

# DOGAĐAJI

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MEĐUNARODNA RADIONICA ZA STUDENTE  
NOVINARSTVA SVEUČILIŠTA U DUBROVNIKU I  
PODGORICI

## Globalizacija ili lokalizacija medija?

Suvremeni medijski razvojni smjer je globalizacija. Ali, što se događa s lokalnim medijima? Jesu li nestali pred snažnim naletom svjetskih globalnih medijskih korporacija, transformirali se ili su se prilagodili novim uvjetima?

To je bila tema prve međunarodne radionice za studente novinarstva Sveučilišta u Dubrovniku i Podgorici, koja se održavala od 11. do 13. svibnja 2007. godine u bokeljskom ljetovalištu Prčanj.

Radionicu je sponzoriralo Sveučilište Indiana, i to na poticaj i prijedlog prof. dr. Sherry Ricchiardi. Namjera i želja je da to postane tradicionalni susret studenata i profesora novinarstva iz dvije susjedne zemlje.

Sudionici radionice bili su prof. dr. Sherry Ricchiardi, Sveučilište Indiana; Frank Folwell, urednik USA Today; prof. dr. Stjepan Malović i doc. dr. Gordana Vilović sa Sveučilišta u Dubrovniku; mr. Nataša Ružić, Univerzitet u Podgorici te po pet studenata iz Dubrovnika i Podgorice.

Predstavljene su sljedeće teme:

Prof. dr. Sherry Ricchiardi: "Utječu li mediji SAD na svijet?"

Prof. dr. Stjepan Malović: "Utjecaj globalnih medija na lokalne"

Doc. dr. Gordana Vilović: "Etički aspekti globalizacije medija"

Studenti su analizirali medije koji obavještavaju o zbivanjima u Dubrovniku i Podgorici te su te vijesti uspoređivali s objavama na

globalnim medijima, poput CNN-a, BBC-ja, te su posebnu pozornost posvetili saznanjima koje konzumenti medija stječu o svijetu danas.

Uredništvo *MediAnala* objavljuje dio tekstova koji su izneseni na radionici u Prčnju.

Druga radionica održat će se početkom svibnja 2008., također u Prčnju.

*Sherry Ricciardi\**

## Foreign News Shrinks in Era of Globalization

### Sažetak

Samo su vrhunske novinarske organizacije poput the New York Times, Washington Post, National Public Radio, The Associated Press te pregršt drugih, zadržale čvrstu mrežu međunarodnih dopisnika koji djeluju u uredima širom svijeta. Već je postala tradicija da su američki novinari ozbiljno preuzeli ulogu globalnih psućuvara, a posebice ako su vijesti povezane s povredom ljudskih prava ili političkim prevratom. Koje su posljedice povlačenja s globalne novinske fronte, ne samo za američku javnost već i za svjetsku? Prema nekim nalazima, većina Amerikanaca jednostavno nije bila uključena u događaje koji su se događali izvan njihovih granica, osim ako oni nisu u direktnoj vezi s njihovom domovinom. Urednici su na ovo počeli gledati kao izvrsnu priliku da opravdaju smanjenje opsega pokrivenosti iz inozemstva, tvrdeći da čitatelji i gledatelji žele naglasak na domaće vijesti – na priče koje su izravno povezane s njihovom lokalnom zajednicom.

**Ključne riječi:** novinarstvo, globalizacija, svjetski događaji, lokalne vijesti

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That was the headline for a Los Angeles Times story on September 27, 2001. Media critic David Shaw noted that the coverage of international news by the U.S. media had declined significantly in recent years in response to corporate demands for higher profits and an increasingly fragmented audience.

“Having decided that readers and viewers in post-Cold War America cared more about celebrities, scandals and local news, newspaper editors and TV news executives have reduced the space and time devoted to foreign coverage by 70% to 80% during the past 15 to 20 years,” Shaw wrote at the time.

His column, published six years ago, was prophetic.

In January 2007, the Boston Globe, a newspaper renowned for its international reporting, announced that it would close the last three of its foreign bureaus in an effort to trim costs. The Baltimore Sun and New York Newsday, both Pulitzer Prize winners for international reporting, also shut down foreign operations this year.

In a memo to his staff, Boston Globe editor Martin Baron called the paper’s foreign coverage a “point of special pride in our newsroom.” But ultimately, he said, Globe management was guided to close the bureaus by the principle to “secure the resources required for local coverage and for journalism that has more direct impact on our readers.”

