

Critical Infrastructure Protection Initiative @ Dalhousie University

Analysis of Selected Print Media Coverage of Two Cases of Failed Terrorist Plots:
The Australian's Coverage of the 'Sydney Five' (2005) and *The Globe and Mail's*
Coverage of the 'Toronto 18' (2006)

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**Analysis of Selected Print Media Coverage of Two Cases of Failed Terrorist Plots:
*The Australian Coverage of the ‘Sydney Five’ and
The Globe and Mail Coverage of the ‘Toronto 18’***

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Draft Research Report on Media Coverage of Two Failed Terrorist Plots

At the CIP Initiative at Dalhousie University, we developed and maintain a database that includes data on various aspects of media coverage of 25 major critical infrastructure and emergency management events from four countries (Australia, Canada, UK and the US). Thus far, we have completed articles on patterns of media coverage during H1N1, food contamination, natural disasters and industrial failures.

In the spring of 2013 the broadsheet media in Canada and the US dedicated considerable attention to terrorism; this was in light of the Boston Marathon Bombing (Botelho, 2013), and then extended with the arrest of two individuals in Canada alleged to be plotting to bomb passenger railway lines (Weston, 2013) and the subsequent murder of a British soldier on the streets of London by Islamic extremists (Rayner and Swinford, 2013). In our database, we have data on the media coverage of the failed terrorist plots 'Sydney Five' and 'Toronto 18.' As we have not yet published these data, we thought we would prepare a working paper on media coverage of failed terrorist plots. By analyzing these two events—and by placing them in comparative perspective with each other as well as the other events in the database—we hope to contribute to a greater understanding of media coverage of terrorist plots and critical infrastructure (CI) and emergency management events more generally.

The observations in this paper are drawn primarily from these sources: (1) our media database, which includes data from one year of coverage in selected newspapers for 25 different events; (2) detailed analysis of one year of coverage in *The Australian* of the 'Sydney Five' and in *The Globe and Mail* of the 'Toronto 18'; and (3) the risk and media, and media and terrorism literature, respectively.

This paper is underpinned by the assumption that media play a dual role in society: they reflect the flavour of public debate and influence it (Hood et al., 2001; Stehr, 1994; Castells, 1996; van Dijk, 2006 as cited by Tulloch and Zinn, 2011).

There are aspects of any emergency management event that are unique, and therefore it is extremely difficult to make general claims; this is especially so when we have small sample sizes, as we have here. With this in mind, we have reviewed the two failed terrorist plots (as depicted in the media coverage) and have tried to identify themes, controversies and patterns that might provide insights into the manner in which the media report such events. While the research generated interesting insights, recall that the observations are based on two different cases from different countries.

Finally, on the surface, the natural disasters and industrial failures that are included in the database do not necessarily seem like appropriate points of comparison for failed terrorist plots. Obviously, the natural disasters and industrial failures occurred whereas the terrorist plots did not – which is to say, security officials prevented the plots from being realized. Also, almost all of the media coverage that focuses on industrial failures and natural disasters will occur within the year of the event, which is the timeframe we used when collecting media articles. Because terrorist plots involve trials, media coverage of the events will likely have a ‘second bump’ when the trial occurs. Industrial failures often have inquiries, but they usually start and incur a lot of media coverage during the same year as the event.

Nevertheless, the purpose of the database is to collect media data to examine post-9/11 events that occurred in the US, UK, Australia and Canada that could fall under the heading ‘all hazards,’ which underpins most Western governments’ approaches to critical infrastructure protection and emergency management. We wish to examine the types of events that received attention and the types of attention they received. As plots from Islamic extremists have generated considerable media attention over the past decade and more, we felt it was important to include such plots in the database. As neither Canada nor Australia had an example of a post-9/11 domestic terrorist event carried out by Islamic extremists, we elected to examine failed terrorist plots, which as we will point out below, provide considerable opportunity for reflection, and yet are neglected by the academic literature.

As this report is in draft form and was written on a very tight timeline, we would ask that you not cite it without the permission of the corresponding author. The database was built with the support of SSHRC operating grant no. 410-2008-1357.

We have tried to capture the key points in an executive summary. We hope you find this report useful.

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1.0 Executive Summary

1.1 Parameters of Failed Terrorism

Definitions of Terrorism and Failed Terrorist Plot in this paper

There are several definitions of terrorism. Ruby (2002), for example, describes it as politically motivated violence perpetrated in a clandestine manner against noncombatants. Terrorism is committed in order to create a fearful state of mind in an audience different from the victims. Sorel (2003) defines international terrorism as an illicit act (irrespective of its perpetrator or its purpose) that creates a disturbance in the public order as defined by the international community, by using serious and indiscriminate violence (in whatever form, whether against people or public or private property) in order to generate an atmosphere of terror with the aim of influencing political action.

These definitions emphasize the act of generating a feeling of terror. In this sense, both the Sydney Five and the Toronto 18 could be considered successful (or at least partly successful) terrorist plots in the sense that they may have generated a sense of terror among members of the public. It is certainly true that public opinion polls in Canada following the Toronto 18 event showed that Canadians believed that an act of terrorism in Canada was much more likely (Laghi, 2006).

Nevertheless, for the purposes of this paper, we describe Sydney Five and Toronto 18 as failed terrorist plots. The perpetrators had the intention of committing terrorist acts, which security officials prevented. We are particularly interested in these types of acts, whose impact has thus far been largely overlooked by the academic literature.

Studying Failed Terrorist Plots as Opposed to Attacks that Were Carried Out

Irrespective of how much advanced planning security officials have done, terrorist attacks catch security officials off-guard. Their response is hurried. Security officials have to contend with the emergency itself (e.g., victims) as well as pursue the perpetrators. Within hours, security officials will be asked by the media and political overseers about myriad issues, including who is responsible, why the intelligence community was not better prepared, the effectiveness of the coordination between domestic agencies and other national governments. The list goes on. Arguably, and as we saw in the Boston Marathon bombing when over 9,000 security officials pursued the perpetrators (Botelho, 2013), it leads to a level of transparency; the public sees aspects of how security officials respond during such a crisis. There are also victims, which creates highly emotive media coverage. Finally, the public is also not necessarily passive. Again, as we saw in Boston, members of the public – victims, bystanders, local businesses and online communities – engaged in the process of identifying possible suspects.

Failed terrorist plots are different. Depending on the exact nature of the plot, security services can control information much more effectively. They hold a press conference; determine what to say and when to say it; who attends; what the presenters wear; and whether or not to place national symbols,

such as flags, in the background. They can also emphasize aspects of the operation they would like to emphasize, including areas where intelligence service has improved, such as inter-agency and international collaboration. Indeed, officials frame the issue as terrorism in the charges they lay and, in so doing, connect the issue with broader international events, such as the War on Terror. Generally, such events are seen as a good news story for security officials. The public is generally a passive recipient of the information.

Successful risk management depends on our capacity to learn from early warning signs. Yet there is ambiguity about the meaning of failed terrorist plots. On the one hand, they generate positive coverage for security services because they have detected and presumably stopped the event from occurring. On the other hand, it is not clear if the plot is symptomatic of more widespread problems among segments of the population. It is not clear if other plots are in progress. Also, because the plot was never carried out, it raises questions about the guilt, innocence and intentions of the alleged terrorists. Would they have actually carried out the plot? It takes years to make such a determination in a court, which will only come to a conclusion well after the initial media coverage is over. There is little academic literature on media coverage of failed terrorist plots. The purpose of this paper is to use two cases to identify common themes and extract observations about how we learn about terrorism and terrorist plots. Our sample size is small; we are therefore constrained in our ability to generalize.

1.2 Our Findings

Summary

While the coverage of the Sydney Five and Toronto 18 are strikingly similar, there are many aspects of media coverage of the failed terrorist plots that distinguish them from other events in the database. The terrorist plots generated moderate to strong media coverage; however, the coverage was heavily concentrated in the first few days of the event. The overall tone of the headlines is much less alarming than for other events we examined. Unlike other events, the failed terrorist plots generated positive assessments of government; the few negative assessments tended to come later in the year. Unlike with other events, the federal government does not compete to the same degree with other groups for attention. The federal government is used more than any other source in the stories, by a comfortable margin.

Academic Literature Review

There is very little academic literature on media coverage of failed terrorist plots (if any). Social media are completely absent in this literature.

Coverage of terrorist plots is very intense in the first few days. It focuses on the criminal nature of the allegations against suspects, who the suspects are and to which international terrorist organizations they may be connected. After the initial coverage, interest begins to change and even wane. It may have to do with the time the criminal justice system takes to prosecute suspects. The story loses its more

fascinating qualities quickly as more bureaucratic processes are initiated to bring terrorism suspects to justice.

The media frame the problem as Islamic extremism and in so doing connect the event with 9/11 and the associated War on Terror. The coverage tends to overlook aspects of the event that may distinguish it from Islamic extremism.

Media rely heavily on government for information on terrorism cases and the information asymmetry can leave them vulnerable to manipulation by government interests.

The media's focus on terrorism committed by Islamic extremists can lead them to overlook other forms of terrorism, such as right-wing extremism and eco-terrorism. The media also risk contributing to the social exclusion/racial profiling/dehumanization of Muslims and Arabs.

Canadians do not seem to perceive terrorism as a major threat to Canada's national security. It is viewed through the lens of US-Canada relations and how American security concerns impact Canada's border security, trade and immigration policies.

There seems to be more anxiety about terrorism sponsored by major terrorist groups. There is less emphasis on sole actors ("lone wolf") who are not affiliated with international groups. Law enforcement officials have stated lately that they are becoming increasingly more concerned about "lone wolf" actors because of how difficult it is to detect them and anticipate their actions.

Volume, Tone, Rate of Publication, Performance Assessment and Sources Used in Media Coverage of Sydney Five and Toronto 18

- Coverage of the Sydney Five and Toronto 18 are strikingly similar in a variety of ways.
- Both events had high volume coverage in the first few days; coverage dropped off considerably after the first week.
- Both cases were similar in tone of headlines and overall volume of coverage.
- The headlines for these two events, on balance, are less alarming than those for other events in the database.
- The federal government is the most frequently cited source in the coverage, and by a significant margin. After the initial coverage, the media expand their sources beyond the federal government but no one source comes close to matching the number of references to the federal government.
- On balance, the government receives positive performance assessments.
- The coverage of the Sydney Five focused more on legislation than did the coverage of the Toronto 18. This is not surprising given that the Sydney Five raids were facilitated by amendments to legislation the week before the arrests.
- In both cases, the coverage includes a number of articles on the details of the investigations. Both cases were the result of long investigations of similar duration.

- In both cases there were concerns that the suspects would not receive a fair trial due to the publicity. The timelines were not consistent. In the Australian case this concern was expressed immediately, whereas in the case of the Toronto 18 it did not appear until months later. There were, however, concerns early on about the fair treatment of the Toronto 18. There were also concerns in both cases as to whether sufficient evidence was collected to convict.
- Social media or technologies were not mentioned in the Sydney Five coverage. The Toronto 18 coverage included an article on the use of social media to support the families of the suspects and an article on the new generation of tech-savvy terrorists.
- Media coverage in both cases included articles that were “reminders” of the ongoing terrorist threat, and in which ways it is changing.

Table 1: Content Themes

Themes in the Coverage	Sydney Five / Australian	Toronto 18 / Globe and Mail
Concerns over Immigration standards	Yes	Yes
Muslim community victimized/Racial profiling by authorities	Yes	Yes
Positive engagement between authorities and Muslim community	Somewhat	Yes
“Homegrown” terrorism	Yes	Yes
Domestic Inter-agency cooperation	Yes	Yes
Counterterrorism success	Yes	Yes
Role of legislation	Yes	Somewhat
Concerns over fair trial	Yes	Yes
Social media	No	Yes
Economic impact (tourism)	No	Yes
International cooperation/role of US	No	Yes

In addition to these cases, we looked at *The New York Times*' coverage of the Sears Tower Plot and the *Daily Telegraph*'s coverage of the Transatlantic Flight Plot. While these cases are in our database, we do not include them extensively in this study. These events generated considerably less media coverage than the Sydney Five and Toronto 18.

