

# The Press and South Africa's Foreign Relations : An Events Analysis

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By using events data, the Afrikaans and English press has been compared for the comprehensiveness of their news coverage of South Africa's foreign relations. Events related to South Africa both as actor and target of foreign policy behaviour have been included. The findings show in broad terms that the Afrikaans press has been more comprehensive in reporting events where South Africa has been the actor. On the other hand, the English press has been far superior in their reporting events where South Africa has been the target of behaviour (external environment). These findings confirm the pluralistic nature of the press in South Africa, although some hegemonic features have been noticeable.

This paper is an offshoot of a larger project on South Africa's foreign relations using events data (see Van Wyk, 1988:42-65; Van Wyk, 1989). A multi-disciplinary approach has been followed.

The assumptions on which this analysis has been based are drawn primarily from the literature of International Relations, Political Communication and Media Studies. It must be stated clearly from the outset that this analysis is a case study of the media in South Africa. The data basis utilised covers only South African events.

The paper is organised in three parts. Part one consists of general notes on the nature of foreign policy and press coverage of foreign policy events. Then the South African case is analysed from which a number of broad proposals will be deduced. Part 2 focuses on methodology. Part 3 examines the results of the investigation and its consequences for South African foreign policy.

## Foreign Policy behaviour, the press and events data

Foreign policy can be broadly defined as the behaviour of the state's executive directed at other



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international actors. Foreign policy should be seen as a reciprocal or mutual process; a process of interaction or action and reaction. A behavioural definition of foreign policy avoids the vagueness of analyses based on foreign policy goals and the lack of information of policy analyses (Hermann, 1978:25-47).

Foreign policy, however, is not a diffused matter but relates to recognisable issue areas which can be defined as sets of problems regarded by policy-makers as closely interdependent and dealt with collectively (Keohane and Nye, 1977:64-65). To this should be added that issues can be regarded as differences over the allocation of values in the relations between international actors (Rosenau, 1966:18).

The relationship between the press and foreign policy making relates to two broad concerns. First a policy concern, i.e. the role of the press in shaping foreign policy-making as a pressure group

and/or source of information. In democratic societies press freedom is a cherished value. The press performs two vital functions in the foreign policy arena: 1) it informs decision-makers and shapes public opinion; and 2) it acts as watchdog in holding the government responsible for the maintenance of public accountability. (Elliott and Golding, 1974:115). In authoritarian states the press is either co-opted as part of the state's propaganda machinery or suppressed when a clash of interests occurs.

Information or intelligence is a crucial input in the foreign policy-making process. In modern societies the making of foreign policy decision, within a particular situation, will be strongly determined by the state's ability to gather and interpret relevant information. (Frankel, 1968:95-110). The bulk of pertinent information is gathered by bureaucrats (diplomats and other personnel) and politicians (MP's, parties) who scan printed matter, especially newspapers, scientific journals and other publications available to the public at large. (Feld, 1979:90). The other major source of foreign policy information is of a covert nature such as electronic tapping, paid informants and actions generally termed as spying. The latter source falls outside the scope of this study.

The second broad concern in the relations between the press and foreign policy is of an academic nature, which will be the primary focus of this paper. Students of foreign policy have frequently turned to newspapers as a source of the daily conduct of foreign policy. The collection of such foreign policy events in a behavioural/quantitative fashion has generated over 40 events data sets. (Vincent, 1983:162; see also Kegley, 1975:91-105).

Utilising secondary sources, like newspapers, has been inevitable since political science scholars, as a rule do not have access to primary sources like minutes of cabinet meetings and departmental files. Relying on secondary sources raise questions about the reliability of newspapers as a source of information. For example : In a study of the foreign policies of Israel and Egypt, Azar and his associates (1972:381) found that the New York Times Index was much more reliable than the Middle East Journal in reporting events. In contrast, a comparison of newspaper reporting on international crises in The New York Times and The Times (London) displays significant similarities in the escalation and decline of conflict in such crises. Absolute amounts of reported events differed,

however, in certain of the case studies (Hill and Fenn, 1974:163-186). The limited resources (finance, manpower) available to the events data analyst in South Africa preclude such comparisons. In compiling data sets, choosing the most comprehensive report on a particular event, rather than cross-newspaper comparisons, becomes inevitable. In conclusion, one should clearly state that policy concerns largely determine the environment in which the academic analysis of foreign policy events takes place.