The cutback on international news continues to be a disturbing trend for the American media, especially in light of what is going on in the world today.

America is at war on two fronts, Afghanistan and Iraq; there is great upheaval in the Middle East, including a stand off with Iran over nuclear build up. America and Russia are at odds over U. S. plans to deploy an anti-missile shield in Europe. There is genocide in Sudan, a killing field in Congo, and Zimbabwe hovers on the brink of disaster. China, emerging as a world super power, has close ties to some of the world’s worst rogue governments, including North Korea.

How could prestigious newspapers like the Boston Globe, Baltimore Sun and Newsday pull the plug on foreign coverage at a time like this?

Beginning in the late 1970s after the Vietnam War ended and picking up steam into the 1990s, many news executives decided that Americans weren’t interested in international news. Instead, there was a

growing emphasis on the celebrity culture, soap opera type scandals and community news.

Only top tier news organizations, such as the New York Times, Washington Post, National Public Radio, The Associated Press and a handful of others, maintained a strong network of international correspondents operating in bureaus around the world.

Traditionally, American journalists have taken their role as global watchdogs seriously, especially as it related to human rights abuses and political upheaval. What are the consequences of pulling back from global news front, not just for the American public, but also for the world at large?

### **Study Shows Public's Indifference**

In a 1995 content analysis titled "International News Coverage Fits Public Ameri-Centric Mood" conducted by the PEW Research Center for the People and the Press, analysts reached a disturbing conclusion. The study suggested that the way the media covered international news was doing little to change the America public's indifference or concern about world events and foreign policy.

According to the findings, the majority of Americans simply were not tuned in to events beyond their borders unless they had a direct impact on their homeland. Editors viewed this as an opportunity to justify cutbacks in foreign coverage by claiming that readers and viewers wanted an emphasis on more local news – stories directly related to their communities.

The four-month PEW analysis of over 7,000 international news stories found that newspapers and network television tended to focus most often on world news that had a distinct American orientation, while local television – from which one-fourth of Americans get most of their news – was all but ignoring the world. There were few attempts to localize international news or to find local links to what was happening in foreign countries.

The PEW study concluded that the U.S. media carried few international articles that would broaden and educate Americans about the world beyond those hot spots where "breaking news" usually was

occurring. According to the study, conflict was the dominant topic, confirming the “bad news is news” rule of journalism.

In his September 2001 article, the Los Angeles Times’ David Shaw noted, “Most media in the United States – like most Americans – have historically shown less interest in foreign news than have the media and citizens of many other countries, in part because America has long been strong and secure and relatively isolated. But the amount of time and space devoted to international news here have declined still further in recent years.”

In 1975, sociologist Herbert Gans conducted a study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News and Newsweek magazine to determine the amount and type of foreign coverage. Gans found that most foreign news stories fell into seven categories:

1. American activity in foreign countries.
2. Foreign activities that affect Americans and American policy
3. Communist bloc countries’ actions
4. Elections and other peaceful changes in government personnel
5. Political conflict and protest
6. Disasters
7. The excesses of dictatorships

Number three on Gans’ list has become outdated, since the Communist bloc in Europe disintegrated after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. Today, the words “communist bloc” might be changed to the actions of Middle Eastern countries. Other than that, Gans’ list continues to have a ring of truth today in the way media handle foreign news.

### **Terrorist Attack Sparks New Reality**

America’s interest in foreign news changed dramatically after terrorists flew airplanes full of passengers into the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon in Washington, D.C. on September 11, 2001. The increased importance of international and security issues and the U.S. military action in Afghanistan and later Iraq coincided with a spike in public attention to foreign news. For Americans, it was a wake up call.

As the stunned nation worked through the grieving process and a pervasive fear of more attacks, there was a new reality about the need for foreign news. September 11 clearly demonstrated to many Americans that they – and the media – had ignored the world at their own peril. Post 9-11, there was a more urgent need to know what was going on around the globe, especially as it pertained to the declared “war on terror.”

Many within the journalism community believe that just as the September 11 attack was an intelligence failure on the part of the United States government, it was also a failure of the media who did not adequately inform the American public about the rise of the Taliban, Osama bin Laden, and the growing influence of Islamic militants around the world.