2.0 Literature Review: Learning from the Media about Risks

Judging the performance of the public- and private-sector owners, operators and regulators of CI via the manner in which they are depicted in the media during emergencies presents particular challenges. Researchers have noted the media's propensity to report the dramatic over the common but more dangerous (Soumerai et al., 1992), its tendency to sensationalize (Johnson & Cavello, 1987), and sensationalize the most negative aspects of events, in particular (Wahlberg & Sjoberg, 2000). CI failures are sensational and lend themselves to this type of coverage, and therefore it is not clear whether the events receive the coverage they do due to their dramatic nature or because they genuinely reflect the sustained concerns of civil society.

Moreover, researchers have been careful to note that there is no 'one view' about risks among the public. Risk perception is mediated through social context (Boholm, 2009; Slovic et al., 2004; Frewer, 2004; Alaszewski, 2005). It has been argued that risk perception among populations varies by gender (Drottz-Sjoberg, 1991), education (Kraus et al., 2001; Rundmo, 1999), degree of expertise in the subject matter (Slovic, 1987; Brun, 1994) as well as a variety of emotive factors (Baron et al., 2000; Rundomo & Moen, 2006). Therefore, what one might consider important, newsworthy or even dangerous and alarming is subject to interpretation.

Further still, Wahlberg and Sjoberg (2000) note that the media's influence is too often taken for granted when in fact much of the evidence points the other way – that media are probably not a strong causal factor of (especially not personal) risk perception. Risk perception may be affected by the media, but the effects are lessened by impersonal impact. Moreover, individuals' perceptions of broader risks to society are more easily changed than their perception of their own personal risk. Finally, it is not conclusive that individuals' perceptions of their personal exposure to risk will result in them changing their risk-related behaviour (Slovic, 1998 as cited by Slovic, 2000).

Mutz and Soss (1997) note that the media raise people's perception of the salience of a subject in the community, but are much less successful in changing people's mind on a particular subject. Similarly, Atwood and Major (2000) note that people do not think of themselves as being as vulnerable to risks as others are. Indeed, some suffer from cognitive dissonance; they are unrealistically optimistic, ignoring the news and denying personal vulnerability. In other areas of research, it has been suggested that most individuals gain information from a variety of sources, not just the media (Verba & Nie, 1972), including other individuals, government organizations and advocacy groups. It has also been argued that research tends to focus on print media when in fact most people receive their news from television and radio (Cottle, 2000). The rising prominence of social media makes this issue even more problematic.

Nevertheless, an examination of the print media coverage of CI events offers some important insights. First, notwithstanding the fact that individual perception may vary, researchers have noted that many people base their perceptions about risk primarily on information presented in the media (Fischhoff, 1985, 1995; Kitzinger & Reilly, 1997). Hood et al. (2001, p. 93) argue that high-circulation newspapers do not necessarily reflect public opinion, but they do assume that these papers reflect "the flavour of the public debate, not least because opinion leaders read such sources". For this analysis, Hood et al. draw on Gaskell et al. (1999) who conclude that increasing amounts of coverage of technological controversies are associated with negative public perceptions, or what is referred to as Quantity of Coverage Theory (Leahy & Mazur, 1980). Print media also have the advantage of being a stable source that is updated usually every 24 hours. So while the researcher may not be able to monitor how the story changes by the minute – as one might be able to do by researching TV or social media – the researcher can monitor

the progress of the story on a 24-hour basis, in the same way that one might research TV or social media stories at 24-hour intervals. Looking at the daily paper also has the advantage of looking at a source that has eliminated many errors in reporting that happen throughout the day during a CI event – and can run amok on social media, for instance.

Contrary to Hood et al.'s claim that volume of coverage alone is an indicator of the views of civil society, there is reason to believe that a more nuanced reading of media coverage is required. Media analysis of coverage of Hurricane Katrina, for instance, found that the story placement and the tone of media coverage had an impact on the force of government reaction (Barnes et al., 2008). Moeller (2006) distinguishes between 'simple' emergencies in which answers appear to be straightforward and 'complex' emergencies that require more political and social attention. Natural disasters, characterized as 'simple' emergencies, receive more media coverage because the events are dramatic, yes, but require relatively less research and background knowledge; cause and effect relationships are perceived to be straightforward or, at a minimum, outside our control. Industrial failures, on the other hand, are characterized as 'complex' emergencies; they receive less media attention because they require significantly more media resources and are not as easy to explain (Moeller, 2006).

This is not to suggest less coverage means less concern. Ironically, at times, the opposite may be true. For example, responses to hurricanes are often *ad hoc* and reflect on "social problems retrospectively while rarely if ever dealing prospectively with future disasters" (Barnes et al., 2008, p. 609). Coverage of industrial failures, on the other hand, while receiving perhaps less coverage, seek more often to assign blame. Pidgeon (1997) argues that "despite the inherent complexity and ambiguity of the environments within which large-scale hazards arise, and the systemic nature of breakdowns in safety, cultural myths of control over affairs ensure that a culprit must be found after a disaster or crisis has unfolded" (p. 9).

Recent literature has identified several important research opportunities in this field. Bakir (2010) calls for an analysis of the responsiveness of private and public institutions to different types of risks. As many Western countries rely heavily on both private and public sector actors to provide critical services, the examination of emergency response must include both. A comparative approach across countries has particular advantages also. First, as CI failures are rare, it allows us to increase the number of cases. Second, while CI failures seem unique, an examination of media coverage allows us to determine if indeed there are patterns in media coverage after these events that can help us predict media coverage for future events.

Terrorism and the Media

The academic literature on terrorism and the media is heavily focused on media in the United States, particularly after the terrorist attacks on New York, Pennsylvania and Washington, DC, on September 11, 2001 (Altheide, 2006, 2007). Moreover, the literature is highly focused on Islamic terrorism as opposed to other forms, such as right-wing extremism or eco-terrorism. Due to the focus of this project, the scope of the review was broadened to include reporting on terrorism in Canada and Australia as well. However, in all three countries, there is a clear sense that September 11 was a watershed moment in terms of the relationship between the media and terrorism (Altheide, 2007; Papacharissi and Oliveira, 2008). The change can be partially accounted for by the magnitude of the attacks, the impact of the 24-hour news cycle and its ability to transmit news of the attacks in real time, and the role of television in broadcasting a steady stream of emotional images from the scene (Altheide, 2006; Biernatzki, 2002; Kellner, 2002; Nacos, 2003).

There are two important contexts to consider for this project: (1) the relationship between the media and terrorism and (2) the relationship between the media, government and society. First, the media have a symbiotic relationship with terrorism (Rohner & Frey, 2007; Biernatzki, 2002). Terrorists rely on the media to draw attention to their cause and recruit others (Nacos, 2003; Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008). In turn, the media cover major events like terrorism attacks in the hope of drawing high viewing figures and earning sales revenue (Rohner & Frey, 2007). Secondly, the media plays an important intermediary role between the government and society. In a healthy democracy, the media take on a watchdog role by independently and objectively reporting on the activities of government (Bossio, 2011; McNamara, 2009). In turn, the media wield significant influence over the way in which issues are framed and communicated to the public (Altheide, 2006, 2007). These two perspectives are useful for understanding the ways in which failed terrorist plots are covered in the media, especially since September 11, 2001.

The literature focuses on the reporting conducted in the immediate aftermath of September 11 and later as the policy ramifications of the War on Terror began to unfold. In the immediate aftermath, the literature focuses on the ways in which advancements in communication technology transmitted the terrorist attacks in new and innovative ways, the fear and other forms of social control that were perpetuated, and the ways in which the intense coverage could negatively affect the public psyche (Altheide, 2006; Nacos, 2003; Pfefferbaum et al., 2005).

During the second time period, the literature turns its attention to the media and its relationship to the government. Overall, the literature is highly critical of the media during this period with the kinds of criticism varying by country. For instance, media in the United States are criticized for failing to consider the broader causes of terrorism (Altheide, 2007; Nacos, 2005; Papacharissi & Oliveira, 2008; Ismael & Measor, 2003). In the United States and Australia, the media are accused of failing to perform their watchdog role adequately *vis à vis* the national government (Bligh et al., 2004; Kellner, 2002; Bossio, 2011; McGarrity, 2011; McNamara, 2009).

Furthermore, both the Canadian and Australian media are criticized for racial profiling and its subsequent contribution to the dehumanization and social exclusion of Muslims, Arabs and other racialized groups (Aly, 2007; Harb, 2008; Osuri & Banerjee, 2004; Bahdi, 2003; Ewart, 2012; Ismael & Measor, 2003; Steuter & Wills, 2009). Specifically, the media are found to perpetuate anxiety about 'homegrown terrorism' and the 'enemies within,' cultural stereotypes, the 'Other,' and the clash of civilizations between Western secular values and Islam (Altheide, 2007; Aly, 2007; Kellner, 2002; Nacos, 2005; Harb, 2008; Ewart, 2012; Ismael & Measor, 2003; Steuter & Wills, 2009). Finally, Canada's immigration and refugee policies, multiculturalism and border security with the United States are also recurrent themes in the Canadian literature (Andreas, 2003, 2005; Harb, 2008).

In summary, there are a number of key findings from the literature review. Overall, the literature is focused largely on Islamic terrorism, the media in the United States, and the repercussions of the terrorist attacks committed on September 11. Furthermore, the literature is largely critical of the media in the United States, Canada and Australia, employing a post-colonial theoretical framework to interpret the depiction of Muslims and Arabs. It is also highly critical of the media for failing to perform their watchdog role by objectively vetting government rhetoric, especially around the War on Terror. Indeed, it appears as if the media were mostly influenced by government in the aftermath of 9/11 and failed to drive change (i.e., legislation). These findings from the literature can be connected to this project in a number of ways.

In the Canadian examples, there was a strong focus on Canadian immigration and refugee policies, multiculturalism, border security, homegrown terrorism and racial profiling. The Australian examples also focused on homegrown terrorism and the role that new counter-terrorism legislation played in facilitating the arrests. In later sections, these themes will emerge in the coverage of the Toronto 18 and Sydney Five cases. There were a number of gaps uncovered in the literature as well. First, although literature on falsely accused terrorists exists, such as the case of Dr. Mohamed Haneef in Australia, there is an absence of literature on media coverage following failed terrorist plots (Ewart, 2012; McGarrity, 2011; McNamara, 2009). However, this gap is significant given that these cases provide a valuable opportunity to learn and adapt to early warning signs that a country is potentially vulnerable to terrorism.

Furthermore, there appears to be far less concern about other forms of terrorism in the media, such as right-wing extremism and eco-terrorism. Additionally, most of the literature is concentrated between 2002 and 2007, meaning that new issues – such as the role of social media – are largely absent from the discussion. Finally, while there is a substantial number of studies on the media and the framing of terrorism, there is comparatively little research on how this framing changes over time, how coverage by media sources varies in different countries and how the media reports on terrorism suspects and people who are implicated in the planning and execution of acts of terrorism (Ewart, 2012). This project will attempt to address some of these gaps in the literature.

