QUELLE DIFFÉRENCE? Language, culture and nationality as influences on francophone journalists' identity

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Canada, Belgium and Switzerland are multicultural countries with several similarities including having French as a minority language. The trio also shares similar media landscapes, systems and approaches to journalism to those of other Western European and Northern American countries. These commonalities offer an opportunity to probe for the possibility of a language-based differentiation in journalists' professional identities. Our comparative analysis of Worlds of Journalism Study data suggests that francophone journalists in our three countries have much more in common than not with their other-language peers. However, the francophone journalists seem more likely to identify with a politicized role that includes agenda-setting, citizen-motivation and scrutinizing power, and less likely to be driven by attracting and satisfying audiences. A différence francophone *exists, but it is modest.*

KEYWORDS Belgium; Canada; francophone; journalism; language; media systems; professional identity; Switzerland

Introduction

Belgium, Canada and Switzerland all have significant francophone minority populations;[1] each sits well within the mainstream of Western developed nations, and each has a significant public broadcasting presence in its official languages as well as commercial media landscapes with broadly similar shapes and economic challenges. The availability of comparable answers to identical questions asked in the Worlds of Journalism questionnaire therefore offered us an opportunity to seek possible differentiations along language lines among journalists' perspectives in the *Francophonie*. In effect, we are searching for signs of a francophone culture of journalism, stretching across the borders of nation states.

The Potential Influence of Francophone Identity

So far, comparative studies of media systems and journalistic cultures have mainly compared journalists from different countries. Although this national framework remains relevant for many research questions, other, less frequently studied phenomena may cross territorial boundaries, including "cultural training linked to race, gender and ethnicity, and deterritorialized popular cultures," as well as the impact on "media cultures" of

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globalized dissemination (Hepp and Couldry 2009, 32). After all, national borders "do not necessarily correspond to cultural, linguistic and ethnic divisions, nor do they correspond to a common sense of identity" (Hantrais 1999, 98; Hanitzsch 2009, 416). Hallin and Mancini (2004, 26) went a step further, stating that: "Language factors can also be significant, dividing media markets into separate segments (as in Switzerland and Belgium) or increasing the importance of competition from outside a particular national market (as in Ireland, Canada, Austria, and Belgium)". The national level, then, is "by no means the only reference value, communication cultures can also be distinguished within national states, such as the linguistically segmented media markets in Belgium, Canada or Switzerland" (Esser 2016, 55, our translation).

That such linguistically segmented cultures might develop beyond the borders of a nation, sharing practices and assumptions at larger scales, is already apparent in the Anglo-American journalistic model whose "discursive fact-centred practices," established during the second half of the nineteenth century (Chalaby 1996, 310, 2004) may be contrasted to a French(-speaking) journalistic model that has been "built in the shadow of the political arena" (Delporte 1999, 23; Benson 2002) and characterized by a strong influence of literary circles at the origin of the so-called "opinion press." Both distinct from and influenced by the Anglo-Saxon practices, the specificities of a French (-speaking) journalistic model were confirmed and detailed by various researchers at the turn of the 1990s (Ferenczi 1993; Ruellan 1993, 1997; Chalaby 1996, 2004; Martin 1997; Delporte 1999), and placed in an international perspective by Hallin and Mancini (2004, 69), who consider France as a "mixed case, lying between the Polarized Pluralist and Democratic Corporatist models".

Although the study of the language of journalism has attracted attention within a wide range of academic disciplines (Richardson 2010), and while journalism can be seen as one of "the most important textual systems in the world" (Hartley 1996, 32), few comparative studies have proposed further consideration of the language criterion in determining journalistic practices and values (Hanitzsch et al. 2011, 288; Hanitzsch and Donsbach 2012, 272). In one rare attempt at a cross-linguistic comparison, Thomson, White, and Kitley 2008, 227) remained "unclear as to the degree to which different languages and cultures have developed their own individual journalistic styles and structures". Nevertheless, national studies in the tradition of David Weaver et al. provide ample reason to investigate a *différence francophone* across our three countries.

Within Canada, several national studies of journalists (Pritchard and Sauvageau 1999; Demers 2003; Pritchard and Bernier 2010; Bernier and Barber 2012) have already suggested marked differences among the identities of francophone and anglophone journalists. One of the main differences is the political involvement of journalists. In the province of Quebec, journalists have been known to be quite militant, particularly in the period of political turmoil that unfolded in the 1960s and 1970s. They have often entered politics after working in the news media, and are more likely than Americans or anglophone Canadians to be active union members (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 209, 224). Nonetheless, as Demers (2003) explains, these studies lack sufficient information to distinguish Quebec journalists from the country as a whole, and existing knowledge leaves us merely scratching at the surface of possible cross-language differences in Canada.

