
Canadian Mines, Indigenous Communities and Accountability in Guatemala: What Role for the Media?

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Abstract

This article examines the role of the Canadian press as corporate watchdog. A content analysis of Canadian newspapers over a five-year period reveals that human rights abuses perpetrated by Canadian mining companies in Guatemala are under-reported. Sourcing constraints, lack of newsworthiness and other traditional journalism standards help explain why this story is 'missing' in the traditional press. Reporting critical of the mining companies was produced principally by individual journalists with a personal interest in the issue; however readership and ownership patterns in the Canadian media detract from the potential influence that this independent reporting may have.

Ongoing conflicts between indigenous Guatemalans and Canadian mining companies working in the country's highlands are periodically exposed by the news media. Large Canadian companies such as Goldcorp and HudBay have been accused of leaching arsenic into the groundwater, causing mineral poisoning of local communities, forcing the expulsion and relocation of Mayan villagers, ignoring the land rights of indigenous communities, and aiding and abetting pro-mining militias who have assassinated local activists.

Rather than being isolated incidents, these atrocities are widespread due in part to the policies of both the Guatemalan and Canadian governments. The Guatemalan government has been supporting foreign development of its extractive industries under the advice of the World Bank since the 1990s; Oxfam-America estimates that mining concessions currently cover over 10 percent of the countryside and that Canadian companies own 80 percent of these mines. One troubling reason for Canada's dominance is that regulations on the Toronto Stock Exchange are more lenient than those in New York: in particular, Canada imposes laxer disclosure requirements about the

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environmental impact of mining projects.¹

That these human rights abuses are being perpetrated to further the interests of Canadian mining companies is irreconcilable with Canada's self-proclaimed image as a defender of human rights. The federal government's website clearly states that 'Canadians expect their government to be a leader in the human rights field by reflecting and promoting Canadian values on the international stage' (Department of Foreign Affairs, 2009) and 'Canada is recognized as a world leader for its efforts to promote and protect human rights'(ibid.). Nevertheless, there are no laws that require Canadian companies working overseas to follow a code of ethics and no mechanism to launch legal investigations of alleged human rights abuses occurring abroad (Patterson, 2005a, 2005c). In this situation, there appears to be great potential for the Canadian news media to play a role in holding Canadian mines to higher standards of corporate responsibility simply by covering events in the area and highlighting mining conflicts.

This article investigates whether the Canadian press is indeed playing the role of corporate watchdog for Canadian companies located overseas. The first section explores the theoretical role played by the media in improving corporate responsibility and outlines the mechanisms through which the media could influence mining practices overseas. The following three sections then examine this hypothesis through an in-depth case study of Canadian newspaper coverage of Canadian mining in Guatemala. The second presents the methodology used to select the sample articles. The third section analyses the extent to which the conflict is reported and demonstrates that, to a large extent, mining opposition is ignored by the Canadian media. The fourth section examines sourcing constraints that help explain this lack of coverage and how private actors such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and Church groups can overcome this obstacle, while the fifth looks at alternative factors that explain why some reporters covered the story. Finally, the sixth section examines structural aspects of the news media in Canada, including readership and ownership, in order to assess the potential influence of reporting on the case.

It will be shown that newspaper coverage of opposition to Canadian mines is extremely limited. In particular, while some independent papers and reporters

¹ In addition, Canadian mining companies 'can pass on 100% of their federal tax deduction for some exploration costs' to investors and in 2000 'the federal government added a tax credit, over and above the deduction, for some of these costs' (Patterson, 2005b).

manage to cover the conflict thoroughly, Canada's most influential paper, *The Globe and Mail*, caters to business interests; this reduces the likelihood that the news media will help in holding mining companies accountable.

The Media's Role in Promoting Corporate Accountability

The media has long been seen as an important part of the checks and balances that exist to prevent abuses of power. But how exactly can the media influence corporate behaviour, and what factors influence the media's potential in this regard?

Alexander Dyck and Luigi Zingales (2002) provide one of the most developed theories that explain the potential of the press to promote corporate responsibility. As part of an international analysis completed for the World Bank, the authors found that the media may shape corporate policy by acting as an information aggregator and thus affecting the reputation of a corporation, its managers and shareholders. In particular, a company's reputation can be affected in three ways:

1. media coverage can convince politicians to introduce corporate reforms as a result of shaming;
2. coverage can directly affect the reputation of managers and board members in the eyes of shareholders and employees; or,
3. coverage can affect the reputation of corporate affiliates in the eyes of the public.

Therefore, following this thesis, in order for the news media to play the role of corporate watchdog, articles would have to include information that would bring shame to corporations, corporate affiliates or general society if widely read. The media as a watchdog could thereby influence public opinion and this, in turn, could bring about either stricter government regulation of companies as a result of politicians responding to the concerns of their constituents, or a voluntary shift in corporate policies as a response to the shaming of shareholders and board members.

Theorists of social activism support this view of the potential role of the media as a corporate watchdog. For example, in their overview of lessons learned in the movement for greater corporate accountability, Broad and Cavanagh (1999) found that campaigns for corporate responsibility have a greater likelihood of success if they make good use of the media. In particular, they cited evidence from campaigns against sweatshops in Central America that

demonstrated the effect of graphic news stories of corporate abuse on eventual changes in corporate policy.

Clearly, however, only a media willing to report on corporate abuses can be a corporate watchdog. Certain structural constraints might influence the media's potential in this regard. For example, in his 'Propaganda Model' of the media, Noam Chomsky refers to the effect of sourcing constraints on coverage: 'government and corporate sources ... have the great merit of being recognizable and credible by their status and prestige' (Chomsky and Herman, 1988). These elite sources are also far easier to access as they use a variety of tools such as press releases and press conferences to cater to journalists' needs. As only the corporate sector and the government have the resources necessary to produce this public relations material, their views often dominate news coverage, thus making stories less capable of shaming corporate affiliates. Sourcing practices are therefore a major determinant of whether or not the media can play the role of corporate watchdog.