Tables and Figures

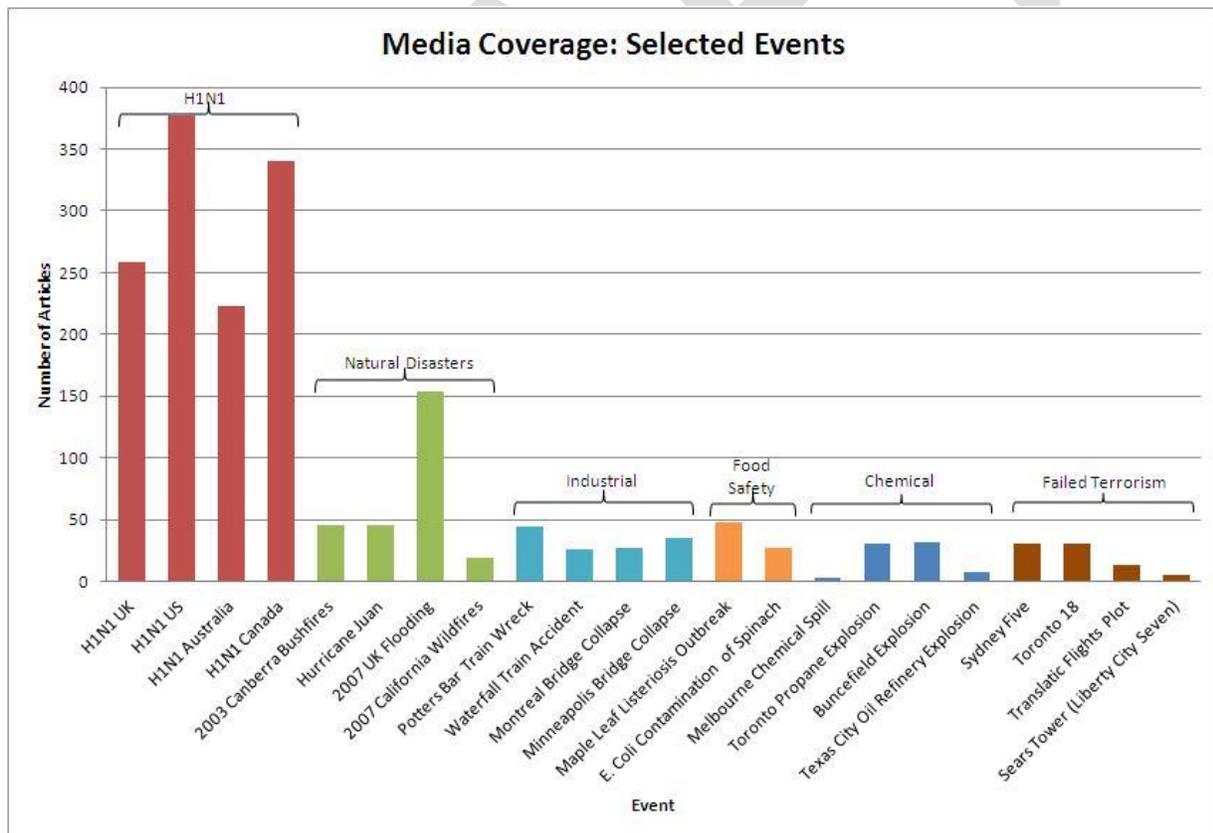
3.1 Volume of Coverage

Key message: Sydney Five and Toronto 18 received a similar volume of coverage as industrial/chemical failures.

Media Coverage of Selected Critical Infrastructure/Emergency Management Events (“All Hazards”)

Figure 1 shows the number of articles on the selected event that appeared over a 365-day period following the start of the event. The number represents the total number of articles in one national newspaper from the country in which the event occurred. Countries include Australia, Canada, the UK and the US. Events include natural disasters, industrial (including chemical) failures, food contamination, failed terrorist plots and H1N1. Sources: Australian events: *The Australian*; Canadian events: *The Globe and Mail*; UK events: *The Daily Telegraph*; US events: *The New York Times*. All events are post-9/11.

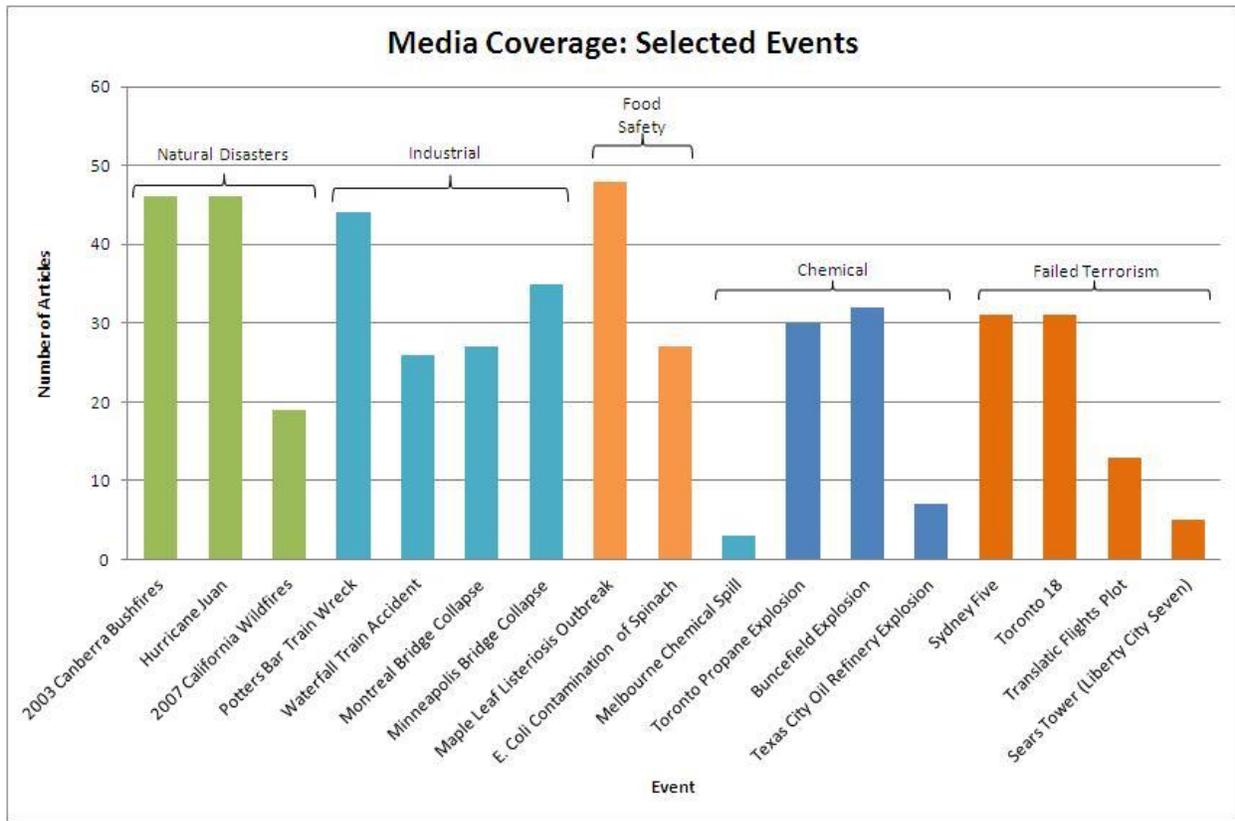
Figure 1: Media Coverage of Selected Events



Key message: Sydney Five and Toronto 18 received a similar volume of coverage as industrial failures. When we remove H1N1, natural disasters received the most coverage.

Figure 2 presents the same information as Figure 1 with the exception that the H1N1 and UK Flooding cases have been removed to facilitate a comparison of events with similar volume of coverage.

Figure 2: Media Coverage of Selected Events (detail; without H1N1 or UK Flooding)



3.2 Tone of Headlines

Key Message: The tone of the headlines for Sydney Five in *The Australian* and Toronto 18 in *The Globe and Mail* is generally less alarming than for other events in our database. In the case of the Toronto 18, headlines were largely balanced, which is very unusual compared to the other events. The headlines for Sydney Five were slightly more alarming.

We calculated the number of articles that had an alarming headline as a percentage of those that were either alarming or reassuring, which is summarized in Table 2. We exclude articles that are alarming and reassuring, and neither alarming or reassuring. We assume these types have a neutral impact.

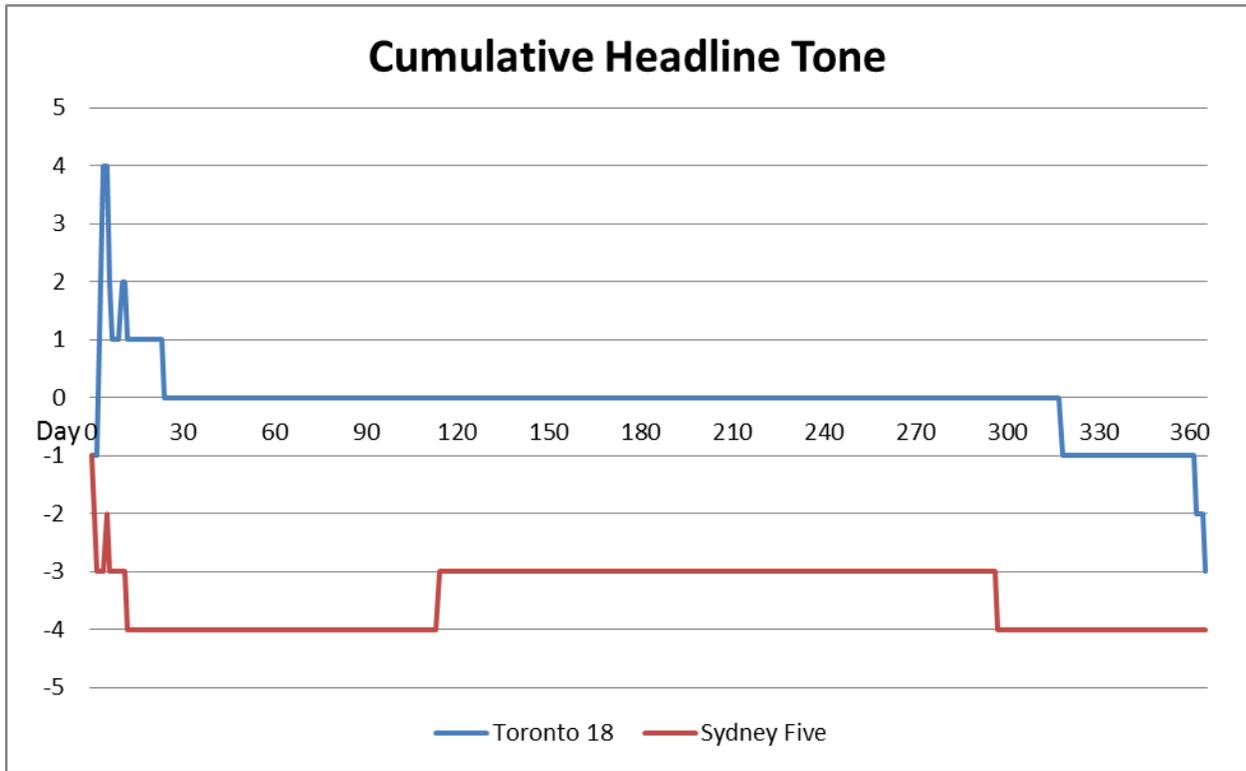
Table 2: Tone of Headlines: Critical Infrastructure/ Emergency Management Events

Event	Number of Alarming Headlines	Number of Reassuring Headlines	Percentage of Alarming Headlines
Failed terrorist plot			
Toronto 18 <i>(The Globe and Mail)</i>	10	7	58.82%
Sydney Five <i>(The Australian)</i>	9	4	69.23%
Transatlantic Flights Plot <i>(The New York Times)</i>	9	1	90.00%
Sears Tower <i>(The New York Times)</i>	1	1	50.00%
H1N1			
H1N1 Australia <i>(The Australian)</i>	127	24	84.11%
H1N1 Canada <i>(The Globe and Mail)</i>	157	64	71.04%
H1N1 UK <i>(The Daily Telegraph)</i>	172	28	86.00%
H1N1 US <i>(The New York Times)</i>	123	63	66.13%
Natural Disasters			
2003 Canberra Bushfires <i>(The Australian)</i>	22	8	73.33%
Hurricane Juan <i>(The Globe and Mail)</i>	25	11	69.44%
UK Flooding <i>(The Daily Telegraph)</i>	93	10	90.29%
2007 California Wildfires <i>(The New York Times)</i>	10	1	90.91%
Industrial Failures			
Waterfall Train Accident <i>(The Australian)</i>	11	3	78.57%
Montreal Bridge Collapse (De la Concorde Overpass) <i>(The Globe and Mail)</i>	15	5	75.00%
Potters Bar Rail Accident <i>(The Daily Telegraph)</i>	28	1	96.55%