Turning to Belgium, the country is commonly described as a country with two media landscapes, but, as in Canada, hard evidence for the dichotomy remains sparse. Overall, Dutch- and French-speaking Belgians share similar values and attitudes on social issues (Billiet 2011). Despite Wallonia's shared border with France, which suggests that

francophone journalism might be closer to the Mediterranean model (Hallin and Mancini 2004), and despite the historically higher levels of trust among Flemish people (Billiet, Maddens, and Frognier 2006), Flemish and francophone journalists do not differ significantly in terms of self-image, political preference or attitudes to ethical practice (Raeymaeckers et al. 2013, 54, 6, 35–46).

The evidence is similarly mixed in Switzerland, where some studies (Marr and Wyss 1999; Wyss and Keel 2010) have shown that the multilingual context impacts the social structure of journalists, their professional training and their self-understanding of the Swiss society. The country's federal structure has encouraged the segmentation of the three major regional and language media markets (Swiss-German, French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino), allowing many relatively small media products to prosper at local and regional levels (Bonfadelli et al. 2011). Although a large-scale survey conducted in 1998 found that journalists in Switzerland shared similar working conditions and perceived similar journalistic roles to counterparts elsewhere in the industrialized West (Bonfadelli et al. 2011), much of this research underrepresented minority French, Italian and Romansh media professionals. Not unimportantly, over the past two decades, economic disruption and technological transformations have led to growing consolidation and concentration of Swiss media companies across linguistic boundaries (Bonfadelli et al. 2011; Dal Zotto, Schenker, and Sacco 2017). However, language barriers continue to play a significant role in shaping the borders of Swiss media markets (Blum 2003).

Beyond the particular features of journalism, there is no doubt that francophone minorities of our three countries distinguish themselves culturally in significant respects from their other-language compatriots, with common cultural reference points and collective identities that become more pronounced when confronted with other (linguistic) groups (Azzi and Klein 1998, 77). Our countries are full members of *la Francophonie*, for which there is no equivalent in the world's other language groups; francophone minority areas have developed ideas about multiculturalism and a sense of distinct history in relation to the nationally dominant linguistic group, as well as policies for using and promoting the French language (Demont-Heinrich 2005; Caulier and Courtois 2006). In these areas, language may become a defining feature of ethnic and personal identity (Francard and Blanchet 2003, 159). Because language constructs the identities and subjectivities of our daily existence (Hanks 1996), local cultures may live on within "the communicative practices of native and non-native speakers" despite the destabilizing effects of trans-national migration and information mobility (Heller 2003; Kramsch 2011, 306).

Nonetheless, we should guard against over-interpreting the features of the French culture. Some have proposed "language ecology" as a metaphor for a complex approach to the study of language as cultural context (Kramsch and Whiteside 2008). Following Kramsch,

> Culture might slowly lose its power to explain human behaviour in a multilingual/multicultural world where people are born in one culture, grow up in another, and end up living and working in a third. More important than a person's "language" and "culture" might be the socioeconomic, historical or ideological subject positions that people take and that get expressed through the multiple symbolic systems they choose to use. (Kramsch 2011, 313)

Group identities are "fluid" (Camilleri et al. 1990) and, as globalization detaches communication contexts from their geographic anchorages, individuals within the

Francophonie liquide carry in themselves significant "potential differences at a linguistic, cultural and identity level" (Johansson and Dervin 2009, 397).

Similarly, national frameworks remain significant even within a multicultural, increasingly globalized context. Even within relatively comparable national spaces, such as those that exist among Western democracies, many facets of journalism differentiate professionals from different countries. Hallin and Mancini placed Canada within the North Atlantic or Liberal "media system," characterized by a relative dominance of market mechanisms and commercial media, and Switzerland and Belgium within the north European Democratic Corporatist model, where commercial media are tied to organized social and political groups and the state's role is relatively active within clear legal limits. That said, they placed Belgium closer than Switzerland to the Polarized Pluralist Model, associated with France among other Latin and Mediterranean countries (Hallin and Mancini 2004, 70). In this third model, media organizations are more strongly integrated with party politics, the state's role is stronger and commercial media structures weaker. As Woltersdorff (2001, 34) stated, "French journalistic tradition rather favours the so-called *presse d'opinion*, placing greater importance on the freedom of speech than on the freedom of information". Likewise, Kuhn (2014) stated that French journalists seem less inclined than many European peers toward a distanced and autonomous stance *vis-à-vis* political involvements.

Yet, the national identity, like language identity, is increasingly liquid and "an explanatory variable is much too diffuse and complex" to serve as a reliably independent variable for explaining media systems (Dobek-Ostrowska et al. 2010, 168). In probing the potential impact of language, therefore, our goals are strictly exploratory rather than definitive, as should be the case with national identity.