The analysis of press-foreign policy linkages in South Africa has been constrained by a number of factors. The relevant literature is poorly endowed. There is the sole contribution of Geldenhuys (1984: 182-192), although Mulder (1981:69-90) and St Leger (1981) also made contributions with some bearing to the problem under investigation. The analysis below is based on Geldenhuys (1984), unless indicated otherwise. The choice of a suitable theory of analysis is another problem. There is the pluralist theory, subscribing to the view that societal cleavages have produced the "Afrikaans" press which supports the substance of state policies and the "English" press which tend to oppose them. One can hardly speak of a black press in South Africa since all newspapers are owned by white-controlled business. Then there is the hegemonic theory (based on marxist analysis) which maintains that both the Afrikaans and English media operate within the dominant ideology and political economy for maintenance of the status quo (see Tomaselli and Tomaselli, 1981).

The structure of the data set applied favours the pluralist approach, i.e. to compare the Afrikaans and English press for comprehensiveness of news reporting on foreign policy events. If noticeable differences are absent, and one assumes that ideological intent influences news coverage, explanation in terms of the hegemonic theory becomes credible.

The task of news reporting in South Africa is a hazardous endeavour due to excessive state censorship (see Critical Arts Vol 2(3)).

As far as South Africa's foreign policy is concerned the press is particularly curtailed by law in reporting on military aspects of foreign relations, activities in the nuclear field and procurement of petroleum products (Geldenhuys, 1984:187). International rejection of apartheid has led to the enforced isolation of South Africa in many areas. One of the state's reactions was to curb the flow of in-

formation about international relations, notably diplomatic meetings, arms transfers and the effect of sanctions (see Van Wyk, 1988:63-89).

Given the extent of censorship, the South African state's response to the media fits the authoritarian model. The Afrikaans press has been largely co-opted. In fact the Afrikaans press is largely a product of Afrikaner nationalism and adheres to the basic tenets of governmental policy. The Afrikaans press has also acted as socialisation agent for the state by preparing, for example, the white public for domestic effects of changes in South Africa's foreign policy, notably the stationing of black diplomats in white residential areas. On occasions the state has favoured the Afrikaans press with privileged information about foreign policy. *Die Burger*, for instance, was better informed than any other South African newspaper about South Africa's military intervention in Angola 1975. The suggestion has also been made that the State provided sensitive information on the Namibian settlement (involving the Western contact group) to the Afrikaans press whenever there was an unfavourable turn of events for the South African government.

The English press, in contrast, persistently objects to the harmful effects of apartheid on the South African society. To paraphrase Potter, as quoted in Geldenhuys (1984:183), they have kept the vocabulary of democracy and the concept and fact of dissent alive.

The English press accepts the responsibility of monitoring the public accountability of the state. The exposure of the information scandal should be seen in this light. Despite this apparent success, the English press is virtually impotent in influencing government policy and the functioning of the state apparatus.

These activities have been curtailed by state censorship, the emergency regulations, as outlined above, and state repression, particularly the banning of newspapers and the detention of journalists. (see in particular Cooper et al., 1987/88:817-840).

State coercion (expressed by the Steyn commission) is based on the allegation, as far as foreign policy is concerned, that the "anti-government" and "negative reporting" of the English press have created a distorted image of South Africa abroad.

The contrasting foreign policy perceptions of the Afrikaans and English press is clearly illustrated by comparing their editorial comments on eight major foreign policy issues i.e. the Portuguese coup d'état (1974); the Vorster-Kaunda summit meeting at Vic-

toria Falls (1975); South Africa's military intervention in Angola (1975/6); the Vorster-Kissinger summit meetings (1976); the Vorster-Mondale talks (1977); the UN imposition of a mandatory arms embargo against South Africa (1977); the internal elections in Namibia (1978) and the Mugabe victory in Zimbabwe (1980). In broad terms the Afrikaans Press supported state foreign policy on these issues. The English press was much more critical and argued that changes in the region and external pressure against South Africa should serve as an admonition that only the scrapping of apartheid would secure South Africa's return to international relations in the acceptable sense of the word.