A second factor that constrains the media's potential as a watchdog is the importance of the paper in which the articles are published. If few citizens read an article, it will have little effect on a corporate reputation. Not surprisingly then, Dyck and Zingales (2002) found that newspaper readership was an important variable in their regression model. Similarly, the importance of the audience of a particular newspaper also influences the media's impact: an article read by powerful politicians or the chief executive officers of big companies has a greater effect on reputation.² Therefore, the credibility and sway of the newspaper in which the article is published must also be taken into account (*ibid.*, 120). Finally, Dyck and Zingales also found that press diffusion, which captures 'the presence of an active and competing press' plays a large role in determining private sector responsiveness to media coverage; in fact, press diffusion accounted for 42 percent of the variation in their statistical observations (*ibid.*, 124, 129). Therefore, it is also likely that press ownership patterns, such as the domination of media conglomerations or the prevalence of independent papers, would influence the ability of the media of a particular nation to affect accountability.³

² An example of this was presented by Human Rights Watch's Arvind Ganesan in a fall 2009 class visit to Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs. Ganesan noted that Angolan politicians are typically more sensitive to reports of their misdeeds that are published in Portuguese newspapers than to reports published in Angolan or other Western papers. The reason for this is that many of Angola's political elites read Portuguese media.

³ Other factors taken into account by Dyck and Zingales, which have less relevance in this case of a single-country study of the Canadian press, are: per capita income, environmental regulation, absence of violations against the media, and the rule of law.

Methodology

Based on the information presented above, we can deduce that the potential of the Canadian media to hold Canadian mining companies accountable overseas depends largely on the existence of coverage that can affect the reputation of mine managers and shareholders, as well as on coverage that can mobilize the general public to pressure politicians into taking action. The existence of this coverage is in turn influenced by secondary factors, such as sources that represent non-corporate views, newspaper readership, newspaper credibility and newspaper ownership patterns. This understanding is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Model of theoretical relationship between news coverage and corporate accountability



This article applies this theoretical framework to a single case study – Canadian mining in Guatemala – in order to assess the potential of the Canadian news media to play the role of corporate watchdog with regard to Canadian companies overseas. This case study was selected for a number of reasons. First, Canadian mines account for the largest amount of foreign mining activity in Guatemala. Second, compared to local groups in other countries affected by the extractive industry, Guatemalan communities have been particularly organized, vocal and persistent in their opposition to continued development: local villages have publicized numerous town meetings denouncing the mining companies, held official referendums in which they voted for the mining companies to move off their territory, attended shareholder meetings, and organized marches and land occupations. They have also been supported in their protests by over 15 international NGOs based in Canada, the USA and abroad.⁴ Due to the significance of their protest these groups should be, if

⁴ The most active international NGOs who collaborate on this issue are: Rights Action, Network of Solidarity with the People of Guatemala, Global Response, Mining and Communities, Oxfam America, le Project Accompagnement Québec-Guatemala, ACOGUATE, MiningWatch Canada, the Observatorio de Conflictos Mineros de América Latina, Development and Peace,

anything, more accessible to the news media. Finally, the abuses and oppression these groups have been subjected to as a result of their opposition has been significant and substantiated by a number of NGOs. It appears clear that there have been a number of murders, violent forced expulsions, arrests in addition to health concerns among communities living near the mines, and that these activities are directly attributable to stakeholders with interests in the mines.

Newspaper coverage of the conflicts and abuses described above was analysed in order to assess the nature of reporting on corporate activities and alleged illegal behaviour overseas. A content analysis was conducted of newspaper coverage of Canadian mines in Guatemala using Lexis Nexis Academic, and all 103 Canadian English-language newspapers archived in Lexis Nexis were examined. (For a complete list of the newspapers surveyed, see Appendix 1.)⁵ The search parameters were set to cull all articles containing the words 'Guatemala' and either 'Mine' or 'Mining' over a period of five years (from 3 November 2004 to 3 November 2009). This timeframe was selected because it corresponds to the start of the conflicts between Canadian mining companies and local indigenous groups in Guatemala: in particular, Goldcorp bought the Marlin mine venture from Glamis Gold in 2005 and began production soon after. The search was therefore designed to gather any and all newspaper coverage pertaining to Canadian mining companies and the controversy surrounding them in Guatemala.

The initial search produced 472 articles, not all of which were relevant. Articles that used the word 'mine' solely in its possessive form, as well as articles published only online, letters to the editor, opinion pieces, world briefs and event announcements were all eliminated from the study in order to concentrate on significant news pieces. In addition, short business briefs that provided only an update about a company's financial indicators or management (share prices, capital to debt ratios, announcements of resignations or the appointment of new managers ...) were also removed from the study. A detailed content analysis was conducted of the remaining 67 articles (listed in Appendix 2).

Probe International, Speaking4Earth, Indigenous Peoples' Issues and Resources and Colectivo Madre Selva (based in Guatemala). Amnesty International Canada also conducts campaigns against violent attacks on indigenous anti-mining organizations

⁵ It is important to note that only English-language papers were selected and therefore the conclusions drawn here do not extend to French and Aboriginal papers.

A Missing Story?