Journalists' Roles and Practices

In an 18-country precursor to the current, more comprehensive Worlds of Journalism study, Hanitzsch examined journalists' descriptions of their professional role and posited four milieux—"populist disseminators, detached watchdogs, critical change agents and opportunist facilitators"—with "detached watchdogs" focusing on informing citizens and monitoring government and business, "critical change agents" adding an intent to have an impact on social change, and "populist disseminators" working to attract and engage audiences with ideologically neutral purpose (Hanitzsch 2011). These distinctions of emphasis in terms of role have long been associated with journalists' differing views, in particular countries and world regions, on the "objectivity" norm (Donsbach and Klett 1993; Hanitzsch et al. 2011, 275) and other ethical standards (Weaver and Wu 1998; Berkowitz, Limor, and Singer 2004).

Diversity in ethical approaches is not surprising when we consider the nature of ethics itself. Ethics, or reflection on morality (Thomaß 1998, 17), helps to characterize both the personal identities and professional discourse of journalists. Journalism itself is created through organized actions (Rühl 1996, 93) within a social and cultural context and within a mesh of economic, technical and hierarchical structures (Weischenberg 1992). Plaisance, Skewes, and Hanitzsch (2012, 654) found that "ethical outlooks are indeed related to the larger structural system in which they operate," even as a growing international consensus forms around "theories of cognitive processing, professional socialization, and cultural ideology" that point toward "elements of universalism in journalistic behaviour". Nevertheless, even against an increasingly globalized context of fragmentation

of languages, behaviours and customs, particular standards might remain resilient in specific groups and milieux (Müller-Scholl and Ruß-Mohl 1994, 272).

How might these different outlooks be measured? Forsyth and Pope (1984) posited two ethical dimensions: relativism (which seeks guidance within situational contexts) and idealism (which considers good consequences always attainable). Hanitzsch, based on the 18-country precursor study, found that Western journalists generally showed a lower expression of relativism than others, and moderate idealism (Hanitzsch 2009). How does this difference translate into the rights and wrongs of concrete reporting practices? Here, the connection, if any, is murky. Willnat and Weaver (2014, 17), for example, reported that a trend toward a more "gentle" journalism in the United States might be a reflection less of cultural factors than of commercial pressures that weigh against costly endeavors such as investigative journalism. Similar pressures are common knowledge in our three countries, and others. There is, therefore, little reason to expect any differences amongst language groups concerning the ethics of particular journalistic practices.

Perceptions on roles and ethics are among the most essential elements of journalistic culture (Hanitzsch 2007), and together, they should provide an enticing sketch of any differences that exist among sub-cultures. Therefore, overlaying the precursor findings on roles and ethics upon Hallin and Mancini's (2004) account, it is reasonable to expect that if there is a French influence, we will see some Mediterranean inclination among francophone-minority journalists, in the form of some tendency away from "populist" and "watchdog" conceptions and toward the "critical change agent" type—that is, an aspiration to influence the political agenda, public opinion and social change. Neither Belgium nor Canada was included in the precursor study, and nor was France (which is also absent from the current iteration of the global study). We therefore set out to analyze the views on roles and ethics expressed by journalists in our three countries, seeking insight on the extent, if any, that these cultural benchmarks might be associated with language-group rather than national differences.

For reasons that are, by now, clear, we expected that journalists from Belgium, Canada and Switzerland might tend to perceive roles somewhat congruently with Western-oriented leanings toward detachment and the monitoring of government, and to express a sense of being bound by general principles of professional ethics. However, the different media systems represented, as classified by Hallin and Mancini (2004), would supposedly result in different degrees of orientation toward objectivism and market orientation (which we would suppose to be highest in Canada) versus European journalists' greater integration with social and political groupings. At the same time, Mediterranean media cultures' aspiration to influence social change and political opinion led us to expect francophone news workers' sense of their roles to be more closely attuned to political and social outcomes, with their more corporately influenced Dutch-, German- and English-speaking peers more apt to focus on competing for, and entertaining, audiences.

Methods and Broad Findings

A total of 1780 journalists who answered the Worlds of Journalism questionnaire across our three countries are included in this analysis (Belgium: 592; Canada: 352; Switzerland: 836).[2] Interviews were conducted by phone in Canada (22 percent response, 4.93 margin of error (MOE)); online in Switzerland (28 percent response, 3.1 MOE); with a mix of phone, face-to-face, email and online in Belgium (37 percent response, 3.79 MOE).

The field work was done in the periods 2012–2014 (Belgium), 2014–2016 (Canada) and 2014–2015 (Switzerland). Our sampling strategies varied slightly, but all sought a balance between representativeness of organization types and of individual journalists.

Since our interest was in potential divergence between francophones' and compatriots' journalistic cultures as conceptualized (see above) by Hanitzsch (2007), we began by grouping Likert responses on roles, ethical approaches and reporting practices into broader categories using factor analysis. We discovered five factor groupings with Eigenvalue greater than 1 (indicating coherence) and Cronbach's alpha close to 0.65 (indicating reliability).[3] We gave each grouping a descriptive name, as follows.