This background conveys the notion that news coverage of foreign policy events by the two press groupings will differ. Neither the above arguments nor the available literature tell us much about these differences vis-a-vis our research questions, i.e. which states does South Africa conduct international relations with? What is the nature of foreign policy behaviour? Which issues are relevant in foreign relations? The following proposals should be seen as an heuristic exercise or provocative questions rather than testable hypotheses.

The first set of proposals concern the foreign policy behaviour of South Africa. Mulder's study (1981) established that Afrikaans and English newspapers differ little in their news reporting of foreign countries. No comparable data on foreign events are available.

The way of least resistance, not substantiated by known facts, is that Mulder's findings might be true for foreign policy behaviour as well. Given the Afrikaans press support of the state's foreign policy, it is expected that they will emphasise the successes and positive aspects of foreign policy while the English press might emphasise the failures and negative aspects (Geldenhuys, 1984:191).

The second set of proposals concerns the external environment.

The English press coverage of events where South Africa is the target — other international actors' behaviour directed at South Africa — will be more extensive than that of the Afrikaans press.

The reasons for this proposal are 1) the English press has a superior network of foreign correspondents and 2) language and a lack of historical ties inhibit the Afrikaans press from developing such a network. This not only concerns the volume of events but also the variety of international actors as well as the scope of behaviour.

The third set of proposals concerns issue areas. Security issues have dominated South Africa's foreign relations since the collapse of the Portuguese empire in Africa. Namibia and apartheid has endured as salient foreign policy issues for the past three decades (see Van Wyk, 1988:53-55). Whether one press grouping has been more comprehensive than the other in reporting on these issues has not yet been the focus of scholarly investigations. The findings of this paper should be seen at best as an effort to provide quantitative data and suggest research questions for future investigations.

## Methodology

Data was drawn from the South African Foreign Events Data (SAFED) set. SAFED events were taken from newspaper clippings compiled by the Institute for Contemporary History at the University of the Orange Free State. The data set covers the period 1977-88 and contains more than 16,000 events. A foreign policy event can be described as a simple declarative sentence (as reported in a newspaper) on a state's activities, aimed at influencing the behaviour of the external recipient. "Activity" can be described as official, non-routine, deliberate, overt actions of the government's executive directed at external actors (McGowan, 1975: 52-54). In operational form a foreign policy event is reconstructed by scanning news coverage in newspapers. Sometimes an event is taken entirely from one paper but in many cases various reports are necessary to reconstruct an event. Taken over a lengthy period (12 years in this case) generalisations over the comprehensiveness of news coverage is justifiable. The methodology describing the compilation of SAFED has been outlined in detail elsewhere (Van Wyk, 1988:43-44; Van Wyk 1987).

The concepts central to the propositions in the previous section requires elucidation, in terms of definition and operationalisation, at this stage. The Afrikaans press refers to those newspapers that publish in Afrikaans and/or owned by Afrikaans companies, notably Perskor and Nasionale Pers. These papers are *Beeld*, *Die Burger*, *Hoofstad* (terminated 19-02-1983), *Oggendblad* (terminated 19-02-1983), *Oosterlig*, *Rapport*, *Financial Gazette* (terminated 1979), *Tempo*, *Die Transvaler*, *Die Vaderland*, *Die Volksblad*, *The Citizen*, *City Press*, *Finansies & Tegniek*, *Volkstem* (terminated October