Chemical			
Toronto Propane Explosion (<i>The Globe and Mail</i>)	18	6	75.00%
Buncefield Explosion (<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>)	16	7	69.57%
Texas City Oil Refinery Explosion (<i>The New York Times</i>)	4	1	80.00%
Food Safety			
Maple Leaf/ Listeriosis Outbreak (<i>The Globe and Mail</i>)	29	9	76.32%
E. Coli Contamination of Spinach (<i>The New York Times</i>)	14	3	82.35%

Figure 3 shows the cumulative tone of the Toronto 18 headlines in *The Globe and Mail* and the Sydney Five in *The Australian* over one year. Each headline was assigned a score based on its tone: (-1) for alarming; (0) for alarming and reassuring; (0) for neither alarming nor reassuring; or (+1) for reassuring. If on the first day of the Sydney Five, for example, a newspaper had four alarming headlines (-4), two alarming and reassuring headlines (0) and two reassuring headlines (+2), the net effect for that particular day would be negative two (-4 + 0 + 2 = -2). If, on the second day of the event, the newspaper had two alarming headlines (-2) and three reassuring headlines (+3), then the net effect for that day would be positive one (-2 + 3 = +1). For the cumulative effect of both days, we would add day one (-2) and day two (+1), and arrive at (-1). In Figure 3 we see this cumulative analysis for each case, and accumulated for 365 days of media coverage. Table 2 shows that the papers displayed different patterns; the Sydney Five, on balance, had slightly more alarming headlines in the first couple of weeks and then essentially flat-lined, largely because the coverage stopped. Toronto 18 trended the other way: the headlines, on balance, were slightly reassuring for the first two weeks and then flat-lined, again due to lack of coverage. There were also some alarming headlines at the end of the year for the Toronto 18.

Figure 3: Cumulative Headline Tone



3.3 Rate of Publication

Key Messages: Most of the coverage occurs in the first few days; this concentration is much more acute than the other events in the database. As industrial failures typically have inquiries, a certain volume of coverage appears months after the event occurs when the inquiry takes place.

Figure 4: Rate of Publication for Sydney Five and Toronto 18. The events show similar patterns for the first 80% of articles. The Toronto 18 remains in the media 100 days longer

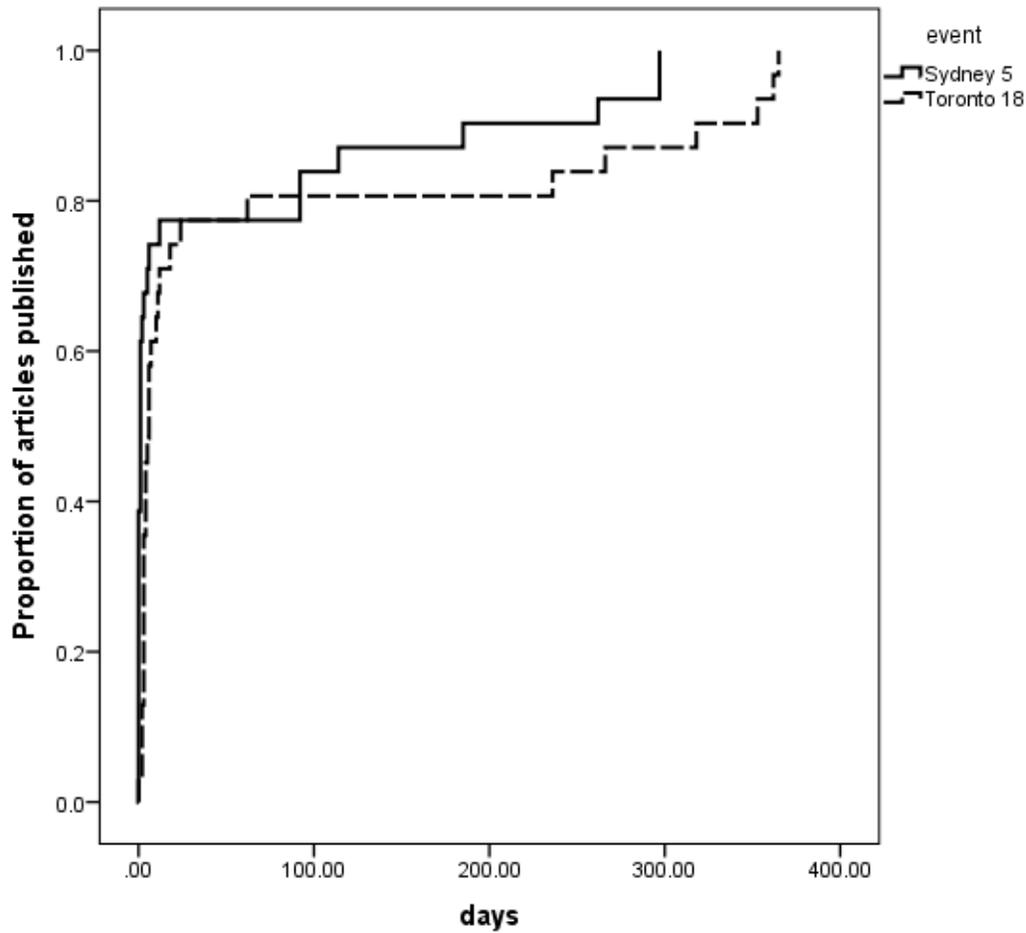
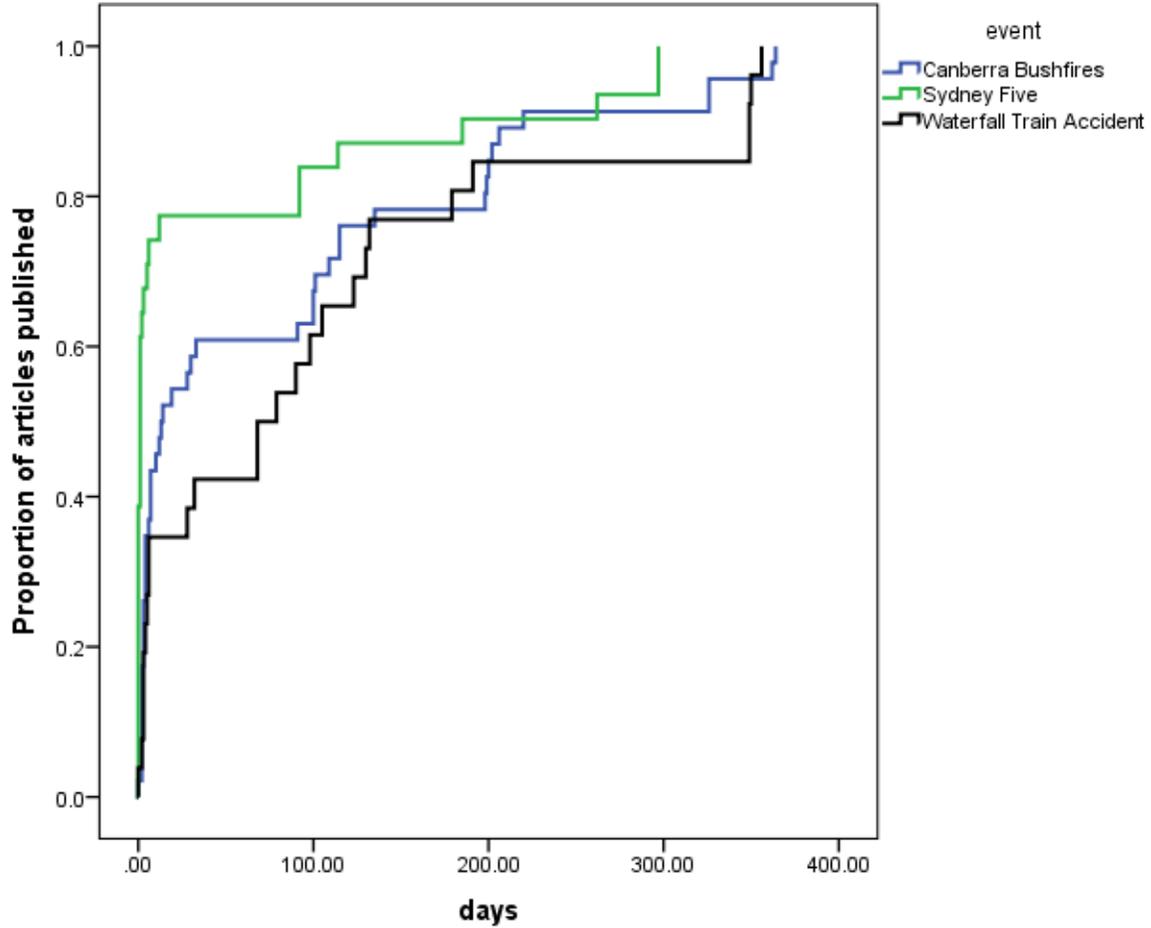
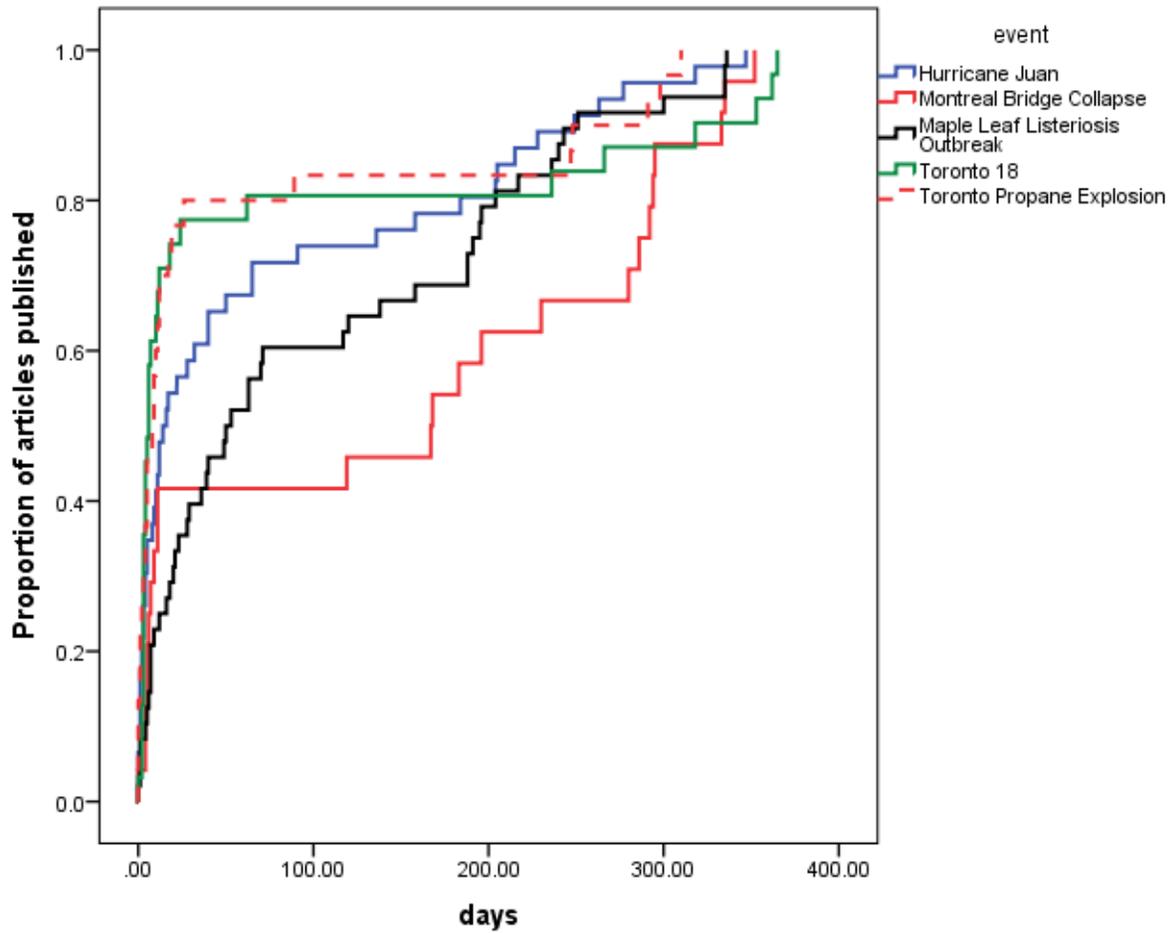


Figure 5: Sydney Five compared to other Australian events depicted in the Australian. Other events include a natural disaster and an industrial failure in the transportation sector.