Role orientations. The factor analysis revealed three groupings of answers to the question, "Please tell me how important each of these things is in your work." These were:

- *The fourth estate*: Provide analysis of current affairs; monitor and scrutinize political leaders; monitor and scrutinize businesses; set the political agenda; be an adversary of the government; provide the information people need to make political decisions; motivate people to participate in political activity (Eigenvalue = 4.77, Cronbach's alpha = 0.831).
- *Community-builders*: Advocate for social change; let people express their views; educate the audience; tell stories about the world; promote tolerance and cultural diversity (Eigenvalue = 2.66, Cronbach's alpha = 0.693).
- *Audience-servers*: Provide entertainment and relaxation; provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience; provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life (Eigenvalue = 1.63, Cronbach's alpha = 0.673).

Reporting practices. The factor analysis revealed no groupings of responses regarding approaches to ethics, but two groupings of answers to the question about applied ethics—that is, reporting practices: "Given an important story, which of the following, if any, do you think may be justified on occasion and which would you not approve of under any circumstances?" The two groupings were:

- *Extreme practices*: Publishing stories with unverified content; accepting money from sources; altering or fabricating quotes from sources; altering photographs (Eigenvalue = 2.74, Cronbach's alpha = 0.68).
- *Deceptive practices*: Claiming to be somebody else; getting employed in a firm or organization to gain inside information; using hidden microphones or cameras (Eigenvalue = 1.79, Cronbach's alpha = 0.64).

Having determined these groupings by factor analysis, we summed the scores on individual items together (Spector 1992). Since there are varying numbers of items for each scale, we standardized all scales to a score out of 10 to allow for greater ease of interpretation (Dawes 2008).[4] We then used the standardized scales to analyze the responses of francophone versus other-language journalists in our three countries combined and separately by country.

Finally, we compared mean scores using a two-step method. First, we used a *t*-test to compare the mean of the entire sample of French-speaking journalists with the consolidated sample of German-Swiss, English-Canadian and Flemish journalists. We then similarly conducted *t*-tests within each of the three countries to observe the consistency of the language-based difference against country-specific variation.

TABLE 1
Relationships between language and measures of roles, practices and ethics

	All three countries		Belgium		Canada		Switzerland	
	French	**Other**	**French**	**Dutch**	**French**	**English**	**French**	**German**
Role orientations[a]								
The fourth estate	6.63	6.15*	6.24	5.56*	6.74	6.55	7.14	6.27*
Community-builders	7.21	6.67*	7.56	6.37*	7.50	7.88*	6.52	6.40
Audience-servers	5.24	6.39*	5.58	5.93*	4.46	5.67*	5.16	6.86*
Reporting practices[a]								
Extreme practices	9.67	9.57	9.62	9.47*	9.77	9.71	No data	No data
Deceptive practices	7.55	7.64	7.36	7.05*	7.31	7.79*	7.99	7.86
Approaches to ethics[b]								
Journalists should always adhere to a code of professional ethics	4.55	4.44*	4.47	4.32*	4.66	4.44*	4.59	4.50
What is ethical depends on the situation	3.15	3.28*	3.32	3.26	2.87	3.27*	3.05	3.30*
What is ethical is a matter of personal judgment	2.31	2.18*	2.41	2.24	1.87	2.29*	2.44	2.12*
Acceptable to set aside moral standards in extraordinary situations	2.88	2.38*	2.99	2.50*	2.91	2.61	2.69	2.23*

[a]Mean scores out of 10 based on scale.
[b]Mean score based on original survey question (the factor analysis indicated that responses to this question should not be combined into a scaled measure).
*Difference between French and other is significant at $p < 0.05$.

The results of all our comparisons are presented in Table 1, where a significant and consistent difference between francophone and majority-language journalists may be observed only in respect to their perceived roles, rather than ethics or reporting practices. It is, therefore, the responses on roles that will occupy most of our attention, and to which we will return shortly.

Regarding approaches to ethics, Francophone journalists may be more likely in general than majority-language peers to agree with the statement that journalists should adhere to codes of ethics, "regardless" of particular situations. This tendency is significant across the total sample, and also within Belgium and Canada, with the difference, if any, less marked in Switzerland. The "regardless" part of this finding is nuanced, however, when the possibility of "extraordinary circumstances" is introduced: in that case, francophone journalists become *more* likely to agree to set ethical standards aside. This suggests that while francophone journalists are, in principle, somewhat idealistic about ethical standards, they are also not disinclined to be swayed by unusual particularities.

Turning to the acceptability of particular journalistic practices, language differences could be discerned neither in the factor-analyzed groupings nor in respect to particular practices. Journalists in all our sub-samples tend to be strongly opposed to practices such as using hidden microphones or cameras and using confidential documents without authorization. They are also somewhat (i.e. not so strongly) opposed to practices such as accepting money from sources or altering or fabricating quotes. It is interesting to see that recent results from South African colleagues in the World of Journalism study (De Beer 2016, 64) show rather similar results to those in our three countries. This speaks to a somewhat globalized understanding of ethical practice.