1984), *Volkshandel*, *Die Afrikaner*, *Suidwes Afrikaner* (terminated), *Die Suidwester*, *Die Republikein*. The English press includes those papers published in English and/or owned by the Argus Group of Companies and Times Media Ltd. (formerly SAAN), such as : *The Argus*, *Cape Herald*, *The Cape Times*, *Daily Dispatch*, *The Daily News*, *Eastern Province Herald*, *Evening Post*, *The Friend* (terminated 31-07-1985), *The Natal Mercury*, *The Natal Witness*, *Pretoria News*, *Rand Daily Mail* (terminated 30-04-1985), *The Star*, *Sunday Express* (terminated 24-03-1985), *Sunday Times*, *Sunday Tribune*, *Weekend Post*, *The World* (terminated 19-10-1977), *Weekend Argus*, *Weekend World* (terminated 19-10-1977), *Post* (terminated 1980), *Sowetan*, *Golden City Press* (terminated), *Sowetan Sunday Mirror* (terminated 28-07-1985), *Post Natal*, *The Sunday Star*, *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, *Financial Mail* and *Business Day*.

The interactive nature of foreign relations prescribe that South Africa should be dealt with in this regard both as an actor and target. Actor in this sense means South African foreign policy behaviour aimed at international actors. Target means the behaviour of international actors targeted at South Africa. In operational form 163 states and 19 non-state actors have been included as actors/targets. The non-state actors are intergovernmental organisations (IGO's) and other non-state actors, notably liberation movements. Much of the dynamics of South Africa's international relations will be lost by excluding such non-state actors.

Foreign policy behaviour refer, as indicated above, to tangible actions (verbal and physical) of the state executive directed at identifiable actors in the external environment. The WEIS scale has been used to operationalise foreign policy behaviour. WEIS consists of twenty-two categories, i.e. yield, comment, consult, approve, promise, grant, reward, agree, request, propose, reject, accuse, protest, deny, demand, warn, threaten, demonstrate, reduce relations, expel, seize and force, (see McClelland and Haggard, 1969:711-723).

McGowan's (1978) conceptualisation and operationalisation of five issue areas has been utilised, i.e. security, status, territory, human resources and non-human (economic) resources. The other issue area which is unique to South African foreign policy has also been included, i.e. apartheid and Namibia. Apartheid refers to the state's official ideology (see Lipton, 1985:14-15). In operational form

it refers to the influence of apartheid on South Africa's foreign relations, notably matters related to homelands, racial separation and discrimination, state action to justify and implement apartheid, apartheid institutions on national, regional and local levels, and ANC action against regime targets (Van Wyk, 1985:14-150. The Namibia issue refers to various efforts to solve this problem (see Du Pisani, 1986:Ch 10). In operational form this issue refers to international diplomatic initiatives (i.e. Resolution 435); co-opted government structures set up by South Africa, the war between SADF and SWAPO, the posturing of parties involved, and the status of Walvis Bay (Van Wyk, 1987:28).

## Findings

For the purposes of analysis a 10% variance will be regarded as a significant difference. Targets of South Africa's foreign policy behaviour and actors targeting behaviour at South Africa are summarised in Tables 1A and 1B respectively. Only actors/targets involving at least 50 events have been included.

**TABLE 1 A**

**Targets of South Africa's Foreign policy behaviour**

	Afrikaans Press		English Press	
	% Freq.	(#)	% Freq.	(#)
ANC	32,7	(33)	67,3	(68)
Angola	42,3	(157)	57,7	(214)
Botswana	44,2	(57)	55,8	(72)
Britain	49,7	(146)	50,3	(148)
Cuba	23,5	(35)	76,5	(114)
France	61,8	(47)	38,2	(29)
Germany, Fed.Rep.	54,5	(36)	45,5	(30)
Lesotho	59,0	(167)	41,0	(116)
Mozambique	51,8	(174)	48,2	(162)
Transitional Govt.				
Namibia	79,1	(34)	20,9	(9)
Renamo	34,8	(23)	65,2	(43)
SWAPO	70,5	(349)	29,5	(146)
Swaziland	50,0	(32)	50,0	(32)
United Nations	57,2	(250)	42,8	(187)
USA	50,3	(395)	49,7	(391)
USSR	55,6	(69)	44,4	(55)
Zimbabwe	53,9	(179)	46,1	(153)