Event	Median (days)	Lower 95% Bound	Upper 95% Bound
Canberra Bushfires	13	0	36
Sydney Five	1	0	2
Waterfall Train Accident	68	0	140

Figure 6: Toronto 18 compared to other Canadian events depicted in *The Globe and Mail*. Other events include natural disasters, food contamination and industrial failures in the transportation and manufacturing sectors.



Event	Median	Lower 95% Bound	Upper 95% Bound
Hurricane Juan	14	2	26
Montreal Bridge Collapse	167	0	373
Maple Leaf Listeriosis	50	23	77
Toronto 18	6	4	8
Toronto Propane Explosion	8	4	12

3.4 Performance Assessment of Government

Key message: The ratio of positive to negative performance assessment of government is net positive in stories about the Sydney Five in *The Australian* and the Toronto 18 in *The Globe and Mail*. Of all the other cases listed in Table 1, only Hurricane Juan had net positive assessments; all others had net negative assessments.

Figures 7 and 8 show the assessment of government performance, as reported by the media in each case. Assessments are categorized as negative, neutral and positive. The figures detail media assessments for federal, provincial and municipal governments and combine assessments of all three levels for a total assessment of government performance.

Figure 7: Media Assessment of Government Performance – Sydney Five

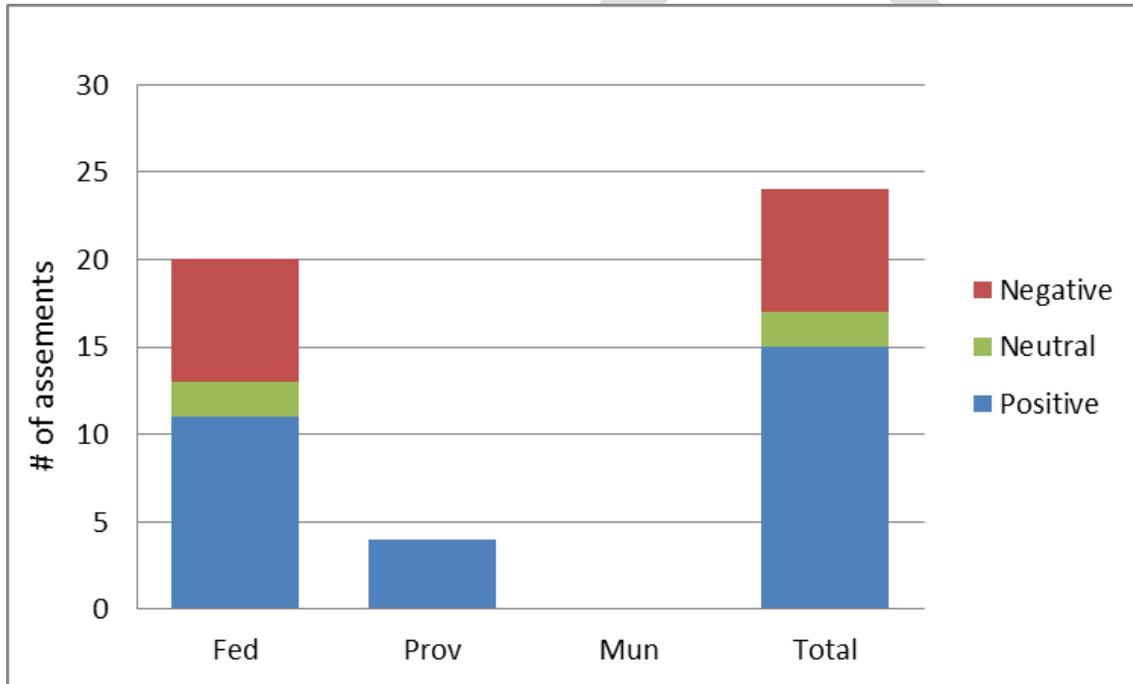
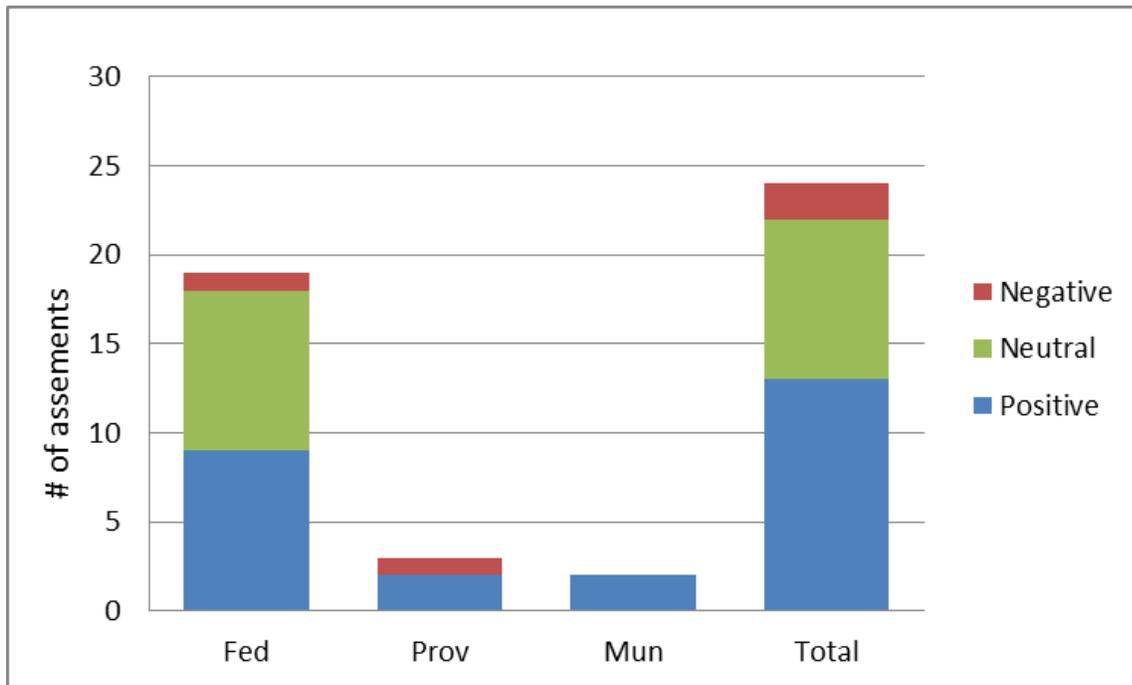


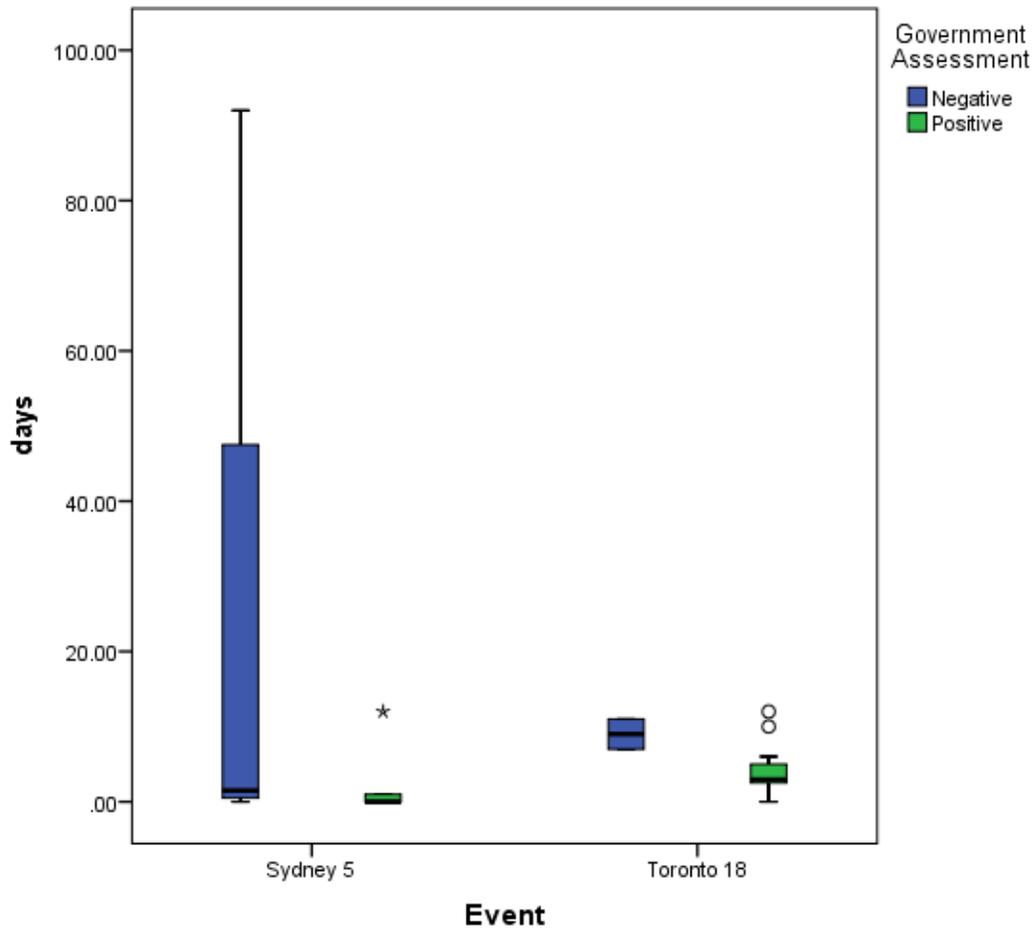
Figure 8: Media Assessment of Government Performance – Toronto 18



Key message: Negative assessments of government performance are not immediate; they tend to come later.

Figure 9 illustrates the publication rate for the failed terrorist plots, using only the articles that negatively or positively assessed government. The data are illustrated using a Box plot, where the solid black line in the middle represents the 'half-life' of the particular articles, the coloured box represents the range of days that the middle half of the articles was published and the end points represent the first and last article published. If there are any outliers, i.e. extremely late-published articles relative to the data, then they are represented with a circle.

Figure 9: Distribution of publication rates for those that provide a negative or positive assessment of government for Sydney 5 and Toronto 18 events. This figure illustrates a delay in negative assessment for Toronto 18 but a relatively prolonged negative assessment for Sydney Five.



Key Message: Compared to other events in our database, failed terrorist plots generate moderate coverage but relatively more positive assessments of government. Natural disasters receive a high volume of coverage and include mixed but relatively positive assessments of government performance. Industrial failures receive moderate levels of coverage but poor government performance assessments. Figure 10, 11 and 12 show, respectively, Canadian events alone, events from Australia, Canada, the UK and the US, and grouping individual events by theme.