Certain immediate observations can be made about the search. First, of the initial 472 articles, there were only 25 identified as pertaining to the subject of Human Rights, 18 to War and Conflict, 16 to Human Rights Violations, 13 to Social Justice and 12 to Protests and Demonstrations; as it can safely be assumed that the same articles likely fall under more than one of these topics, this implies that there were actually very few articles that focused on the conflicts at Guatemalan mines. In fact, even among the 67 articles selected that specifically mentioned the protests at the mines, many only addressed the issue in passing and were classified under other subject headings (see Figure 3). Instead, mention of Canadian mining in Guatemala typically ignored the social impact of the mines in the local community and focused on business interests: for example, 153 of the articles were about Company Activities and Management and 102 about Company Structure and Ownership.⁶

These findings indicate that the conflict can be considered what Nick Russell refers to as a ‘missing story’: one that journalists often ignore even when writing about a pertinent subject (Russell, 2006, 120). According to Project Censored (2009), a news organization that tracks missing stories, explanations offered by journalists about why a story was missing include that: the source is not reliable, the story is still continuing and so cannot be written yet, it is not timely, it is expensive (investigative journalism is costly, and so are libel suits), it is not in the nation’s best interest or it is too complex for the public (ibid.). The reasons that potentially limit coverage of the story of Canadian mining practices in Guatemala will be explored in the following section; this section presents an analysis of the basic content and amount of coverage received by the story.

First, it appears that Canadian reporting was not very responsive to the events occurring in Guatemala; Table 1 shows a timeline of important events surrounding the anti-mine protests in Guatemala over the last five years and the corresponding number of articles published in Canadian papers during that time period.

⁶ In addition, one can argue that even the initial search of 472 articles indicates that the story is ignored: compared to other topics, that number of hits is extremely small. For example, a five-year search for Russian and Hockey, Afghanistan and Canadian and Forces, and even Afghanistan and Mines all resulted in over 3000 hits. Similarly, Chile and Mine or Mining resulted in 1974 results, over three times the amount for Guatemala even though there has been less opposition to the mines there. Even Guatemala and Food resulted in 1074 hits, even though Canada has no special interests or investments in Guatemalan culture.

Table 1: Timeline of anti-mine protests in Guatemala and related events, 2004-9

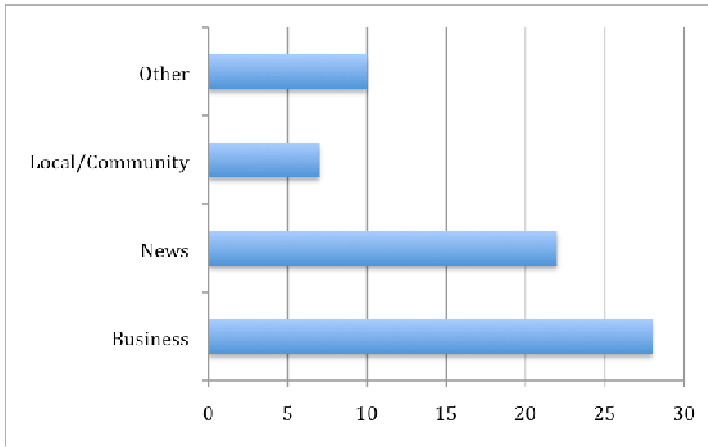
3-Month Time Span (start date indicated)	No. of Articles	Events
Nov-04	2	Protests begin in Sipacapa; Poll released showed 96% of residents opposed to mine; Indigenous group leads 42-day blockade of road to mine; Blockade ends when 1,200 soldiers and 400 police fire at protesters (1 death, 20 wounded); Catholic Bishop leads 3000 person protest in San Marcos; Municipal council of Sipacapa announces referendum
Feb-05	10	Man killed by Glamis private security guards;
May-05	2	Glamis gets court injunction to stop referendum; Referendum votes against mine
Aug-05	14	No major events
Nov-05	0	No major events
Feb-06	1	No major events
May-06	4	World Bank compliance officer sent to negotiate mining dispute, issues report
Aug-06	1	Hundreds of Mayan families invade Skye Resources land with squatter claims
Nov-06	2	Goldcorp Inc. merges with Glamis Gold; protesters block entrance into Goldcorp mines for a week; Army forcibly evicts hundreds from Skye Resources (HudBay) mine
Feb-07	0	Residents of San Miguel Ixtahuacán declare in report that they were pressured into selling their land
May-07	8	Residents of San Miguel send letter to Goldcorp shareholders claiming 2 people were taken during the night and 14 issued with arrest warrants; Constitutional Court finds that referendums were legal
Aug-07	0	No important events
Nov-07	1	No important events
Feb-08	3	No important events
May-08	8	No important events
Aug-08	0	No important events
Nov-08	2	No important events
Feb-09	1	No important events
May-09	4	Goldcorp presses charges against 5 indigenous people after they set fire to rigs at the mine
Aug-09	3	Teacher killed and 8 shot in clash between HudBay security guards and residents

As Table 1 demonstrates, the peaks in articles published do not correspond to the more scandalous events such as shootings, evictions or blockades. In fact, the greatest numbers of articles were published between August and November 2005, during which time no significant events occurred in Guatemala. In contrast, during the three-month period when protests began in Sipacapa, when there was a 42-day road blockade of the mine, when the army shot at civilians and when the local municipal council announced their intention to hold a referendum opposing the mine, only two articles were published. In all, only 14 percent of the articles in the sample had hooks that were directly related to events that occurred in Guatemala (see Figure 2). Instead, most articles used hooks that were only tangentially related to the mining conflict, such as shareholder meetings in Vancouver, announcements by Canadian Church groups about mining ethics or social justice events organized in Canadian cities; when conflicts at Canadian mines in Guatemala were mentioned, the information was often offered as contextual background for another story.

The fact that events in Guatemala were not perceived by reporters and editors to be worthwhile hooks is one potential reason why few articles were published about the story; this concurs with Project Censored's identification of timeliness as a factor to explain missing stories. In addition, this theory is supported by the sample: 34 percent of the articles had no specific hook to make their publication truly 'news'. Other journalists, however, found creative ways to link information about the conflict to local events. These included meetings among Canadian First Nations groups worried about mining on their lands, educational events about Guatemala hosted by NGOs and Church groups, corporate decisions by the mines or even, in one case, the reporter's own trip to Central America.

