailies as their major source of news. Only 1% of anglophones said they use French-language dailies most often for news and information.

The pattern that emerges, therefore, does seem to give some credence to the claim by Quebec's francophone cultural nationalists that more francophones than anglophones are being assimilated into the "other" official culture. Furthermore, it can be seen from Table 5 that respondents in the "other" language category tend to follow the anglophone patterns of media usage. The one exception to this last statement is in the use and trust of electronic media. Those in the "other" group have the highest trust in television, and use and trust radio at about the same level as the francophone group. The implication seems to be that those who are least familiar with a language find the visual content of television an aid to comprehension, and thus, trust. Radio, on the other
SATISFACTION WITH THE GAZETTE'S NEWS COVERAGE  
(IN PERCENTAGES)  
ACCORDING TO EDUCATION LEVEL AND AGE GROUPINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>24-25</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-54</th>
<th>Over 55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school or less</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEGEP or commercial graduates</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University graduates</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% very satisfied with The Gazette
% not satisfied with The Gazette
% liking news coverage as it is
% wanting more news:
- international affairs
- national news
- local news
- news about French community
- business news
- sports news
- entertainments news
- news analysis and editorials

(Number of respondents) (246) (130) (242) (147) (157) (166) (146)
hand, requires greater concentration for comprehension, unless, of course, one is a native-speaker or fluent in the language. This may account for the much greater use and trust of radio by anglophones.

Finally, there is some indication that university graduates use radio and television less often, and newspapers more often, than those with less education. Similarly, they seem to trust newspapers more, and the electronic media less, than those with less education. Furthermore, university graduates tend to read other newspapers more frequently than those with less education.8

Respondents' Satisfaction with Media

In general, it can be said that there is a widespread belief that the English-language community is adequately served by all the media available to it. More than three-quarters of the respondents (78%) indicated some degree of satisfaction with the total amount of news and information available to them.

However, only 19% said the English-language community was very well served by its media and considerably more anglophones (19%) than francophones (9%) thought the English-language community was not well served at all.

Roughly the same levels of satisfaction were expressed overall about the news coverage of The Gazette, with anglophones again expressing more dissatisfaction than francophones (28% to 14%).

Despite the high degree of general satisfaction, it is interesting to note that when they were asked to list specific areas about which they did not get sufficient news, only 18% of the respondents said coverage was fine as it is.
The implication seems to be that while a strong majority find *The Gazette* a satisfactory newspaper, they are equally convinced that there is much room for improvement. This conclusion is further reinforced by the finding that fully 68% of the respondents believe *The Gazette* would be a better newspaper if it had direct English-language competition.

When we break down some of the above figures, we find that university graduates were the most dissatisfied with *The Gazette*'s news coverage. More than one-third of them (35%) said they were not satisfied, compared to the 16% of those with secondary education or less who were not satisfied. Similarly, only 8% of university graduates said they were very satisfied, compared to the 17% of those with secondary education or less who were very satisfied. And more university graduates (18%), in comparison to those with less education (14%), said they didn't think the English community was well served by the totality of its media outlets.

University graduates also led in the desire for more news in all categories except sports and entertainment. In particular, university graduates had a much higher desire than those with less education for news about international affairs and business and for more news analysis and editorials. (See Table 8)

By age breakdown, it can be seen that the highest degree of dissatisfaction was expressed by those between the ages of 25 and 54, especially when the desire for more news about individual subjects is taken into consideration. (See Table 9)

In general, women tended to be more satisfied with the news media than were men, and expressed more of a desire than men for more news only in the areas of entertainments, local affairs and
national affairs — though only marginally in each case.

In every category, anglophones expressed more of a desire for more news, with the biggest differences in the areas of national news, business news and analysis and editorials.

Therefore, if we can assume that those areas which were least mentioned in the desire for more news are the ones given best coverage, and vice versa, then it would appear that the strengths of The Gazette are decidedly in its sports, business and entertainments coverage. Conversely, its least satisfactory coverage is in international affairs and in news about the local French-language community.