**TABLE 1 B**

**Actors targeting behaviour at South Africa**

	Afrikaans Press		English Press	
ANC	28,4	(27)	71,6	(68)
Angola	45,0	(220)	55,0	(269)
Anti-apartheid Movement	41,4	(55)	58,6	(78)
Australia	37,0	(60)	63,0	(102)
Botswana	48,1	(161)	51,0	(174)
Britain	44,8	(342)	55,2	(422)
Canada	50,0	(45)	50,0	(45)
Commonwealth	43,2	(41)	56,8	(54)
Cuba	22,5	(29)	77,5	(100)
European Community	54,1	(40)	45,9	(34)
France	51,3	(101)	48,7	(96)
Germany, Fed.Rep.	56,4	(102)	43,6	(79)
India	34,0	(17)	66,0	(33)
Israel	43,6	(44)	56,4	(57)
Kenya	28,6	(16)	71,4	(40)
Lesotho	46,2	(218)	53,8	(254)
Mozambique	43,2	(201)	56,8	(264)
Transitional Govt.				
Namibia	71,7	(33)	28,3	(13)
Netherlands	57,4	(62)	42,6	(46)
New Zealand	46,9	(23)	53,1	(26)
Nigeria	46,7	(42)	53,3	(48)
OAU	43,3	(55)	56,7	(72)
Portugal	41,1	(23)	58,9	(33)
SWAPO	59,4	(306)	40,6	(209)
Swaziland	46,1	(47)	53,9	(55)
Tanzania	56,0	(47)	44,0	(37)
UNITA	37,3	(28)	62,7	(47)
United Nations	53,0	(296)	47,0	(262)
USA	47,4	(773)	52,6	(857)
USSR	47,8	(85)	52,2	(93)
Zambia	53,7	(188)	46,3	(162)
Zimbabwe	49,7	(378)	50,3	(383)

Press comprehensiveness regarding the targets of South Africa's foreign policy, produced mixed results. The English Press reported more events about the ANC, Angola, Botswana, Cuba and Renamo. The Afrikaans Press reported more events about SWAPO, the transition (DTA) government in Namibia (previously Multi-party Conference, Turnhalle), the UN and USSR. Reporting

about Britain, Swaziland, USA, Mozambique, Zimbabwe and the FDR did not differ significantly. No discernable pattern relating to international, regional or ideological groupings have been identified. One outstanding feature of the findings has been the disparities vis-a-vis SWAPO, RENAMO and the Transitional Government in Namibia. From a perspective of comprehensiveness, 79,1% of events on the Transitional government in Namibia and 70,5% of events on SWAPO were drawn from the Afrikaans press. Given the co-opted role of the Afrikaans press as a propaganda arm of the state, they vigorously supported the DTA-alliance and commented adversely upon SWAPO as a "marxist front organisation". One should also add that until the recent establishment of The Namibian, Afrikaans newspapers dominated the local press scene in Namibia. Most of the events on RENAMO (65,2%) have been drawn from the English press.

The reciprocal side of foreign relations confirms the postulated proposal that the English press reported more comprehensively on the behaviour of international actors targeting at South Africa.

In simple terms, the English press presented a more comprehensive picture of South Africa's external environment. On the bilateral level the English press were more comprehensive about 15 actors: ANC, Angola, the Anti-apartheid Movement, Australia, Britain, the Commonwealth, India, Israel, Kenya, Mozambique, the Organisation for African Unity, Portugal, SWAPO, UNITA, and the United States of America. Only with events related to four actors (West Germany, the Transitional Government in Namibia, the Netherlands and Tanzania), did the Afrikaans press offer more comprehensive coverage. With 13 actors coverage in both press groupings has been equipollent. They are Botswana, Canada, Cuba, the European Community, France, Lesotho, New Zealand, Nigeria, Swaziland, the United Nations, USSR, Zambia and Zimbabwe. It is also noticeable that press coverage of actions by the ANC and SWAPO against South Africa are far superior in the English press. This confirms the arguments raised above that the English press is far more willing than the Afrikaans press to raise the internationalisation of the South African regime's domestic and regional legitimacy crises.

The second set of proposals relates to foreign policy behaviour.

As a first run the 22 point WEIS scale was collapsed into four broad types of behaviour i.e., ver-

bal and physical co-operation as well as verbal and physical conflict. The two press groupings were then compared for comprehensiveness in cases where South Africa has been the actor and target of foreign relations.