Before we proceed to a deeper analysis of the apparent language-rooted differences with respect to journalistic roles, it is important to note that in order to examine language differences as they relate to a broad range of dependent variables, we do not incorporate control variables into this analysis. That being said, comparisons of the sample of French-speaking journalists with the consolidated other-language journalists (see Table 2) indicate few statistically significant differences, and none, for example, in gender or age. Francophone journalists are slightly more likely to work for organizations with a regional reach (36.0 percent versus 26.4 percent), whereas other-language journalists are more likely to work for organizations with a national reach (54.7 percent versus 46.4 percent), which may have something to do with their slightly higher income levels.

These variations are likely to reflect differences in the structure of media organizations and local economies, and there is no readily intuitive reason for a linkage to differences in professional culture. This paper, therefore, uses only bivariate analysis techniques to preliminarily explore the possibility of a francophone journalistic culture, leaving to future studies the possibility of examining our findings in the context of multivariate analysis.

Journalists' Roles

As we observed above, the only significant and consistent difference between the responses of francophone and other journalists in all three countries concerns their perceived professional roles. Specifically, francophone journalists appear to be *more* likely than their majority-group counterparts to perceive themselves as part of a "fourth estate" with a politicized role that includes agenda-setting, citizen motivation, and

TABLE 2
Relationship of language with selected demographic and occupational variables

		All three countries		Belgium		Canada		Switzerland		
		French *N* = 565	**Other** *N* = 1215	**French** *N* = 280	**Dutch** *N* = 312	**French** *N* = 109	**English** *N* = 243	**French** *N* = 176	**German** *N* = 660	**Global dataset** *N* = 27,304
Gender (%)	Male	60.2	60.9	60.0	66.7	55.0	57.2	63.6	59.5	57.7
	Female	39.8	39.1	40.0	33.3	45.0	42.8	36.4	40.5	42.3
Age (mean)		40.7	41.1	39.1	37.3	43.25	45.08	41.6	41.4	39.1
Education (%)	None	2.3	5.7	0.4	0.3	0	0.4	6.9	10.4	1.0
	High school	3.8	8.1	2.9	2.2	3.7	4.6	5.2	12.3	8.2
	Some post-secondary	3.4	6.5	1.1	0.6	0.9	2.5	8.7	10.9	6.7
	Bachelor	25.8	34.0	12.3	27.9	67.0	63.9	21.4	25.6	54.1
	Master	63.4	43.3	82.6	67.9	26.6	27.8	56.1	37.0	28.3
	PhD	1.3	2.5	0.7	1.0	1.8	0.8	1.7	3.8	1.8
Formal study (%)	Journalism	43.5	43.5	46.3	53.6	53.3	64.9	32.0	27.1	42.9
	Communications	8.4	9.1	7.8	10.3	10.5	8.3	8.0	8.7	11.7
	Both	6.4	8.8	6.6	7.0	6.7	3.5	6.0	12.4	12.3
	None	41.7	38.6	39.3	29.1	29.5	23.2	54.0	51.8	33.1
Political views (mean)		4.2	4.1	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.4
Media type (%)	Daily paper	43.7	36.8	36.7	28.4	64.8	55.9	43.8	43.8	35.5
	Weekly paper	11.9	13.0	11.9	1.6	0	1.1	17.6	22.3	8.6
	Magazine	11.7	13.2	11.9	14.8	2.0	12.1	11.4	15.9	9.6
	Television	18.0	18.2	23.7	24.2	26.7	13.2	11.4	12.7	22.5
	Radio	11.2	17.5	9.7	16.1	1.5	4.4	17.0	23.0	16.1
	News agency	4.6	3.0	2.2	0.6	7.9	4.4	8.5	2.6	3.8
	Online (stand-alone)	2.2	7.9	1.4	4.2	5.9	0	4.5	10.3	7.6
	Online (of offline outlet)	5.5	15.2	2.5	10.0	0	0	13.1	22.3	8.6

Employment status (%)	Full-time	70.4	64.1	71.8	76.9	81.1	71.6	67.6	51.8	78.9
	Part-time	14.7	22.6	7.5	5.8	1.2	8.3	30.1	38.5	9.8
	Freelance	14.7	12.5	20.7	15.7	16.0	19.3	2.3	9.7	9.9
	Other	0.2	0.7	0	1.6	1.6	0.9	0	0	1.4
Reach of medium (%)	Local	13.2	14.4	10.8	14.8	19.8	5.4	13.6	17.1	19.8
	Regional	36.0	26.4	17.3	8.7	39.6	36.6	63.6	31.8	25.8
	National	46.4	54.7	66.9	73.9	36.3	52.0	19.3	46.1	46.9
	Transnational	4.4	4.5	5.0	2.6	4.4	5.9	3.4	5.0	7.5

scrutinizing power. Conversely, francophones are *less* driven by a mission of attracting and satisfying audiences (by providing entertainment, daily-life advice, etc.).