However, the rarity of Guatemalan hooks implies that even among the 67 articles that did address the mining conflict in Guatemala, coverage rarely focused on the protests. Instead, many of these articles concentrated on the business repercussions of the protests; as such, many of the articles were written for the business section of the paper instead of the news section. Figure 3 illustrates a breakdown of the sample into publication sections.

Figure 3: Newspaper sections in which articles appeared



Clearly, articles with a business focus do little in terms of inciting accountability. Although these articles focused exclusively on Canadian mining companies working in Guatemala, such as Goldcorp and HudBay, most referred only briefly to the protests occurring in Guatemala and devoted the majority of their paragraphs to a financial or corporate update on the health of the company. In fact, some of the business articles seemed to deliberately gloss over the magnitude of the protests and the accusations. For example, a June 2008 article in *The National Post* writes: ‘The big prize is Skye’s Fenix nickel project in Guatemala. It is an old Inco mine that was closed in 1980, and plenty of infrastructure is still in place. It is also fully permitted and has government support’ (Koven, 2008). This assessment completely ignored decades of strife between Inco, its successors and the local population: in 1969 that same Inco mine was the target of university protests that resulted in the assassination of two professors. The protesters had set up a commission to contest the legality of the company’s 40-year concession to exploit the region, and that same concession was later bought by Skye and sold to HudBay (Imal et al., 2007). In addition, in 1973 Inco helped the then-government draft the country’s mining code in order to allow it to profit from low taxes and land prices (ibid.); as a result land claims were and still are disputed by local residents of the area. Moreover, the 1998 United Nations Truth Commission

connected people employed by a subsidiary of Inco to the murders of anti-mine activists (Grainger, 2009).

Other business articles acknowledge the opposition to the mines, but discount it as unlikely to affect profits and therefore unimportant. For example, in June 2005, after negative publicity about the Glamis gold mine in Guatemala caused the company's shares to fall, *The Globe and Mail* reported: 'Dundee Securities Corp. analyst Mark Smith believes concerns about Marlin are overstated, and urged investors to pick up the stock at a discount' and 'Glamis Gold's Marlin mine in Guatemala has come under local and international criticism but it is expected to be the miner's largest and most profitable project' (Luciw, 2005).

More disturbing perhaps was the August 2006 article in *The Globe and Mail* entitled 'Glamis approves Mexican gold mine' whose sole reference to the various global claims against Glamis was 'Everyone is watching to see whether Penasquito will development "teething problems" as Glamis experienced with its Marlin mine in Guatemala' (Won, 2006). Presumably those teething problems refer to the local opposition that delayed the mine's opening and resulted in one civilian death and over 20 wounded.

Three of the business-themed articles did address corporate social responsibility (CSR), but only as a strategy to improve profits. For example, in March 2007 *The National Post* published the following: 'Corporate social responsibility – a term [used] interchangeably with sustainability – has become one of the most sought after skills for leadership in all facets of the industry, from small nickel producers to gold mining giants' (Dougherty, 2006). The article refers to 'dozens of ways the company pursues an aggressive CSR strategy' in different locales, 'whether it is a major nickel project in Guatemala or a gold deposit in Mongolia'. Interestingly, although the article directly references the need for a CSR strategy for nickel mines in Guatemala, it makes no mention of the opposition to HudBay or, even generally, to standards such as environmental rights, indigenous rights and human rights that CSR exists to protect.

Another interesting finding is that not all the articles identified the culprits as Canadian mining companies. In fact, two articles notably omitted this fact and a third identified Goldcorp as American. Although this confusion is understandable as the company has offices in the United States, the company is clearly incorporated in Canada and owned by a majority of Canadian shareholders. In fact, Goldcorp is even suing the USA under NAFTA regulations for discrimination, an action it would not be able to take if it were a US company. Nevertheless, in October 2005 *The Ottawa Citizen* wrote: 'Three of the four overseas projects where allegations of abuses arose this year were

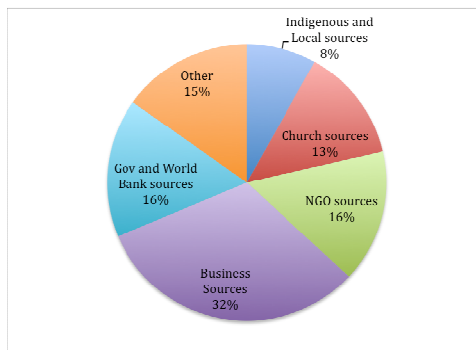
backed by “Canadian” firms that were in fact based elsewhere’ (Patterson, 2005b). Clearly, the effect of this type of coverage is to reduce the sense of accountability of the Canadian public: if the companies are not even Canadian, then why should Canadians feel guilty about their actions?

Sourcing Constraints

The overall content regarding opposition to Canadian mines in Guatemala is therefore sparse. One reason why this might be so is sourcing constraints: if journalists cannot access credible sources that describe and explain anti-mining protests, then they cannot publish the story. In fact, Project Censored identified sourcing issues as one of the primary reasons why a story goes ‘missing’.

In particular, if journalists do not have access to local protesters, they might be less capable of writing a story that legitimizes their claims. In order to test this hypothesis, the number of different sources used in each article was counted. One surprising finding was that some of the biggest advocate groups for increased accountability of Canadian mines were Church groups, both in Guatemala and in Canada.⁷ Sources were therefore classified into either local, Church, business, government, NGO or other, and the resulting distribution is shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Distribution of sources used in articles about Canadian mining companies in Guatemala



⁷ One possible reason why different congregations may have unified in support of the indigenous communities could be that these communities are supported by Cardinal Oscar Andres Rodriguez, who was considered a possible successor to Pope John Paul II.