Most significant, however, are the generally higher rates of desire for more news, in virtually all areas except sports, by university graduates and those in the 35-54 age group. When both the most highly educated and the most politically and socially active groups in our society are not getting the level of news they consider necessary, then it seems that the situation of a one-newspaper community is not serving our society well. The monopoly newspaper, almost by definition, must be an omnibus newspaper with a little of something for nearly every taste. The Gazette, it would seem, is successful in executing this approach to news marketing. But where the danger lies in this approach is in the fact that, in always seeking the widest possible readership, there is a tendency to channel public taste and standards to the average, without enough consideration for the needs of the above-average. And while it is true that a democracy is based on consensus — on the averaging out of tastes, needs, goals etc. — this consensus should emerge only after the presentation of diverse points of view, NOT before it. If we do not have, or create, the
conditions for a diverse presentation of ideas and news we are in danger of stagnating or, at least, of never progressing beyond the status quo.

What Happened After the Star Died

There is no doubt that the Star, when it was still publishing, was generally perceived to be a better newspaper than The Gazette.9

Three times as many people thought it was better than The Gazette of that time in reflecting the interests and concerns of the English-speaking community in Montreal. (It should be noted, however, that 39% of the respondents believe The Gazette has improved since the Star died. This should not be taken to mean that a monopoly improves the quality of a newspaper, however, since 68% believe The Gazette would be a better paper still if it had direct competition.) Furthermore, the Star reached 86% of the respondents, with 51% reading it daily; whereas The Gazette reached 64% of the respondents, with only 36% reading it daily.

Despite the belief that the better newspaper died, fully 90% of the respondents said they switched to The Gazette after the death of the Star. About 5% said they switched to some other newspaper and 5% said they stopped reading newspapers altogether.

Two conclusions emerge from this: One, there is a slight weakening of the newspaper reading habit when a newspaper dies; and two, out-of-town newspapers do not benefit from such a death. The public, it seems, prefers local newspapers.

There was, however, a sizeable increase in the use of radio and television as news sources, with about one-quarter of the respondents saying they now watch more television news and listen to more radio news.
While we cannot say this with certainty, it would seem that the increased use of radio and television probably came from the 20% of the respondents who used to read both the Star and The Gazette daily, and/or the 39% who said they used to read both newspapers at least occasionally. (These figures, by the way, correspond to the 18% who indicated they would buy another English-language newspaper daily in addition to The Gazette, if such a local paper were to become available, and the 36% who said they would buy it at least occasionally in addition to The Gazette.)

It would seem, therefore, that there is a hard core of dedicated newspaper readers who want and are willing to support at least two newspapers in the community. According to The Gazette's own figures, there was a 60% to 70% overlap in the circulation of the Star and The Gazette; i.e. as many as 90,000 to 100,000 people read both papers.

This was a situation that worked to the disadvantage of The Gazette since advertisers could reach nearly as many people by inserting ads in the dominant paper as they could by inserting them in both papers. When the Star went on strike, The Gazette got the ads it had long craved, especially the supermarket and classified ads, and managed to hold on to them even after the Star came back. It was the loss of these ads, rather than the lack of public support, which ended up killing the Star.

This, then, is the Catch-22 problem in newspaper economics today. The public wants and is willing to support a second newspaper. (Up to the end, the Star had more than 100,000 circulation.) But since the support for a second newspaper comes largely from overlapping readership, the people who really pay the bills — the advertisers — will not support a second paper.
Therefore, as long as the success of a newspaper is contingent on advertising support, the public will have to do without a second paper.

Still, there are all those readers who want a second paper. This suggests that a different economic and marketing strategy is required. Second papers cannot, and ought not, compete for overall market dominance to attract the advertisers. All they can hope to achieve is to dethrone the current "champion"—so that no net gain in newspapers results. By setting their sights on more modest goals—on more specialized segments of the market—they can pare their editorial and production requirements to the level where they might just succeed. Our survey, for instance, indicates that the university-educated "up-scale" market is least satisfied by an omnibus newspaper and may well be attracted by a paper catering to their expressed desire for more international news, more in-depth analysis and more insightful editorials. Le Devoir puts out just such a paper for the French market in this city and a similar English-language paper could well be a paying proposition, as well as satisfying the public's needs.