Francophone journalists in Belgium and Switzerland are more likely than others to see themselves as community-builders, while the reverse is true in Canada. The reader will recall that a similar European–North American dichotomy was apparent above, with respect to the claim of autonomy from special interests. Therefore, we conclude that whatever may underlie the difference on community-building between francophones and others in each country individually, it is more likely to be connected to local factors in those countries than to deep-seated common francophone roots.

This leaves the aforementioned polarization between "fourth estate" and "audience-servers" as an apparently significant role difference between francophone and other-language peers. More details of this differentiation may be observed through the individual variables in Table 3.

It may be seen that while the fourth estate grouping, as a whole, is more important for francophones than for majority-language counterparts, not all the relevant roles *individually* demonstrate this difference, and of those that do, not all do so in all countries. There are outlier variables such as "adversary of the government" and "analysis of current affairs," which do not consistently show particular importance to francophones even though the factor analysis suggests otherwise.

On the other hand, the lesser importance of the audience-serving group of roles is consistently evident for all roles in all countries, except that, in Belgium, there is no significant difference regarding the provision of "advice, orientation and direction for daily life."

Unsurprisingly in Western democracies, the roles of supporting government and national development are equally unimportant (when compared to the global means) across the two language groups in all countries. It is more surprising, however, that influencing public opinion appears to be more important among majority-language journalists. The same surprise attaches to the apparent difference with regard to conveying "a positive image of political leadership," although these scores are universally low in our countries, as compared to a global mean that includes countries with strikingly different media systems.

To gain deeper insight on how journalists perceive their roles, we went on to analyze responses to an open-ended question which read: "Please tell me, in your own words, what should be the three most important roles of journalists in [your country]?" We conducted an initial textual analysis to identify recurrent themes and group them into six coding categories. Figure 1 reports key word types that allowed coding of each participant's response into quantitative information under six theme headings. The aim of this analysis was to convert each distinct response into a score of 0 or 1, with 1 denoting a response in which a particular theme was evident. Duplicate responses were eliminated—that is, if a response referred to a single theme more than once (e.g. answering with "inform, inform, inform"), only one score of "1" was recorded for that theme.

Intercoder agreement (Viera and Garrett 2005, 362) was then established by having a research assistant code 10 percent of the sample, affirming four themes—Inform, Educate, Community and Watchdog—as coded with "substantial agreement" (kappa rates between 0.666 and 0.726) and agreement on the remaining three—Investigate, Entertain and Curiosity—rated "almost perfect" (kappa = 0.860–0.902). We then performed a multiple component analysis (MCA), mapping the linguistic regions onto a two-dimensional space.

Figure 2 maps the MCA results, with a few notable patterns. First, the Curiosity theme is close to the map's centre, indicating that all groupings of respondents were equally

TABLE 3
How journalists' perceive their roles

Roles[a]	French *N* = 565	Other *N* = 1217	French Belgium *N* = 280	Dutch Belgium *N* = 312	French Canada *N* = 109	English Canada *N* = 245	French Switzerland *N* = 176	German Switzerland *N* = 660	Global *N* = 27,304
The fourth estate									
Monitor and scrutinize political leaders	3.66	3.26*	3.46	3.31	3.97	3.79*	3.79	3.05*	3.68
Monitor and scrutinize business	3.42	3.17*	3.33	3.19	3.68	3.74	3.40	2.95*	3.50
Set the political agenda	3.18	2.36*	3.12	2.46*	3.10	2.27*	3.31	2.35*	2.90
Adversary of government	2.02	2.14	1.48	1.42	1.61	2.22*	3.12	2.44*	2.47
Provide information people need to make political decisions	3.80	3.64*	3.59	3.30*	4.12	3.80*	3.92	3.74	3.72
Motivate people to participate in political activity	3.10	2.87*	3.01	2.09*	3.02	2.90	3.29	3.23	3.13
Analysis of current affairs	4.06	4.08	3.90	3.80	4.10	4.10	4.27	4.20	4.07
Audience-servers									
Provide entertainment and relaxation	2.50	3.10*	2.66	2.90*	1.94	2.81*	2.60	3.30*	3.08
Provide the kind of news that attracts the largest audience	2.61	3.33*	2.72	3.05*	2.38	2.95*	2.59	3.59*	3.43
Provide advice, orientation and direction for daily life	2.74	3.15*	2.99	2.94	2.35	2.73*	2.60	3.40*	3.34
Community-builders									
Advocate for social change	2.56	2.67	2.63	2.55	2.39	3.14*	2.54	2.56	3.48
Let people express views	3.82	3.46*	3.73	3.33*	3.90	3.87	3.90	3.38*	3.90
Educate the audience	4.04	3.45*	4.58	3.00*	4.85	4.51*	2.69	3.27*	3.90
Tell stories about the world	3.88	3.72*	3.93	3.80	4.21	4.36	3.59	3.45	3.81
Promote tolerance and cultural diversity	3.75	3.43*	3.93	3.31*	3.47	3.83*	3.65	3.35*	3.97
Variables not included in scales									
Detached observer	4.24	4.26	4.17	4.49*	4.43	3.98*	4.25	4.26	3.96
Report things as they are	4.59	4.61	4.50	4.68*	4.85	4.81	4.57	4.50	4.49
Influence public opinion	2.35	2.68	2.33	2.61*	2.40	3.00*	2.34	2.60*	3.25
Support national development	2.29	2.29	2.46	2.31	1.94	2.47*	2.25	2.23	3.29
Convey a positive image of political leadership	1.23	1.40*	1.29	1.68*	1.12	1.32*	1.21	1.31*	1.98
Support government policy	1.42	1.45	1.50	1.54	1.13	1.29*	1.47	1.50	2.08