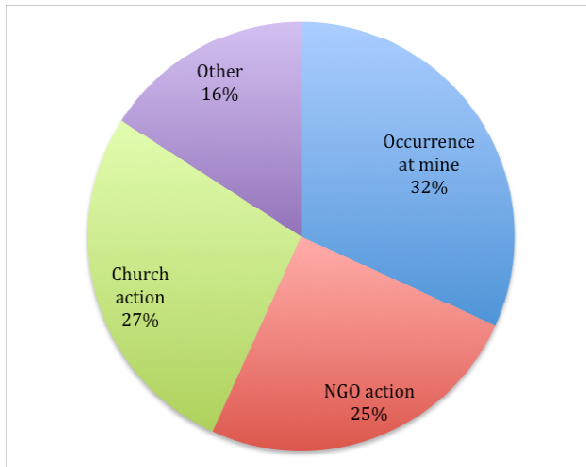
Business sources – that is, mining representatives, financial analysts or consultants who worked with the mines – accounted for the largest number of sources, with 86 different attributions. None of these could be considered sympathetic to claims of misconduct on the part of mining companies; in fact, in articles where non-business sources were cited, business representatives were often quoted as offering defences for alleged mine abuses. For example, a 2006 article in *The Hamilton Spectator* reported ‘Glamis denies cyanide pollution and disputes campaigners’ findings from local studies. [Vice-President of Corporate Relations Joe] Danni said health problems such as skin problems and hair loss were the product of “bad diet” (Buncombe, 2006).

In contrast to the representation of business interests, only 22 attributions, or 8 percent of the sourcing, came from local or indigenous actors in mining conflicts. This does not tell the whole story, however; of these 22 different attributions, only 12 were actually from Guatemala. The rest came from citizens affected by Canadian mines in Honduras, Romania, Ghana and India, or in one case from a Mayan residing in Vancouver. The articles that used local sources from other countries were reviews of allegations of abuses by Canadian mining companies in various nations around the world. Interestingly, these articles were among those that most clearly identified the need for corporate responsibility. However, by not concentrating on one particular company, these articles perhaps reduce the likelihood of applying direct pressure on shareholders or managers of specific mines; nevertheless, by identifying an industry-wide problem, they did succeed in making the case for federal legislation to induce corporate compliance.

In general, though, the lack of local sources left the case for illustrating the need for greater accountability to other Western groups, namely NGOs, Churches and some university affiliates. In the absence of easily accessible, reliable indigenous witnesses, social justice NGOs and Church groups have stepped in to offer a more ‘expert’, citable viewpoint.

Their impact on coverage is clear. A good number of the articles about the conflict were instigated by NGO action. Of the ‘hooks’ that stimulated publication, 11 were related to the work of NGOs and 12 to the work of various church groups (Figure 2); this accounts for slightly over half the total number of stories published because of a timely event and just over a third of all the articles in the sample. Furthermore, some journalists might become interested in the topic because of NGO-sponsored events: for example, Michael Dougherty, a reporter from the sample, became inspired to write about Canadian mines in Guatemala thanks to a solidarity campaign headed by a Canadian Catholic NGO called Development and Peace (Dougherty, 2009).

Figure 2: Event that sparked newspaper coverage of Guatemalan mines



These international activist groups also influence the substance of the articles because they are able to provide reliable scientific evidence by sponsoring reports and investigations. For example, in April 2009 *The Yukon News* was able to cite a water study by the Pastoral Commission on Peace and Ecology that showed high levels of arsenic in the water near Goldcorp's San Martin mine (Munson, 2009).

Fighting the Good Fight: Why Some Articles Were Published

Aside from the influence of NGOs, other factors might explain why the 67 articles in the sample were published. In particular, the interests of individual journalists and the mandate of an individual paper might inspire reporters and editors to cover a story.

A quick examination of the sample reveals that some journalists were clearly more invested in the issue than others due to their individual interests, expertise or 'beat'. Table 2 is a list of journalists who appeared more than once in the sample, along with the number of articles they were responsible for.

Table 2: Journalists responsible for more than one article in the sample

<i>Journalist</i>	<i>No. of Articles</i>
Kelly Patterson	16
Michael Dougherty	5
Andy Hoffman	3
Peter Koven	3
Gordon Hoekstra	2
Derek Swartz	2
Jane Perlez and Kirik Johnson	2
Wendy Stueck	2
Total articles (% of total)	35 (52%)

These eight journalists are responsible for slightly over half the 67 articles analysed. Moreover, three-fifths of these articles were written by just two journalists: Kelly Patterson and Michael Dougherty. Kelly Patterson, a reporter for *The Ottawa Citizen*, was sponsored to spend three months investigating the theme ‘allegations of human rights abuses in developing countries where bloody conflicts have ignited over Canadian mining ventures’. She also wrote a piece for the Canadian Press newswire that was picked up by six different papers.

Michael Dougherty is a columnist for *The Yukon News*⁸ and is therefore more at liberty to cover news events without relying on the same standards of newsworthiness (in terms of hooks, for example). He is the co-chair of the local Roman Catholic Social Justice Committee and thus has elected to use his column to explore injustices and inequalities in order to help contribute to public awareness on these issues (Dougherty, 2009)

Aside from the interests and expertise of individual reporters, the mandated focus of a newspaper also influences the stories it decides to run, as well as the way the stories are presented. For example, studies of Canadian media have shown that Aboriginal writers and papers produce stories written ‘from an Aboriginal perspective and with an Aboriginal style’ (Voyageur, 2003, 168). In

⁸ *The Yukon News*, available at http://yukon-news.com/information/about_us/ (accessed 5 December 2009).

contrast, repeated studies have demonstrated that the mainstream press presents Aboriginal issues in a more stereotyped fashion. For example, Benjamin Singer's 1982 analysis of portrayals of Aboriginal people in the media found that Ontario newspapers predominantly wrote about First Nations either in negotiation with the government over a conflict, or directly in conflict with the government or mainstream society (ibid., 166). Similarly, Marlene Mackie found that in stories published from 1974 to 1975, Indians were labelled as people who were 'poor, uneducated, lazy, dirty, and drank excessively' (ibid.).