Newspaper Regulation

It is evident that nearly 500 years of struggle for freedom of the press have not been in vain. Public consciousness is deeply imbued with an understanding of the fundamental role a free press plays in a democratic society. There is a genuine reluctance to interfere in any way with the workings of the press. However, it is equally clear that there is a widespread concern about the present trends towards more concentration of ownership of our newspapers and about newspaper monopolies in our cities and towns. The difficulty many of the respondents had in taking a position is reflected in the high pro-
Absentee ownership --one of the ramifications of chain ownership--is considered the least problematical of these issues. Only about one-third (37%) of the respondents felt the outsider-owned newspapers cannot adequately reflect the concerns and interest of the community, though only 10% thought they could do it very well.

The fact that two companies now own most of our big-city dailies is perceived as much more of a danger, with nearly half (47%) seeing such a concentration of ownership as a clear threat to press freedom. Another 28% said this was "not much of a threat" and only 8% said this was no threat at all.

Even more of a danger is perceived as coming from the monopolies that newspapers have in one-newspaper towns and cities. More than half (55%) said monopolies adversely affect the quality of news and information, with only 11% saying monopolies improve news coverage. (And, of course, in the specific instance of The Gazette, 68% said it would be a better newspaper if it had direct English-language competition.)

But while there is considerable concern about these trends, there is no clear consensus about the need for government regulation of the conditions under which newspaper companies operate. Thus, slightly more people (46%) said there is no need for the government to regulate the industry than those who said there is a need (41%). However, these percentages can be reversed if we take, on the one hand, only those who are firmly opposed to controls (41%), and on the other, those who qualified their answer or wanted controls (46%). In any case, the undecided 13% could easily tip the balance either way.
A breakdown of the results shows that more men (46%) see a need for regulation than do women (37%); more university graduates (46%) support controls than those with less education (38%); more francophones (46%) support regulation than do anglophones (39%); and more from the age group under 34 (46%) support controls than those over 55 (31%). In every age group, those with university education support controls more than those with less education.

Since the younger and more educated groups provide the greatest support for controls, it is possible that this support will grow over the years, particularly as the public's knowledge of the issue increases.

Also, it should be noted that in every instance that a specific case or a specific regulation is mentioned, the support for regulation increases.

Thus, while only 41% supported regulation per se, 46% said there should be a law limiting the number of newspapers any one company can own. And the 46% who support such limits marginally outnumber the 45% who are opposed.

A much more dramatic example is provided by the support manifested for an independent commission or ombudsman to keep an eye on the press and to deal with complaints from the public. Fully 79% are in favor of such a body. This is certainly one area in which the government could act with nearly the full support of the public. That some government initiative may be required in this area is indicated by the fact that only 17% of the respondents were aware of the existing press council.
Table 7

SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF
THE NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY
(IN PERCENTAGES)
ACCORDING TO AGE GROUPINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>CEGEP etc.</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Overall</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, qualified</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, qualified</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Number of respondents) (252) (142) (254) (648)

SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF
THE NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY
(IN PERCENTAGES)
ACCORDING TO LEVEL OF EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Under 24</th>
<th>25-34</th>
<th>35-54</th>
<th>Over 55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, qualified</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, qualified</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Number of respondents) (159) (163) (174) (150)
Table 8
SUPPORT FOR GOVERNMENT REGULATION OF THE NEWSPAPER INDUSTRY (IN PERCENTAGES) BY LANGUAGE GROUPINGS AND BY SEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>French</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, qualified</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
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<tr>
<td>No, qualified</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Number of respondents) (127) (414) (106) (306) (344)