[a]Mean score based on original survey question.
*Difference between French and other is significant at $p < 0.05$.

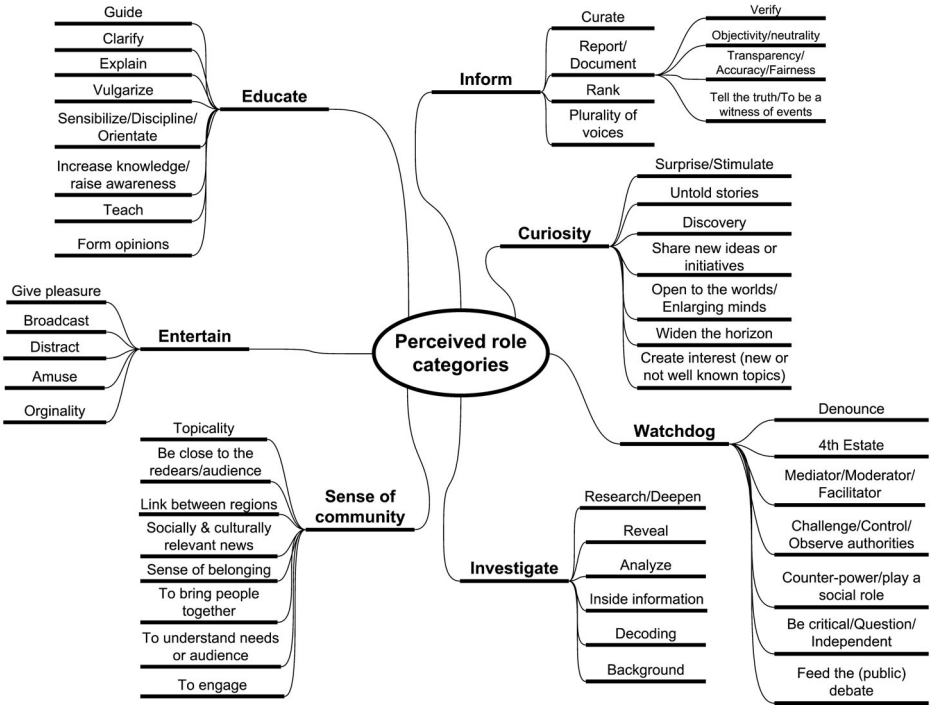

FIGURE 1
Themes within six coding categories for journalistic roles

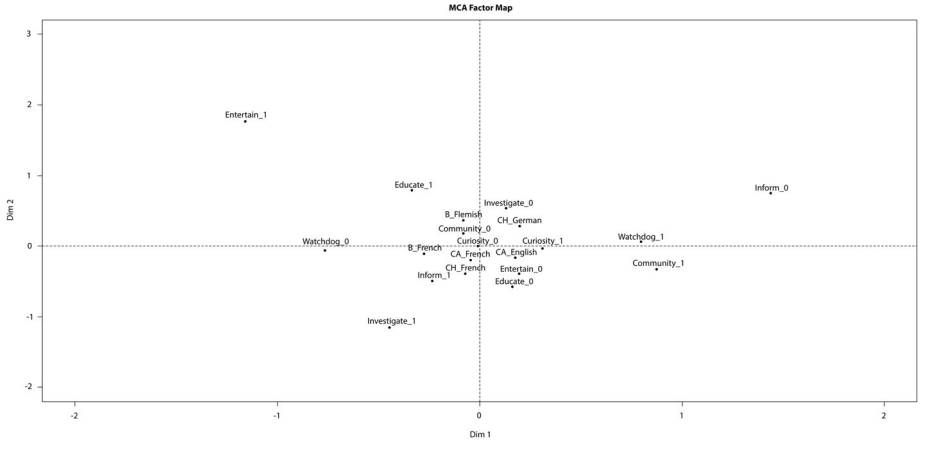

FIGURE 2
Multiple component analysis of the roles perceptions by linguistic regions, using the statistical software R.
Question C8: "Please tell me, in your own words, what *should be* the three most important roles of journalists in [country]?" B = Belgium (French + Flemish, $N = 584$), CH = Switzerland (French + German, $N = 600$), CA = Canada (French + English, $N = 353$). Not all respondents chose to answer this open-ended question

inclined to mention this type of role. Francophones from all three countries—and *only* francophones—are grouped in the bottom-left quadrant of the map, significantly closer than other respondent groups to the Inform and Investigate categories. The majority-language journalists were more distinct from one another than the francophones, with Dutch Belgians privileging educational and entertaining roles, English Canadians more apt to describe themselves as community-builders and Swiss Germans as watchdogs.