**TABLE 2 A**

<b>Co-operative and conflictual behaviour — South Africa as actor</b>			
	<b>Afrikaans Press</b>		<b>English Press</b>
Verbal			
Co-operation	52,1 (959)		47,9 (882)
Physical			
Co-operation	52,8 (206)		47,2 (184)
Verbal Conflict	54,0 (1040)		46,0 (885)
Physical Conflict	55,9 (236)		44,1 (186)

**TABLE 2 B**

<b>Co-operative and conflictual behaviour — South Africa as target</b>			
	<b>Afrikaans Press</b>		<b>English Press</b>
Verbal			
Co-operation	47,8 (1359)		52,2 (1484)
Physical			
Co-operation	47,4 (218)		52,6 (242)
Verbal Conflict	47,9 (2512)		52,1 (2733)
Physical Conflict	48,5 (517)		51,5 (548)

In cases where South Africa has been the actor, the only salient disparity concerns physical conflict, where the Afrikaans press leads the race for comprehensiveness. Since the mid-seventies, South Africa's regional foreign policy has been characterised by a greater willingness to use military means to achieve foreign policy goals (see Callaghy, 1983; Davies and O'Meara, 1985: 183-211). Conclusions at this stage will be premature. For further investigation two questions can be posed: Does the Afrikaans press concentrate on the successes and necessity of SADF action?: Does the English press regard such military coercion in the region as disruptive and based on protecting a minority regime rather than valid threat

assessment?

In cases where South Africa has been the target, minor differences in coverage by the two press groups has been the norm. In terms of volume of events, the general pattern of greater comprehensiveness by the English press persisted.

Using the WEIS scale proved to be a much more productive avenue. The nuances of foreign policy behaviour clearly illustrates a number of differences between the two press groupings.

**TABLE 3 A**

**WEIS behavioural scale:  
South Africa as actor**

	Afrikaans Press		English Press	
Yield	44,7	(17)	55,3	(21)
Comment	55,6	(686)	44,4	(547)
Consult	46,1	(354)	53,9	(414)
Approve	62,1	(110)	37,9	(67)
Promise	57,8	(63)	42,2	(46)
Grant	65,6	(61)	34,4	(32)
Reward	53,3	(32)	46,7	(28)
Agree	43,2	(73)	56,8	(96)
Request	56,5	(83)	43,5	(64)
Propose	54,7	(58)	45,3	(48)
Reject	59,7	(95)	40,3	(64)
Accuse	51,0	(252)	49,0	(242)
Protest	55,6	(50)	44,4	(40)
Deny	49,8	(128)	50,2	(129)
Demand	64,0	(32)	36,0	(18)
Warn	56,0	(130)	44,0	(102)
Threaten	54,9	(28)	45,1	(23)
Demonstrate	52,0	(13)	48,0	(12)
Reduce				
Relations	53,6	(15)	46,4	(13)
Expel	63,2	(12)	36,8	(7)
Seize	57,1	(16)	42,7	(12)
Force	4,3	(133)	45,7	(112)

WEIS-type behaviour, where South Africa has been the actor, clearly shows that all conflict categories (from reject to force) received more attention from the Afrikaans than the English press. Clearly the Afrikaans press's sympathies lie with the vigorous and often belligerent behaviour which the South African state has directed at an external environment characterised by increasing hostility. Coverage of co-operative events (yield to propose)

**TABLE 3 B**

**WEIS behavioural scale:  
South Africa as target**

	Afrikaans Press		English Press	
Yield	41,3	(31)	58,7	(44)
Comment	47,2	(1138)	52,8	(1274)
Consult	42,0	(348)	58,0	(481)
Approve	55,7	(147)	44,3	(117)
Promise	47,7	(95)	52,3	(104)
Grant	53,5	(83)	46,5	(72)
Reward	33,3	(21)	66,7	(42)
Agree	45,7	(95)	54,3	(113)
Request	54,3	(221)	45,7	(186)
Propose	40,2	(235)	59,8	(349)
Reject	50,7	(203)	49,2	(197)
Accuse	49,5	(888)	50,5	(906)
Protest	46,1	(123)	53,9	(144)
Deny	44,7	(76)	55,3	(94)
Demand	56,1	(125)	43,9	(98)
Warn	50,5	(160)	49,5	(157)
Threaten	49,5	(146)	50,5	(149)
Demonstrate	53,5	(131)	46,5	(114)
Reduce				
Relations	47,7	(133)	52,3	(146)
Expel	42,9	(21)	57,1	(28)
Seize	40,0	(18)	60,0	(27)
Force	50,3	(168)	49,7	(166)