In other words, the Quebec Press Council is not at the moment performing a useful function as far as the public is concerned. A beefed-up, better-funded press council is required, one which would adopt a higher profile and do more to serve the public. To this end, it would not be inappropriate for the government to require that all media outlets be members of a press council, nor to set up funding mechanisms that would make the functioning of the resultant council meaningful.
Conclusion

Since shortly after World War I, there has been a world-wide trend to one-newspaper communities, a trend reflected in Canada by the fact that only five English-language communities and two French-language communities have separately-owned competing daily newspapers. The increase in monopoly newspapers cannot be attributed to lack of interest or support by the public; rather, it seems to have much more to do with the consolidation of markets by large newspaper chains. Most of the dailies that have died over the past 10 years had sizeable circulations, often much larger than those of papers still prospering in other markets. The sad fact is that public needs and support are not the crucial factors in the financial equations that the newspaper industry has evolved over the past century or so. Advertising volume is the key, and since advertisers gravitate to the largest newspapers it is inevitable --given the present financial arrangements and the high capital costs of starting up a newspaper --that the trend to monopoly newspapers will continue.

The Special Senate Committee on Mass Media warned us of this inevitability 11 years ago, and since then the trend to monopoly and concentration of ownership has accelerated. As a result of decisions announced virtually simultaneously in August, 1980, Thomson Newspapers Ltd. and Southam Inc. have ended up controlling more than 55 per cent of daily newspaper circulation in Canada, and this without now having to engage in face-to-face competition in any of their markets. One consequence was that on Sept. 3, 1980, a Royal Commission on Newspapers was established to investigate, among other things, "the degree to which the present situation in the newspaper industry has affected or might affect fulfilment of the newspaper industry's responsibilities to the public".
The results of the Concordia survey suggest that, for the time being at least, there is no clearcut consensus about the nature and exercise of these responsibilities. However, the overwhelming support for a press council or press ombudsman suggests there is a significant degree of concern about the extent to which the press is responsible to anyone, given its monopoly in most markets. A similar conclusion is warranted from the widespread belief that competition would improve the quality of the news in one-newspaper communities.

It may be surmised that the public—because it fears a loss of press freedom—has a great deal of difficulty in making up its mind on the issue of press regulations. The distinction between regulation of the business practices of newspapers and regulation of content does not appear to be universally understood, nor accepted. The latter is clearly an unacceptable solution to the problems with our press, but the former may be inevitable, even desirable, given the present trends towards concentration of ownership. The Kent Royal Commission on Newspapers has given a much-needed airing to these matters and its report will certainly contribute to the public's further understanding of the industry, if not to any immediate legislation.

Footnotes

1. The authors wish to acknowledge their debt to the students in the Journalism Program at Concordia University who carried out the telephone survey; and to Concordia and the Reader's Digest Foundation for providing the funding for the research.

2. For example, a series of interviews conducted by Concordia's Journalism Program with 150 community, political and social activists found that a majority believe the
anglophone community in Montreal would be much better served by two English-language daily newspapers. (*The Community and the News*, Concordia Journalism Program brief to the Royal Commission on Newspapers, Feb. 1981.)

3. This aspect of the survey was meant to provide hard data on public opinion concerning the issues of newspaper monopolies and concentration of ownership to which the Kent Royal Commission on Newspapers addressed itself.

4. As mentioned, the area of the survey covers only those parts of Metropolitan Montreal where English-speaking residents form a majority and where *The Gazette* (and formerly *The Star*) had about 90% of their circulation. According to *Gazette* circulation manager Bob Richardson (since then promoted to assistant to the publisher), the *Gazette* sells only about 25,000 of its 219,000 daily circulation east of Park Avenue. All subsequent references to *Gazette* circulation figures are based on data provided by Mr. Richardson. *Gazette* publisher Robert McConnell also confirmed to the authors that the results of this survey match those of marketing studies undertaken for *The Gazette* by private consultants.

5. This information is based on personal surveying experience by Prof. LeCavalier, as well as his knowledge of other surveys conducted by Prof. Maurice Pinard of McGill University, and by le Centre de Recherches sur l'Opinion Publique.