This Swiss-German characteristic marks a puzzling difference between our Likert and MCA findings, given the intuitive likeness between the Watchdog idea and the "fourth estate" grouping. Another puzzling difference is that while majority-language Swiss and Belgian journalists gravitated to the Educate/Entertain MCA quadrant, which seems naturally associated with the "audience-servers" factor grouping, the opposite polarity was true of Canadians.

Is There a Francophone Journalist?

On the whole, francophone-minority journalists in our three countries have much more in common than not with their majority-language peers. Across a total of 37 variables considered in our analyses of Likert questions (21 roles, 4 ethical approaches and 12 reporting practices), there are only a handful of instances where significant and mutually reinforcing differences appear between language groups in all three countries. The sampled journalists, without language distinction, see the core journalistic function of observation as a pre-eminently important role; and there is no significant difference by language group in the journalists' attitudes to professional ethics and controversial reporting practices.

Nevertheless, we cannot ignore the narrow band of nuanced differences that seem to add up to a subtly distinctive sense of the journalist's professional role. Francophone journalists are likely to find purpose in making an impact on society through actively setting the political agenda rather than more neutral roles such as "influencing" public opinion. Francophone journalists are *less* interested than majority-language peers in competing for market share by providing entertainment, relaxation and advice for daily life, and *more* inclined to see themselves as informing and motivating citizens, providing them with information to aid political decisions and keeping tabs on those in power.

This apparent *différence francophone* might suggest a tendency toward an idealistic, rather than pragmatic, view of the journalistic identity, seeming to reflect what is known about Mediterranean media cultures versus countries to the north and west: it seems that francophone journalists might continue to carry a moderately "Polarized Pluralist" DNA despite being located within more market-driven national media systems (Hallin and Mancini 2004). In the framework of Hanitzsch (2011), francophone journalists do indeed appear to lean toward a "critical change agent" self-conceptualization as compared with more ideologically neutral, audience-focused "populist" and "watchdog" peers.

On the other hand, our difficulty in marrying quantitative with qualitative responses may reflect more than merely methodological differences, and the fact that the open-ended question was optional. It may be significant that specifics of the two questions target different truths: the open-ended question focused on ideal roles in general ("what *should be* the role … "), the Likert question on the individual's own role in practice—a subtle difference that might reflect either differing degrees of

idealism regarding one's own work or differences in organizations' allocation of editorial resources. We also acknowledge, again, that our bivariate analysis, focused entirely on differences by language and country, was but a first, exploratory foray into the possible influences of a common francophone heritage on journalism practice. It would be profitably complemented by further international analysis including findings from France and other francophone countries such as Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria, to see how language-linked differences might compare against other cultural differences.

Further study will therefore be needed before determining quite how much weight should be placed on our participants' language-based distinctions, but our findings suggest inescapably that francophone journalists are somewhat more likely than their compatriots to see themselves as communicating to people as citizens, rather than as audiences or, in effect, customers.

In short: *Quelle différence francophone? Pas énorme*.

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NOTES

1. French-speakers constitute approximately 38 percent of the population in Belgium (where the majority language is Dutch), 23 percent in Switzerland (majority German) and 21 percent in Canada (majority English). In all three countries, francophone populations and media are often concentrated in particular geographic regions. All these countries also have other important minority languages.
2. Italian-speaking Swiss journalists' responses are not included in the present analysis because they are neither part of the dominant language group, nor part of the *Francophonie*.
3. Reliability depends in part on the number of items in the scale (Nunnally 1978, 227–228), and it is therefore not surprising to find that several of our scales fall slightly below Spector's (1992) proposed minimum Cronbach's alpha of 0.7, which has become a generally accepted guideline. Nevertheless, we note that the factor groupings relevant to role orientation all have alpha scores quite close to 0.7 or higher.
4. Summary statistics of the scales (valid *N*; mean; standard deviation; median) were as follows. Fourth estate: 1659; 6.29; 1.67; 6.57. Audience-servers: 1746; 6.03; 1.77; 6.00. Community-builders: 1683; 6.83; 1.54; 6.80. Special interests: 1696; 3.60; 1.36; 3.67. Professional imperatives: 1636; 6.86; 1.30; 7.00. Organizational interests: 1445; 5.32; 1.45; 5.20. Extreme practices: 888; 9.61; 0.85; 10.00. Deceptive practices: 1735; 7.61; 1.43; 7.78.

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