As the conflict over mining in Guatemala is in part an issue of indigenous rights, and therefore an 'Aboriginal story', it comes as no surprise that papers that serve First Nations in Canada covered the story differently than mainstream newspapers. These stories covered the conflict through what can be called an Aboriginal lens. For example, some of the articles introduced the conflict in Guatemala as evidence of mining companies' systematic disregard of native territorial rights. For example, an article by Gordon Hoekstra published on 4 August 2005 in *The Prince George Citizen* reports:

Both mines are on a list of projects compiled at a North American indigenous mining summit in Edmonton last week. The summit participants – which included native representatives from Canada, the US and Guatemala – agreed to begin strategic planning to address the mines on their list ... 'I was surprised to hear that a number of Canadian companies are moving their operations outside of Canada and telling other indigenous people they have first-rate working relationships with First Nations in Canada,' said Carrier Sekani Tribal Council chief Harry Pierre. 'This is definitely not the case in the Carrier Sekani territories,' said Pierre.

Interestingly, *The Prince George Citizen* self-identifies on its website⁹ as the main source for local news in northern British Columbia, an area that has a population that is 10 percent Aboriginal, which is high compared to the national census of 3.8 percent (Statistics Canada, 2009). By drawing parallels between the experiences of Canadian and Guatemalan Aboriginals, journalists were able to create more proximity and local resonance for the story. They were also able to increase public interest by implying that lessons could be learned from Guatemala about whether or not to trust new mining ventures in their immediate area. Framing the story as a local issue increased the newsworthiness of the subject.

⁹ 'About us', available at <http://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/about-us.html> (accessed December 5, 2009).

Another shocking result of the content analysis was the disproportionate number of articles published by a small, independent paper called *The Yukon News*. The paper is so small it can only publish three times a week with an estimated circulation of 8000; nevertheless, the publication accounts for a total of seven (or 10%) of the articles in the sample. Michael Dougherty accounts for some of these, but *Yukon News* reporters Al Pope and James Munson also made it into the sample. One reason that might explain this is that *The Yukon News* is one of Canada's last remaining family-run independents, and as such it has the freedom to adopt a specific mandate: currently its mission as outlined on its website includes sponsoring local organizations and maintaining 'a distinct philanthropic personality' (it is distributed free). For this reason, it might encourage its staff to pursue more socially minded leads.¹⁰

Non-Aboriginal papers also frame stories in ways to suit their particular audiences and mandates. For example, on 21 May 2008, the same Canadian Press newswire report led to two slightly different articles in the business sections of *The Edmonton Sun* and *The Brantford Expositor*. Both articles described Goldcorp's annual meeting, during which the company had announced its intentions to expand and protesters spoke out against abuses in Guatemala and Honduras. However, while *The Brantford Expositor* included a quote at the end from a representative of one of the protesting NGOs explaining the nature of their complaints ('CEO: Goldcorp eyes more acquisitions', 2007), *The Edmonton Sun* instead quoted CEO McArthur as saying 'Goldcorp is "working extremely hard on health issues and with communities"' ('Goldcorp growing', 2007). The effect was a completely different article: instead of a balanced view presenting two sides of the conflict, *The Edmonton Sun* chose to publish an article sourced exclusively by mining representatives that glossed over the actual nature of allegations against the mine. It also appended an additional sentence about the rise in Goldcorp share prices.

Limited Sway: The Structure of the News Media in Canada

Factors affecting news content are not the only variables that influence the media's ability to play the role of corporate watchdog. Media ownership

¹⁰ This hypothesis is supported by *Yukon News* columnist Michael Dougherty (2009), who writes that one of the reasons the paper is more likely to report on Guatemalan mining conflicts is that 'It is small, independent and locally owned.' He also notes, 'I am free to write on any subject I wish for *The Yukon News* which is a small regional independent paper. Over 700 some columns I have written on a wide variety of themes have never been censored by the paper in anyway. I certainly have anecdotal information on that lack of freedom for staff in chain publications whose economic interests present obstacles for writers.'

patterns, readership and the credibility of the news source might also influence the ability of these articles to have a large impact on Canadian society.

Audiences not only determine the content of the story published, they also influence the effect of the story. Seven articles published by *The Yukon Press* will have little if any effect in improving accountability for Canadian mines, as the paper has a circulation of only 8000 and the majority of these citizens are located in one northern administrative territory. In Canada, total circulation for all independent papers is estimated at 67,881 (half of which are in French). In comparison *The National Post* reaches 272,778 readers, *The Vancouver Sun* 203,335, *The Toronto Sun* 255,837 and, the largest paper in Canada, *The Globe and Mail*, reaches 321,169 with each publication (Lorimer and Gasher, 2001, 211–13).