6. Copies of the complete questionnaire and responses are available from the Journalism Program, Concordia University, 1455 De Maisonneuve Blvd. W. Montreal, Quebec.
7. This was a somewhat surprising result in light of data such as Burns W. Roper's 14-year review of U.S. "Trends in Attitudes Toward Television and other Media" (1972). Roper found that from 1963 on, television has not only been the main source of news, but also the most credible. Either Canadian attitudes differ or there has been a significant recent shift—at least in one community—back to newspapers.

8. These conclusions are supported by the media survey commissioned by the Special Senate Committee on Mass Media and carried out by Martin Goldfarb Consultants in 1969. See Vol. III of the Senate report: Good, Bad, or Simply Inevitable?

9. It should be noted that the preference for The Star seems to have been a preference for the pre-strike Star. About 40,000 regular readers of The Star never went back to it after the strike (because The Star no longer had the major supermarket and department store ads and because many readers simply were satisfied with the new, improved Gazette).

10. The eight-month-long strike at The Star in 1978-79 was a major factor leading up to that newspaper's death. But it should be noted that up to the time of the strike, The Gazette was in a difficult financial position. What the strike settled in other words was which of the two dailies was eventually going to close down. The Star had every advantage and to put it bluntly, they simply blew it. (See David Yates' "FP Learns the Hard Way", Content, Nov. 1979. pp.8-11)

11. The Goldfarb survey 12 years ago found a similar ambiguity, insofar as about 50% of
the respondents then favoured some form of censorship for newspapers, but when the issue was put somewhat differently, only about 20% said the government should regulate newspapers. See Page 7, Vol. III of the Special Senate Committee Report.

12. The difficulty the Quebec Press Council faces is that with a limited budget of $150,000 and a permanent staff of five, it cannot easily enlarge the scope of its activities. (The Status of Women Council, by comparison, has a budget of $1.5 million and a permanent staff of 50; the Human Rights Commission has a budget of $1.7 million and a permanent staff of 60 and so on.) The Press Council does not act on its own initiative, but only responds to issues raised by the minority of citizens who know of its activities. See "Le Conseil de presse du Quebec", by Gerald LeBlanc in Antennes —No. 17, 1980.

13. See Part II, Chapter 4, Section 3 of the final report of the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems (The UNESCO MacBride Commission), 1979, which points out that "concentration is a world-wide problem". (Page 181)

14. Toronto, Calgary, Edmonton, St. John's and Winnipeg (since May, 1981) still have competition between separately owned English-language dailies; Montreal and Quebec City have such competition between French-language dailies. Other cities have two daily newspapers, but they are owned by one company; eg. Vancouver and Halifax.

15. The circulation of The Montreal Star when it closed was 114,349, according to Audit Bureau of Circulation figures for Sept. 1979. When The Telegram closed in Toronto
in 1971, its circulation was 242,612. See The Death of the Toronto Telegram by Jock Carroll (Pocket Books, Richmond Hill, Ont.) 1971. The Ottawa Journal and The Winnipeg Tribune (both closed in August, 1980) had circulations of 77,000 and 105,000 respectively. ("The Day the News Caught Fire", Maclean's, Sept. 8, 1980.)


17. On Aug. 27, 1980 --within a period of 11 hours--Thomson Newspapers Ltd. and Southam Inc. each closed a newspaper competing in the other's market, ending direct competition between these two chains. Southam closed The Winnipeg Tribune and sold the presses to Thomson, thereby giving Thomson's Winnipeg Free Press a clear monopoly in that city. Thomson closed The Ottawa Journal, leaving that market to Southam's Ottawa Citizen. Thomson also sold to Southam its one-third interest in The Gazette and its 50% holdings in Pacific Press in Vancouver, giving Southam clear dominance in these two cities. Previously, (June, 1980) Thomson had sold the Calgary Albertan to The Toronto Sun Publishing Corp., ending its competition with Southam in that city.

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