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Figure 10: All Hazards: Government Performance Assessment and Volume of Coverage in Print Media by Event (Canada Only)

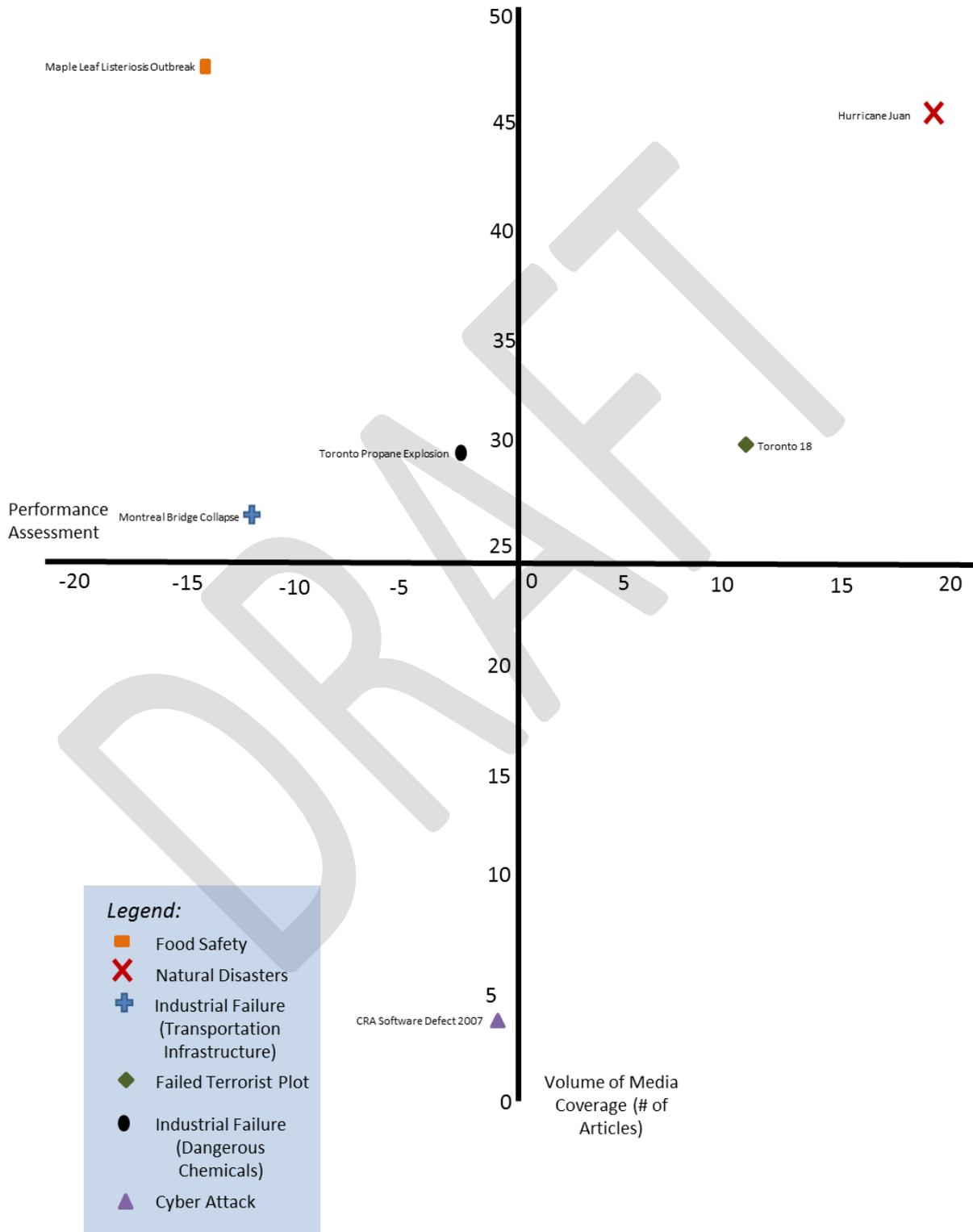


Figure 11: All Hazards: Government Performance Assessment and Volume of Coverage in Print Media by Event (Australia, Canada, UK, US)

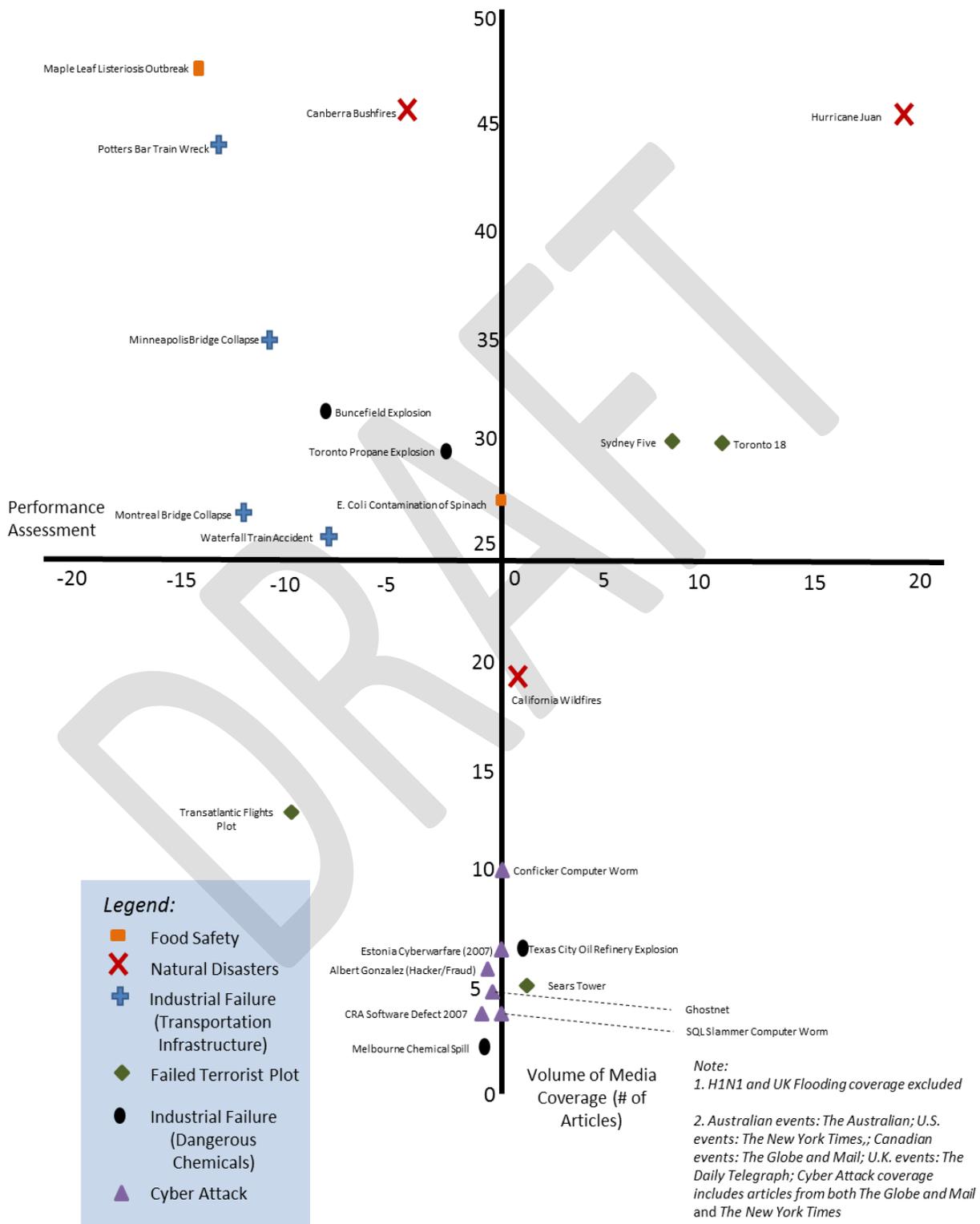
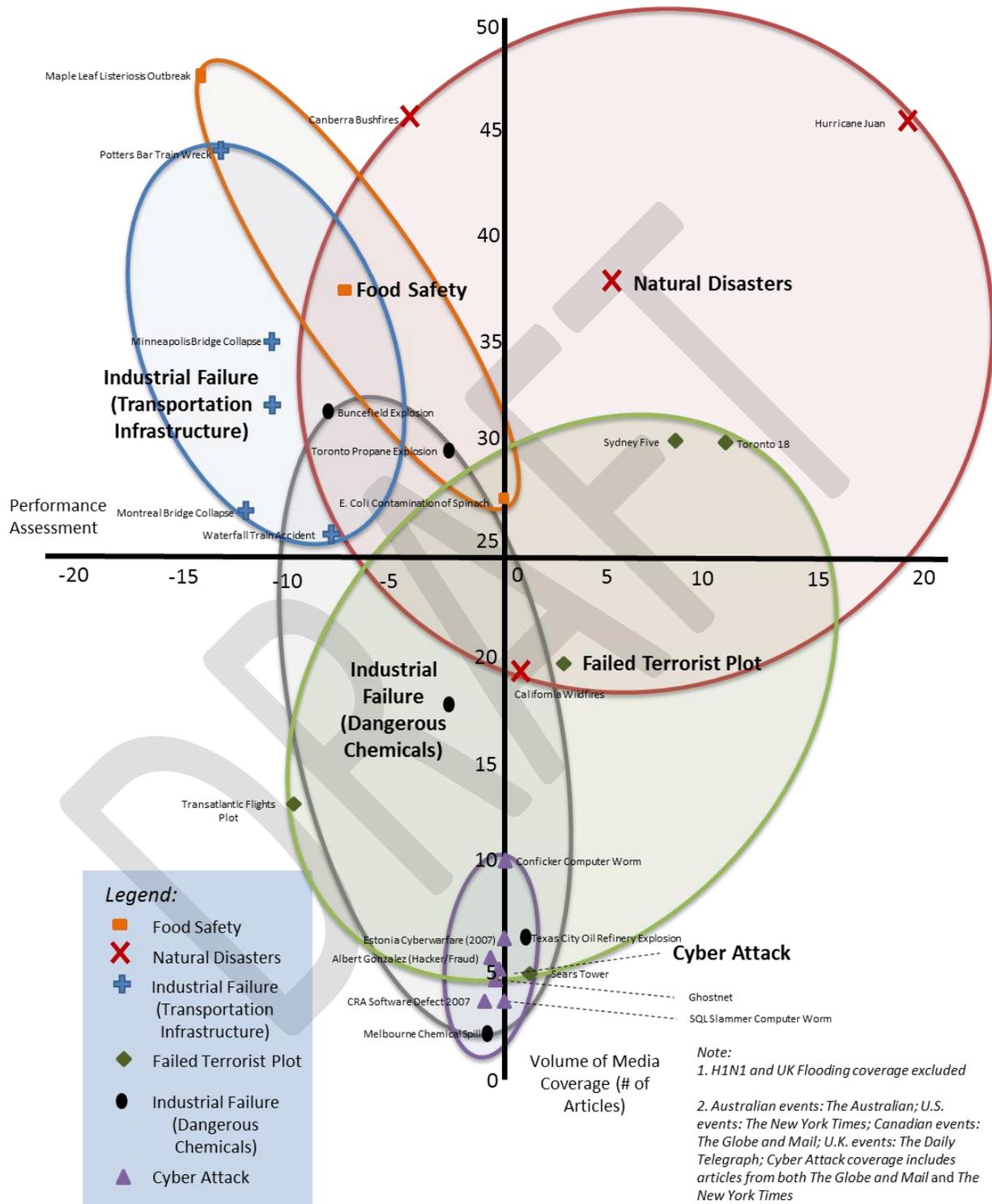


Figure 12: All Hazards: Government Performance Assessment and Volume of Coverage in Print Media by Event Type (Australia, Canada, UK, US)



Sources Used in Articles

Key Point: 45% of articles about Toronto 18 and Sydney Five use federal government sources. In these cases, government does not compete (or conflict) with other sources to the same extent as it does in other cases in the database.