did not yield as definite a pattern as the conflictual categories.

Looking at events where South Africa has been the target, the superiority of news coverage of the external environment by the English press is once again in evidence. The English press clearly portrays that the state's insistence on a hostile and uncompromising external environment is exaggerated, given the number of compromising events emanating from the external environment such as yields (admittance of mistakes), consultation, approvals and rewards. One gains the impression that the South African state's intransigence must take much of the blame for the country's poor international standing. On the conflict side the English press has been more extensive in its coverage of actions aiming at isolating the country, notably expulsions and seizures.

Nonetheless, in 13 of the 22 categories press coverage has been more similar than different in

terms of comprehensiveness i.e., comment, promise, grant, agree, request, reject, accuse, protest, warn, threaten, demonstrate, reduction of relations and force. Whether this pattern can be attributed to journalistic professionalism (despite ideological differences) or hegemonic class interests, remains a matter of further investigation. The third set of proposals relates to foreign policy issues.

**TABLE 4 A**

**Foreign policy issues:  
South Africa as actor**

	<b>Afrikaans Press</b>	<b>English Press</b>
Security	51,0 (1243)	49,0 (1196)
Territorial	51,9 (83)	48,1 (77)
Status	56,5 (786)	43,5 (604)
Human		
Resources	58,2 (212)	41,8 (152)
Non-Human		
(Eco.) Resources	52,0 (117)	48,0 (108)
Apartheid	51,0 (408)	49,0 (392)
Namibia	55,0 (880)	45,0 (720)

**TABLE 4 B**

**Foreign policy issues:  
South Africa as target**

	<b>Afrikaans Press</b>	<b>English Press</b>
Security	47,4 (2068)	52,6 (2294)
Territorial	53,5 (167)	46,5 (145)
Status	50,7 (1535)	49,3 (1495)
Human		
Resources	45,1 (585)	54,9 (713)
Non-Human		
(Eco.) Resources	41,1 (251)	58,9 (360)
Apartheid	48,3 (861)	51,3 (925)
Namibia	54,5 (1801)	45,5 (1503)

One is struck by the dominance of the security issue both where South Africa is actor and target of behaviour. This underlines the crisis caused by the apartheid regime's lack of legitimacy. (See Van Wyk, 1988:54).

The Afrikaans press has been more comprehensive in their reporting of issue related behaviour on the part of South Africa. On three issues — sta-

tus, human resources and Namibia — the difference in favour of the Afrikaans press is significant. The findings on status and Namibian issues tie in well with the discussion of the targets of South Africa's foreign policy behaviour. The Afrikaans press's close links with the state and dominance of the newspaper scene in Namibia most probably account for their dominant news coverage. Also a settlement of the Namibian issue (status) to the disadvantage of SWAPO has been a common concern of the apartheid state and the Afrikaans press. Even the tri-partite agreement on the implementation of Resolution 435 between South Africa, Angola and Cuba excluded SWAPO as a signatory to the agreement. When armed SWAPO combatants crossed into Namibia in late March 1989 in breach of the cease-fire agreement (Geneva Protocol of 5 August 1988) they justified their position on three grounds : (1) they did not participate in the negotiations and did not sign the Geneva Protocol; they were not bound by an instrument to which they were no party; (2) Resolution 435 anticipated that there would be SWAPO forces inside Namibia at the time of the cease-fire confined to bases within the country under UNTAG supervision; and (3) the combatants in question did not cross the border, they were already inside Namibia. (Lawyers' Committee : April 18, 1989).