Moreover, the influence and power of readers must also be taken into account. Here the limits of media diversity in Canada are most clearly revealed, as most media analysts conclude that *The Globe and Mail* is considered by far the most serious source for credible news and that:

Basically the *Globe and Mail* determines what's in the news, and everybody follows the *Globe and Mail* ... Even the MPs follow the *Globe and Mail* ... Then it gets raised in the Question Period, and Question Period is the only thing in the House of Commons that the press covers anymore, and all the press covers Question Period, and therefore that story in the *Globe and Mail* was the lead-off question, so the rest of the press runs with it, and it just goes into one circle ... (Russell, 2006, 80)

This means that in terms of seriously influencing politically active Canadians and policy-makers, *The Globe and Mail* is key. And the paper seems to be particularly unlikely to produce coverage likely to encourage mining accountability. After all, of the 10 articles published in the *Globe* that were about Canadian mines in Guatemala, all were published in the 'Report on Business' section of the paper and, with the exception of one article that spoke of the environmental effects of the mine (Hoffman, 2008), they all focused on the effects of the protests on the company's health: in particular, two articles virtually ignored the protests, two described the protests as illegal obstacles to the mine's development, and two implied that the opponents to the mines were exaggerating. Moreover, 86 percent of the sources used in the *Globe* articles about Canadian mining in Guatemala were from representatives of business, and 6 out of 10 of those articles cited *exclusively* from business sources.

Finally, in the current media regulation environment that favours conglomerations, it is becoming increasingly difficult for independent papers to survive. In fact, over the last 20 years a large number of corporate mergers and takeovers occurred in the Canadian media industry. According to Concordia University's Head of Journalism studies Enn Raudsepp, 84 percent of Canadian media is now owned by the five largest media companies and CanWest Global alone controls over 30 percent of the Canadian media market (Oja Jay, 2003). While it is difficult to measure the effect of this conglomeration on the style of reporting or on content about Canadian mines overseas, the work of Dyck and Zingales (2002) implies that Canada's large media chains might have something to do with the shortage of articles that take a critical look at the practices of the country's mining firms.

Conclusion

The analysis presented in this article has shown that, to a large extent, the Canadian press ignores scandals involving Canadian mines in Guatemala. Some reasons that help explain this lack of reporting are the difficulties of finding hooks relevant to the Canadian population and of accessing local Guatemalan sources. Despite these difficulties, social justice NGOs and Church groups involved in indigenous rights in Guatemala have succeeded in getting the story covered in certain cases: in addition, a few independent newspapers and journalists in Canada have, through their own interest and diligence, reported in depth on opposition to the mines. However, the concentration of the media in Canada and the relative absence of sensitive reporting by important Canadian newspapers like *The Globe and Mail* limit the impact such reporting can have on increased accountability of mining companies.

Some caveats to these findings must be included. First, this project is to some extent based on the assumption that the Canadian news media is more likely to influence the decision-making of Canadian companies with primarily Canadian shareholders. This is not altogether accurate, considering that Canadian media consumers often access American and international news sources. However, conducting a content analysis of coverage from all major US and international papers is unfeasible at this juncture. Furthermore, it is fair to assume that Canadian newspapers have a greater interest in covering and exposing Canadian companies, and would therefore be *more* likely to cover anti-mining opposition than their foreign counterparts.

In addition, single-coder bias limits the reliability of the quantitative data presented in this report, while the exclusion of French and Aboriginal-

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language papers may have also skewed the results as these are more likely to be independently run than English-language dailies.

Finally, only newspapers were analysed. Future research would ideally compare coverage of the traditional news media with sources of ‘new media’ such as blogs, community radio, YouTube and wikis in order to see whether these new information portals, which are often less confined constrained by traditional standards of journalism such as sourcing and timeliness, are better able to serve the role of corporate watchdog.

What is certain is that, whether it is the news media, new media, the Canadian government or international law, any mechanism that promotes the accountability of mining operations overseas would be most welcome. The problem is particularly pertinent in Canada, as the country currently hosts 60 percent of all mining exploration projects worldwide (Patterson, 2005b), and over half the world’s international mining companies (Patterson, 2005a). It is possible to conclude on a positive note: a private member’s bill was introduced in Canadian Parliament on 26 November 2009 that, if passed, will regulate the activities of Canadian mining companies in developing countries (CBC News, 2009). Goldcorp, Barrick and Kinross Gold are all opposing the motion.

Appendix 1: A List of the Canadian Newspapers Surveyed

AbbotsfordTimes (British Columbia)

24 Hours (Toronto, Canada)

Airdrie Echo (Alberta, Canada)

Alberni Valley Times (British Columbia)

Banff Crag & Canyon (Alberta, Canada)

Barrie Examiner (Ontario)

Belleville Intelligencer (Ontario)

Brantford Expositor (Ontario)

Breaking News from
globeandmail.com

The Brockville Recorder & Times

Calgary Herald

The Calgary Sun

The Cambridge Reporter

Canmore Leader (Alberta, Canada)

Carstairs Courier (Alberta)

Chatbam Daily News (Ontario)

Chatbam This Week (Ontario, Canada)

Cobourg Daily Star (Ontario)

Cochrane Times (Alberta, Canada)

Colborne Chronicle (Ontario)

Collingwood Enterprise Bulletin
(Ontario)

Cornwall Standard Freeholder
(Ontario)

Courier Press (Wallaceburg,
Ontario)

The Daily Gleaner (New Brunswick)