Table 3 shows the percentage of articles that use sources from the identified institution, sector interest or individual. In both the Sydney Five and the Toronto 18, about 45% of the articles use at least one source from the federal government. While this in itself is not unusual compared to other events – it is often the case that the level of government primarily responsible for the infrastructure (e.g., the regulator) or emergency response is a source in a large percentage of the total articles – it is unusual that there are so few competing sources of information. The media use other sources in failed terrorist plots but there is no one other source that is called upon frequently. When one combines this with the performance assessment data, which are largely positive, one sees that the federal government is perceived to be the agency responsible and receives positive assessments. In contrast, in natural disasters, all orders of government are called on as sources. In industrial failures, which are largely negative performance assessments, government is called on as a source, but so too is the industry responsible.

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Table 3: Sources for Media Coverage of Selected Events

Event	Type	Federal Gov. Source	Provincial Gov. Source	Municipal Gov. Source	Industry Source	Academic Source	Eyewitness or Citizen Source	Industry Association Source
Sydney Five	Failed Terrorist Plot	45.2%	12.9%	6.5%	22.6%	3.2%	22.6%	0.0%
Toronto 18	Failed Terrorist Plot	45.2%	9.7%	6.5%	22.6%	9.7%	29.0%	9.7%
<i>E. coli</i> Contamination of Spinach	Food Safety	63.0%	22.2%	0.0%	22.2%	25.9%	7.4%	25.9%
Maple Leaf Listeriosis Outbreak	Food Safety	47.9%	2.1%	2.1%	62.5%	10.4%	10.4%	0.0%
Buncefield Explosion	Industrial Failure (Dangerous Chemicals)	18.8%	0.0%	6.3%	84.4%	3.1%	37.5%	15.6%
Texas City Oil Refinery Explosion	Industrial Failure (Dangerous Chemicals)	42.9%	0.0%	0.0%	57.1%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Toronto Propane Explosion	Industrial Failure (Dangerous Chemicals)	0.0%	43.3%	36.7%	40.0%	13.3%	20.0%	33.3%
UK Flooding	Industrial Failure (Dangerous Chemicals)	46.8%	0.0%	8.4%	31.2%	7.8%	48.1%	23.4%
Minneapolis Bridge Collapse	Industrial Failure (Transportation Infrastructure)	45.7%	34.3%	31.4%	17.1%	14.3%	22.9%	0.0%
Montreal Bridge Collapse	Industrial Failure (Transportation Infrastructure)	3.7%	74.1%	14.8%	37.0%	25.9%	18.5%	18.5%
Potters Bar Train Wreck	Industrial Failure (Transportation Infrastructure)	43.2%	0.0%	0.0%	68.2%	4.5%	34.1%	15.9%
Waterfall Train Accident	Industrial Failure (Transportation Infrastructure)	0.0%	34.6%	3.8%	23.1%	3.8%	15.4%	23.1%
California Wildfires	Natural Disaster	31.6%	42.1%	42.1%	31.6%	21.1%	31.6%	10.5%
Canberra Bushfires	Natural Disaster	32.6%	8.7%	8.7%	21.7%	10.9%	13.0%	8.7%
Hurricane Juan	Natural Disaster	34.8%	34.8%	26.1%	47.8%	6.5%	28.3%	10.9%

3.0 Key Themes (Daily): Sydney Five

Event: The 'Sydney Five' failed terrorist plot (2006)

Each row in the following table represents an article that appeared in *The Australian* on the date listed. The 'Detail' column provides a brief summary of the article's key information, and the 'Extractable Observations' column provides some thematic insight into the article that may apply to other failed terrorist plots.

Table 4: Key Themes (Daily): Sydney Five

Summary of media coverage of 'Sydney Five' in *The Australian* between November 9, 2005 and November 9, 2006; 31 articles included.

Date	Detail	Extractable Lessons/Observations
Nov 9, 2005	Article explaining that 17 arrests were made as a result of sweeping terrorists raids in Melbourne and Sydney. Seven of those arrested were in Sydney, the remainder in Melbourne. This is the first article mentioning these arrests. It also mentions the investigation, which began 18 months prior, and an emergency law passed by Parliament the previous week, which helped facilitate the arrests.	Massive and somewhat sensational coverage of the event on the first day, numerous articles exploring the event from different angles. Australia has had relatively few terrorist events of this magnitude, which may partially explain the high level of coverage.
	States that 2 of those arrested in the raids were trained by Al-Qaeda in a training camp in Afghanistan. Claims that the terrorists arrested were part of an organization committed to waging "violent jihad" in Australia.	
	More discussion on the investigation, stating that it is ongoing. To date this was Australia's biggest counter-terrorism operation; it disrupted the activities of two groups in Sydney and Melbourne.	
	Seven men arrested in Sydney were charged with manufacturing explosives, and are accused of being the bomb makers for the terrorist plot.	

	<p>A commentary focused on one of the arrested suspects. It observes that he wanted to be a suicide bomber early on but was apparently denied by the leader of the group. The article also examines some of the training that the groups undertook, and the apparent links and tensions that existed between the Melbourne and Sydney groups.</p>	
	<p>Article outlines some of the criticisms put forth by left-wing senators who criticized the Government for rushing an amendment through Parliament that allowed the arrests to take place.</p>	
	<p>Article advances discussion on the investigation citing increased communications between the Melbourne and Sydney terrorist groups as a trigger leading authorities to conclude that an attack was imminent. This resulted in the decision to arrest the groups after the 18-month investigation.</p>	
	<p>A commentary on counter-terrorism raids shows how far security has evolved since 9/11. The article discusses the investigation, stating that it was painstaking and involved cooperation among many agencies. It also mentions that institutional rivalries that existed in the past are largely gone.</p>	
	<p>Article argues that the terrorists' arrests confirm that the PM made the right decision in passing the recent laws that facilitated the arrest. Any critics of the PM over his motivations for passing the laws are discredited. It also argues that the terrorist laws are needed, but striking the right balance with these laws is a challenge.</p>	
	<p>Article argues that the counter-terrorism raids show there is no doubt that terrorism poses a danger to Australia. It also notes that those arrested in Sydney were alleged to be preparing a terror attack, while those arrested in Melbourne were charged only with membership in a terror organization. It includes some commentary on the necessity of anti-terrorism laws to protect Australians.</p>	

	Another favourable appraisal of the PM, arguing that the terrorist raids show that the PM did the right things in introducing the amendment to the counter-terrorism laws.	Tone towards the police and government is for the most part positive in the early articles.
	Another article praising the cooperation between authorities. The investigation was complex and involved several agencies. Also notes that some of the men arrested in Sydney were Australian citizens. Finally, mentions the Commonwealth Games as a possible target, which is not confirmed by government officials – slightly alarmist given this was not mentioned by any authorities or in any previous articles.	
Nov 10, 2005	Article explores how a chemical supply company alerted police to unusual purchases by Muslim men in Sydney. This, in part, led to the arrests.	Heavy coverage continued on second day.
	Article states that close links existed between some of the suspects arrested and radical prayer halls in Australia. Most notably, there were ties between the groups and a controversial Melbourne cleric Sheik Mohammed Omran.	
	Another article praising the new laws that were “rushed” through Parliament. The attorney general is quoted as calling them crucial for the nation’s ability to thwart terrorism. The article goes on to argue that without these laws the arrests would probably not have happened. Critics note that the government has not provided adequate detail and specifics of the threat, and the laws could actually stimulate more terrorism by disaffected individuals.	
	Article provides some detailed background on the 17 terror suspects arrested. Includes age, marital status and brief biographical information.	
	Article argues that as long as there is a fair trial, for the most part, the Muslim community supports the raids.	
	The lawyers representing the suspects argue that the publicity of the case diminishes the likelihood that the accused will receive a fair trial.	

	Article stating that the raids left the surrounding neighbourhoods 'traumatized'. Also includes a quote from a neighbour describing the suspects as coming from "normal Australian Families".	
Nov 11, 2005	The cleric Sheik Mohammed Omran is quoted as stating racism is more likely to cause terrorism than Australia's involvement in the Iraq war. He cites the recent arrests as shocking and asserts that the government should not have allowed such an event to receive so much public attention.	
Nov 12, 2005	Article argues that the Australian government has had young Muslims under surveillance long before these arrests. The government is accused of indiscriminate surveillance of the community, including cases in which some are surveilled without evidence.	For the first two days, performance assessment of the government was relatively positive. The coverage becomes less positive at this point with evidence of indiscriminate surveillance emerging.
Nov 14, 2005	Article announces that the government is increasing funding for counter-terror resources in light of the recent raids. The article includes comments from the Police Minister stating that that counter-terrorism is the government's most important priority and resources are adequate but further vigilance required. First article mentioning police/counter-terrorism funding.	
Nov 15, 2005	The suspects were apparently under orders to inflict 'maximum damage'. One of the possible targets was a nuclear reactor. The article also includes some exploration of the ideology of the suspects, stating that they belong to a hardline Islamic group with no respect for mainstream Muslim community leaders.	After the first week, volume of coverage declines dramatically.
Nov 21, 2005	Article states that while police believe they have made significant progress in countering terrorism in Australia with the recent arrests, there are more terror cells forming in the country. The article also cites the recent operation as a success in terms of cooperation, and that many lessons will come out of it for future operations.	

Feb 9, 2006	The brother of one of the arrested suspects speaks out against the PM, accusing the government of targeting and alienating Muslims and proclaiming his brother's innocence.	
March 3, 2006	Article explaining that the Australian authorities have determined that none of the suspects arrested in the raids in November had any direct links to external terrorist organizations. The article also explores concerns related to homegrown terrorism.	
May 13, 2006	Article explores some of the communications techniques between the accused terrorists. Specifically, looks at the coded text messages they used to communicate which were disguised as "love messages".	Coverage several months after the event is sporadic and tends to focus on developments in the trial.
July 29, 2006	Prison authorities were ordered to use reasonable force as necessary to get the 13 Melbourne terror suspects to attend court. The article also outlines some of the charges and evidence against the suspects.	
Sep 2, 2006	Seven of the Melbourne terror suspects refused to obey the order to appear in court. The article also provides more background information on the charged and activities of the group.	
	Article outlines of some of the evidence presented by the prosecution in the trial, and summarizes the proceedings to date. It also mentions the difficult decision investigators faced when they made the decision to arrest the group, as opposed to waiting and amassing more evidence. Much of the evidence is described as circumstantial, and physical evidence is lacking.	
Sep 11, 2006	Australian authorities continue to worry about future terrorist attacks. The November arrests are an example of the type of terrorist plot that could occur. The threat is continually evolving but Australian authorities are well positioned to combat it.	9/11 anniversary

4.0 Key Themes (Daily): Toronto 18

Event: The Toronto 18 failed terrorist plot (2006)

Each row in the following table represents an article that appeared in *The Globe and Mail* on the date listed. The 'Detail' column provides a brief summary of the article's key information, and the 'Extractable Observations' column provides some thematic insight into the article that may apply to other failed terrorist plots.

Table 5: Key Themes (Daily): Toronto 18

Publication: *The Globe and Mail*

Date	Detail	Extractable Lessons/Observations
June 3, 2006	A brief article stating that several people have been arrested in the Toronto area on terrorism-related charges – minimal details available.	First articles provide minimal detail – piecing together information, attempting to deliver a full account of the events. Rely on government sources.
	A follow-up article with more detail. An RCMP source confirms that police in the Greater Toronto Area launched counterterrorism raids arresting at least eight people.	
June 5, 2006	An editorial exploring terrorism and extremism in Canada, and its relation to immigration and multiculturalism. Examines how citizens can succumb to the ideology of Islamic extremism.	After two days, articles are focused less on the event and more on the context and related issues. A greater variety of sources are incorporated and different perspectives included.
	A Toronto Mosque was vandalized, sparks fear of possible backlash against Toronto Muslims.	
	US officials praise Canada's counter-terrorism success, but some also fear that Canada could be a staging area for attacks into the US.	
June 6, 2006	The RCMP officers received sensitivity training prior to the raid to learn about Muslim traditions and protect themselves from complaints of racial profiling.	More comprehensive articles emerging include background and contextual information.