Even with a renewed public interest in foreign affairs, newspapers, the three major newsweekly magazines and major TV networks continued to pull back their international presence. USA Today, America’s largest circulation daily, continues its international coverage, especially out of Iraq, but foreign news appears to take a back seat to local stories in “the nation’s newspaper.”

During the Cold War era, from the end of World War II to the collapse of the Eastern bloc, it was a different story. Media studies show that during this period, the former Soviet Union was the most reported on country in the world by U.S. media. At the time, there was a standoff between two super powers with vast nuclear capability.

### **U.S. Media Still Wield Influence**

Despite the down turn in foreign news, some American-based media outlets, such as the NYT, Washington Post and the Associated Press -- the largest and most powerful news organization in the world -- continue to have global impact with what they report each day. World leaders read their stories regularly, their work is cited in speeches and reports around the globe, and they continue to produce in-depth, serious content from correspondents around the world.

While some editors continue to rationalize that Americans are not interested in what is happening outside their borders, recent studies show the opposite to be true.

A 2004 PEW Research Center report noted that the U.S. national election that year was the first since the Vietnam era in which foreign affairs and national security issues were a higher public priority than the economy. Asked whether they follow international news closely most of the time or only when something important is happening, a majority (52%) said most of the time. In April 2000, that number was 33%.

Over the past few years, there has been a growing globalization of the world community with important factors linked to the United States. Among some of the most important trends:

- The U.S. has increased economic ties to foreign countries. There are dozens of news stories about this every week in the business sections of newspapers, magazines and on TV news. Yet, the media, for the most part, does little in-depth reporting on impact of American trade and outsourcing of jobs in foreign countries or to localize international business stories.
- There are a growing number of people, many recent immigrants, who maintain strong ties to their homelands. Latinos are the fastest growing minority group, making up 14 percent of the population. There are refugees from Sudan, Burma and other conflict zones entering the country on a regular basis. America is more connected than ever to populations around the globe.
- More citizens are involved in foreign affairs activities, such as humanitarian aid to Darfur, where rape, murder and forced exodus have become routine. American medical teams help fight HIV/AIDS in Africa. U.S. teachers, doctors, nurses, engineers, agricultural experts work in poverty-stricken and developing countries around the globe.
- Americans are taking advantage of faster, more convenient and relatively inexpensive opportunities for world travel. Although that trend was slowed after 9-11, travel agencies say the trend has picked up again.

There are plenty of reasons why Americans should care about what is happening on the international scene. The responsibility to engage the public in foreign affairs falls squarely on the shoulders of the media. The

perceived lack of interest could stem from the fact that the media has not done a very good job of making foreign news relevant to the lives of average citizens. Maybe the problem isn't foreign news so much as how the news is presented.

Some news organizations already are changing their models of coverage to meet demands for greater international focus.

ABC News recently announced that after two decades of cutbacks in international bureaus they would buck the trend by opening one-person operations to dramatically boost coverage in Africa, India and elsewhere. ABC News mini-bureaus are being opened in Seoul; Rio de Janeiro; New Delhi and Mumbai, India; Jakarta, Indonesia, and Nairobi, Kenya. These small officers, staffed by a reporter-producer with the latest hand-held digital technology, cost a fraction of what it takes to run a full-time bureau.

Is it possible that the new model being used by ABC News could be the wave of the future for television foreign news coverage?

The Associated Press is expanding worldwide coverage with bureaus in xenophobic North Korea and Guangzhou, China, a major industrial area that has not been tapped by western journalists. The AP has begun to place greater importance on areas of specialty reporting, such as lifestyle, sports, finance and entertainment as part of their international coverage.

The AP's goal is to localize foreign news whenever possible and help Americans understand how news from abroad affects them, said Tom Curley, AP's president and CEO. Curley called it "a great moment of opportunity" with new technology that provides journalists and the public with instant access.

"It's out there, and if we don't go for it, we'll be tracking backwards . . . We really have to adjust our operation dramatically so we can file from all formats simultaneously, online, video, photo, cutlines as well as text," Curley said in an August interview.

Just like the AP and ABC News, many in the journalism business are readjusting their thinking and their way of doing business on the international level with the aid of modern technologies. Only time will tell if these changes and a renewed sense of urgency take hold and make a difference in how the media covers foreign affairs and how the American public responds.