In matters related to South Africa as a target, comprehensive reporting on issues produced significant discrepancies i.e., economic issues, Namibia and human resources. The Afrikaans press has been more comprehensive on Namibia. The arguments advanced above should suffice. The English press has been more sensitive to the international political economy. The English press's structural ties with the business community, and in effect the world capitalist system, reveal a concern about the effects of international isolation (i.e. sanctions) on the South African economy. The poor exchange rate of the Rand is a further alarming concern of the English press. In the Afrikaans community — of which the Afrikaans press forms part — a more defiant attitude to international pressure is recognisable. The state, aided and abetted by the Afrikaans press, has exploited the propaganda potential of such international punitive actions; given the white public's negative view of the outside world. It is easy for the state to convince this public that the deprivation caused by sanctions will be a benefit for the South African so-

ciety. Finally, the discrepancies regarding human resources issues are of interest. The Afrikaans press has been more comprehensive on South Africa as an actor while the English press dominates reporting on the external environment.

Human resources refer to human rights and human interaction, particularly matters such as tourism, culture, education, exchange schemes, sport, information, forced removals, refugees, banning, discrimination, morals and so forth (Van Wyk, 1987:25). These broad social-cultural areas are prime targets of the international isolation campaign against South Africa. (See Geldenhuys, 1985.) The difference in comprehension is most probably explainable in terms of the ideological positions of the two press groupings. The Afrikaans press reasons that international punitive measures are unfair and uncalled for, while the English press argues that such exclusions are not desirable but the South African state has itself to blame due to its policies of racial discrimination.

Further correlation with patterns of co-operative and conflictual behaviour will be required to test this statement.

## Conclusions

This study measured comprehensiveness of foreign policy events as reported in the South African press. The Afrikaans and English press were compared on relations, behaviour and issues. In all three instances the reciprocity of foreign relations were considered. The findings show that:

- (1) Reporting on the targets of South Africa's foreign policy behaviour did not produce explainable patterns, although the Afrikaans press's reporting on Namibia was more comprehensive.
- (2) On behaviour directed at South Africa (external environment) the English press was more comprehensive both in volume and scope of actors.
- (3) The Afrikaans press was more comprehensive than the English press on South Africa's foreign actions but the opposite was true for the external environment.
- (4) On issues the Afrikaans press was more comprehensive vis-a-vis status, human resources and Namibia in cases initiated by South Africa. On the external environment, the English

press was more comprehensive on economic and human resources issues but the Afrikaans press was superior on Namibia.

The above findings have some implications related to the sources of foreign policy-making. Geldenhuys (1984:64-67) and Gouws (1985:43-56) have shown that the Afrikaans press has much more credibility for National Party politicians than the English press. It is evident that foreign policy decision-making relies on many sources of information and that only politicians in executive roles can influence decision-making. But given the apartheid state's myopic and skewed perception of the external environment, (i.e. total onslaught) it is in the country's interest that decision-makers should be as well-informed as possible. The findings of this study point clearly that the Afrikaans press covers the outside world relations with South Africa rather poorly.

It is imperative, if South Africa desires escape from its pariah status, a sound knowledge and information basis of the world community is essential. Only when these insights have been internalised will the rulers of apartheid realise that a return to international interaction, in the accepted sense of the word, necessitate the total abolition of apartheid and minority rule.

In conclusion, one can ask: Are the above findings new knowledge or merely "general knowledge" cloaked in academic jargon? Empirical analysis of press reporting on South Africa's foreign relations has not been subjected to quantitative methodology before. The knowledgeable observer (say a newspaper editor) might argue that academics waste their time to prove what practitioners already know. Given the ideological commitment of the mainline Afrikaans newspapers, one might counterargue that the compatibility between knowledge and behaviour (say editorial policy) is unlikely under such constraints. Hopefully an article of this nature will address a larger audience, including decision-makers. In such a case, the task of the social scientist is to prove what might be regarded as general knowledge in certain circles. The law of evidence (like events data) is an essential tool to prove or disprove conventional understanding of reality, particularly in this society where logic has been undermined by forty years of apartheid rule.

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