	Includes the charge sheet for 17 of the alleged terrorists, indicating the charges for each. Also details the three phases of alleged activity, which are gun smuggling, training and recruitment, and the bomb conspiracy.	
	Further discussion of the charges against the suspects. Also includes some commentary on the anti-terrorism operation that led to the arrest and US concerns over inadequate Canadian immigration standards.	Coverage of concerns over Canadian immigration standards begins.
	Prime Minister Harper called President Bush to thank him for the cooperation of US authorities. Concerns over Canadian immigration system are again highlighted. Canadian parliamentarians defend the immigration system and show high level of cooperation and unity in Parliament in the wake of the arrests.	
	Security measures on parliament hill have been stepped up. Some critics note that there are still gaps and the measures are weak compared to parliaments in other jurisdictions.	
	A brief article discussing the low growth of tourism in Toronto and the negative impact on the tourism industry of events such as the Toronto 18.	First article which is focused on potential long-term economic impact.
	Discusses the investigation leading to the arrest of the suspects. The investigation was triggered by the arrest of a Younis Tsouli and was a large multinational effort spanning several months. This event reveals the changing nature of terrorism in that none of the suspects were Al-Qaeda members, nor did they have foreign training.	
June 7, 2006	Article discusses one of the suspects, Steven Chand. He is described as a Muslim convert who spent time trying to recruit others. He's described as personally wanting to storm Parliament, take hostages, make demands and behead the Prime Minister.	
	More details emerging. Outlines some details of the investigation and the plot such as potential target list and bomb types.	

	Another article describing the investigation. Describes the investigation as comprehensive and consuming thousands of hours. It involved electronic surveillance, long surveillance stakeouts and conversations with informants.	
June 8, 2006	Another account of the plot, now referred to as operation BADR.	
June 9, 2006	Unpacks the concept of beheading as a terrorist tactic.	
	Article summarized efforts by the RCMP to reach out and engage the Muslim community to combat its past image of racial profiling.	
June 9, 2006	Examines how the Muslim community is reacting to the arrests. Specifically, it observes that the families of the accused are ostracized by their community.	The tone of the coverage begins to change in that some of the articles are more sympathetic towards the suspects, focusing on their families in particular.
June 10, 2006	Provides an overview of the results of a recent survey. Highlights include that a majority of respondents believe a terrorist attack is likely to occur in Canada, and there is increased support for the Afghanistan mission.	
Jun 13, 2006	A brief article focused on an event to be held sparked by the Toronto 17 events called 'I am not afraid'. The article questions the value of such an event.	
June 14, 2006	First article on the treatment of the suspects. The article outlines some allegations that the suspects are being subjected to cruel punishment. This is disputed by the Ontario government, which claims they're receiving the same treatment as any other prisoner.	
June 15, 2006	Another commentary on terrorism focused on the generation of tech-savvy terrorists. The article examines the threat posed by terrorist groups using the internet to spread their messages. These mediums allow access to a wider audience contributing to the 'homegrown threat'.	
June 21, 2006	Four suspects were arrested in the UK by anti-terrorism police – reported to have links to the Toronto 17.	

June 27, 2006	An article that argues that Toronto arrests help to demonstrate that the authorities can keep Canadians safe from the threat of terror without the help of security certificates, and that these arrests could potentially assist those who are currently being held under these certificates.	
January 25, 2007	The lead informant in the case testifies for the first time. In a bizarre turn of events the informant's brother was arrested then released at the same time; limited details provided.	Coverage several months after the event is sporadic and several of the articles focus on developments in the ongoing trial.
February 24, 2007	Terror-related charges against the youngest Toronto 18 suspects were stayed. The evidence was not as strong as initially thought. Also indications that some of the evidence against other suspects was not as strong.	
May 21, 2007	An article detailing assault charges being faced by one of the key informants for the terrorism case.	
May 22, 2007	Article looks at a Facebook page created to lobby on behalf of the accused. The goal of the groups is to ensure that trials are fair and that suspects' families are supported.	Only mention of social media.
April 4, 2006	The 18th member of the Toronto 18 was charged. First mention of 18th member.	
April 17, 2007	An unknown gunman fired shots into the car of the wife of one of the Toronto 18 suspects. The wife attributes this to remarks she had recently made criticizing the isolation in which her husband was being held.	

5.0 Note about the Authors

Kevin Quigley is an associate professor and director of the School of Public Administration at Dalhousie University. In 2008 he published critically acclaimed book, *Responding to Crises in the Modern Infrastructure: Policy Lessons from Y2K* (Palgrave). Quigley specializes in public sector risk, strategic management and critical infrastructure protection. He has published in respected academic journals, such as *Public Administration, Health, Risk & Society* and the *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*. As principal investigator, he has secured over \$800,000 in research grants and contribution agreements over the last six years in the areas of risk, resilience and CIP. He is part of a team that was recently awarded a SSHRC Partnership Grant and which received a total of \$3.98 million in funding over seven years on the subjects of globalization and borders. Quigley has worked with government departments such as the Canada School of Public Service, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Defence Research and Development Canada, Public Safety Canada, Treasury Board Secretariat, the Government of Nova Scotia's Public Service Commission and Public Safety New Brunswick. His work on risk and CI has also been funded by the Economic and Social Research Council in the UK. He has been invited to speak on CI issues in several countries. Prior to starting graduate work, Kevin Quigley was a senior public servant in the Ontario Public Service.

John Quigley is a professor and an industrial statistician at the University of Strathclyde. He received his BMath (Hons) in Actuarial Science from the University of Waterloo and his PhD in Management Science from Strathclyde. His main research expertise is in statistical inference, applied probability modeling and elicitation of prior probability distributions. In particular, he is interested in decision support methodologies with few observed data. He has extensive experience in modeling risk and reliability problems with decision-makers in the military, aerospace and railway industries. John is an Associate of the Society of Actuaries, a Chartered Statistician, and a member of the Safety and Reliability Society and the Institute of Mathematical Statistics. He has been involved in consultancy with companies such as NASA, MoD, DSTL, Railway Safety Standards Board, BAE Systems, Goodrich, Siemens and Fairhurst. His recent publication "Estimating the Probability of Rare Events: Addressing Zero Failure Data" published in *Risk Analysis*, was shortlisted for the *Lloyd's Science of Risk Prize* in Insurance Operations

Bryan Mills was the lead researcher on the 'Sydney Five' and 'Toronto 18' cases in this publication. Bryan is a recent graduate of the MPA program at Dalhousie and is a research assistant for the *CIP Initiative* at the School of Public Administration.

Kristen Stallard was the lead researcher on the terrorism literature review in this publication. Kristen is a recent graduate of the MPA program at Dalhousie and a research assistant for the *CIP Initiative* at the School of Public Administration.

Appendix 1: List of Events in Critical Infrastructure/Emergency Management (CI/EM) Database

- Pandemics
 - H1N1 UK
 - H1N1 US
 - H1N1 Australia
 - H1N1 Canada
- Natural Disasters
 - 2003 Canberra Bushfires
 - Hurricane Juan
 - 2007 UK Flooding
 - 2007 California Wildfires
- Industrial Failures
 - Potter's Bar Train Wreck (UK)
 - Waterfall Train Accident (AUS)
 - De la Concorde Overpass Collapse (Montreal)
 - Mississippi River Bridge Collapse (Minneapolis)
- Food Safety Issues
 - Maple Leaf Listeriosis Outbreak
 - 2007 North American *E. coli* outbreaks
- Chemical Disasters
 - Melbourne Chemical Spill
 - Toronto Propane Explosion
 - Buncefield Explosion (UK)
 - Texas City Oil Refinery Explosion
- Terrorist Conspiracies
 - Sydney Five
 - Toronto 18
 - Liberty City Seven (Sears Tower)
 - Transatlantic Flights Plot
- Cyber Attack
 - Ghostnet
 - Conflicker Computer Worm
 - Albert Conzalex (Hacker/Fraud)
 - CRA Software Defect 2007

Appendix 2: Methods for This Research Paper

We reviewed 1,857 articles from four different newspapers. We accessed the coverage of these events by using the Factiva database to search within a leading national newspaper in each country: *The Australian*, *The Globe and Mail* (Canada), *The Daily Telegraph* (UK) and *The New York Times*. These are all high-distribution newspapers and opinion leaders in each of the respective countries.¹ We identified our sample by drawing on all articles that appeared in the period of one year following the date at which each event began and that included in the article the term(s) most commonly used to refer to the event. For example, in addition to the “De la Concorde Overpass Collapse”, we used the terms “Montreal Bridge Collapse” or “Montreal Bridge.” We eliminated any articles that were clearly not principally about the event. These types of events tend to appear many articles during the year in which they occur, but the references to the events are often ‘asides’ in articles that are principally about something else. In all cases we chose to examine articles that were principally about the event in question.

For the analysis of the headlines, we drew on the analytical framework of Rowe, Frewer and Sjöberg (2000), which examines not only volume but also media tone and content when considering how risks² are communicated to the public. Headlines were categorized in one of four ways: alarming; reassuring; alarming and reassuring; neither alarming nor reassuring. We reduced the impact of the bias in assessments by using several strategies.

For All non-H1N1 Stories

We assessed all the articles during a short and fixed period of time (between February and August 2010). We also developed a standard template and applied it to all articles. All results were stored in a Microsoft Access database that we developed and maintain. One research assistant classified all articles in *The Australian*; one classified all articles in *The Globe and Mail*; and one classified all articles in *The Daily Telegraph* and *The New York Times*. While this approach introduces some consistency in the analysis within each newspaper, it fails to have the same level of consistency across newspapers. The group did meet initially, however, to review articles together to introduce some level of consistency. The group also met occasionally throughout the assessment period to discuss the review process. Nevertheless, because different individuals assessed different newspapers we are hesitant to make strong comparative claims across the newspapers.

For All H1N1 Stories

The method was the same as the one noted above except that it was carried out by four different research assistants and the review occurred the following year – January and February 2011.

A few methodological constraints on the headline content analysis bear noting. First, and as noted in the literature review above, what constitutes alarming is often in the eye of the beholder. In general, we

¹ Local media coverage may well yield different results but they are not part of this particular research project.

² Rowe, Frewer and Sjöberg (Roux-Dufort, 2007) examine how science and technology risks are communicated to the public.

judged headlines to be alarming when they used dramatic language and implied the potential of a negative outcome or that the event and the consequences were 'out of control.' As much as possible, we tried to wear the hat of the newspapers' (relatively broad) target audience and not that of an expert. While there were some difficult judgments, most headlines were categorized easily. Second, headlines are dramatic. Just because a headline is alarming it does not follow that the entire article is alarming.

For analysis of the content of the articles, we counted the number of articles that referred to various key terms. The key search terms were selected based on conventional items that were relevant to public administration and risk management. We also determined whether key actors – such as government and owners and operators in CI sectors – were assessed positively, negatively or neutrally. (N/A was also an option.) To summarize the performance data, a value of + 1 was assigned to each article that was on balance a positive assessment for each key public or private CI entity and a value of -1 to each article that was on balance a negative assessment. (Neutral assessments were given 0.) We then calculated the total net sum, adding the number of positive and negative assessments together. We also present the data as a ratio (negative to positive assessments).

For analysis of the key themes of the two failed terrorist plots, one research assistant analyzed *The Globe and Mail* coverage of the Toronto 18 and *The Australian's* coverage of the Sydney Five. The analysis covered one year of media coverage beginning when the story first appeared in that publication. The research assistant took note of the date when important details were reported and made extractable observations based on those details.

Inter-rater reliability

To test the inter-rater reliability of all aspects of coding, ten per cent (n=186) of the 1,857 articles were double-coded independently of the original coders. Using Cohen's kappa coefficient we found an inter-rater reliability agreement of $k = .80$ for tone of the headlines, and $k = .66$ for government performance assessment. This corresponds to a substantial level of agreement.

6.0 Work Cited

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