- The Daily Herald-Tribune* (Grande Prairie, Alberta)
Daily Miner & News (Kenora)
Dunnville Chronicle (Ontario)
Edmonton Journal
The Edmonton Sun
Financial Post Investing
Fort McMurray Today
The Gazette (Montreal)
The Globe and Mail (Canada)
The Guardian (Charlottetown)
The Guelph Mercury
The Halifax Daily News
The Hamilton Spectator
Hanover Post (Ontario)
Kamloops Daily News (British Columbia)
Kingston Whig-Standard (Ontario)
La Presse Canadienne (PC)
La Presse Canadienne (PC) – (FR)
The Leader-Post (Regina)
Lindsay Daily Post (Ontario)
The Lloydminster Meridian Booster
The London Free Press
The Londoner (Ontario, Canada)
Meadow Lake Progress (Saskatchewan, Canada)
Melfort Journal (Saskatchewan, Canada)
Midland Free Press (Ontario)
Nanaimo Daily News (British Columbia)
National Post (formerly *The Financial Post*)
Nelson Daily News (British Columbia)
Niagara Falls Review (Ontario)
Nipawin Journal (Saskatchewan, Canada)
North Bay Nugget (Ontario)
North Shore News (British Columbia)
Northern News (Kirkland Lake, Ontario)
Orillia Packet & Times (Ontario)
Ottawa Citizen
The Ottawa Sun
Owen Sound Sun Times (Ontario)
Pembroke Observer (Ontario)
Peterborough Examiner (Ontario)
Port Hope Evening Guide (Ontario)
Portage Daily Graphic (Portage la Prairie, Manitoba)
Prince George Citizen (British Columbia)
Prince Rupert Daily News (British Columbia)
The Record (Kitchener-Waterloo)
Red Deer Express (Alberta)
Sarnia Observer (Ontario)
Sarnia This Week (Ontario, Canada)
Sault Star (Sault Saint Marie, Ontario)
Selkirk Journal (Manitoba, Canada)
Sherbrooke Record (Quebec)
Shoreline Beacon (Port Elgin/Southampton, Canada)
The Simcoe Reformer (Ontario, Canada)
Southwest Booster (Saskatchewan)
St. John's Telegram
The Standard (St. Catharines)

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The Star Phoenix (Saskatoon)
Stratford Beacon Herald (Stratford, Ontario)
Sudbury Star (Ontario)
The Telegraph-Journal (New Brunswick)
The Times & Transcript (New Brunswick)
Times Colonist (Victoria)
Times-Journal (St Thomas, Ontario)
Timmins Daily Press (Ontario)
Timmins Times (Ontario, Canada)
The Toronto Star
The Toronto Sun

The Vancouver Province
The Vancouver Sun
Welland Tribune (Ontario)
Western Standard (Alberta)
Windsor Star
Winnipeg Free Press (Manitoba, Canada)
Winnipeg Sun
The Woodstock Sentinel-Review (Ontario, Canada)
Yukon News (Yukon)
Farm Market (Timmins, Ontario)
Ontario Farmer (Canada)
Windspeaker

Appendix 2: The Articles

1	Canadian companies operating abroad need to know how to protect their assets		2-Oct-09	<i>Prince George Citizen</i>
2	Violence at HudBay project leaves one dead;	Peter Koven	30-Sep-09	<i>Calgary Herald</i>
3	Man dies in protests at HudBay project; Relocating families	Peter Koven	30-Sep-09	<i>National Post</i>
4	Guatemalan deadly serious about green cause	Ken Ellingwood	21-Jun-09	<i>Edmonton Journal</i>
5	First Nation challenges mine plan	Gordon Hoekstra	23-May-09	<i>Prince George Citizen</i>
6	What's mine isn't yours	James Munson	3-Apr-09	<i>Yukon News</i>
7	Students pray for change	Luke Simcoe	30-May-09	<i>Star Phoenix</i>
8	HudBay CEO's exit doesn't quiet critics	Andy Hoffman	11-May-09	<i>Globe and Mail</i>
9	Corporate rapine and government complicity: what will Yukoners do?	Al Pope	28-Nov-08	<i>Yukon News</i>
10	Nursing students getting set for Guatemala trip		13-Nov-08	<i>Nelson Daily News</i>
11	Goldcorp bested by Mayan mother	Andy Hoffman	10-Jul-08	<i>The Globe and Mail</i>
12	Goldcorp says power lines		5-Jul-08	<i>Cornwall Standard</i>

	to mine tampered with;			<i>Freeholder</i>
13	Goldcorp says power cut affects Guatemala plant		5-Jul-08	<i>Globe and Mail</i>
14	HudBay takes \$432M step into Latin America; Buys Skye Resources; Prize is nickel project in Guatemala	Peter Koven	24-Jun-08	<i>National Post</i>
15	CEO: Goldcorp eyes more acquisitions		21-May-08	<i>Brantford Expositor</i>
16	Goldcorp growing		21-May-08	<i>Edmonton Sun</i>
17	Big deals not on Goldcorp's radar	Andy Hoffman	21-May-08	<i>Globe and Mail</i>
18	Goldcorp agrees to STUDY		25-Apr-08	<i>Vancouver Sun</i>
19	Golden promises, dross reality	Michael Dougherty	4-Apr-08	<i>Yukon News</i>
20	Amnesty International on industry	James Neeley	19-Feb-08	<i>Peterborough Examiner</i>
21	Amnesty International presents talk on Guatemala		29-Jan-08	<i>Nelson Daily News</i>
22	The ethics of donations	Kate Heartfield	17-Jul-07	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>
23	Local residents learn about negative impacts of mining in Central America		5-Jun-07	<i>Cobourg Daily Star</i>
24	Local residents learn about negative impacts of mining in Central America		5-Jun-08	<i>Port Hope Evening Guide</i>
25	Churches want to see resource companies act ethically overseas	Kelly Patterson	3-Jun-07	<i>Halifax Daily News</i>
26	Churches target mining, oil ethics	Kelly Patterson	29-May-07	<i>Calgary Herald</i>
27	Churches preach mine safety; Canadian firms. Urge Ottawa to ensure ethical action overseas	Kelly Patterson	29-May-07	<i>The Gazette</i>
28	Churches push for industry ethics rules; Canadians often 'the bad guys' in overseas mining operations	Kelly Patterson	29-May-07	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>
29	Churches demand Ottawa enforce ethics for Canadian firms overseas	Kelly Patterson	29-May-07	<i>Star Phoenix</i>
30	Churches demand more	Kelly Patterson	29-May-07	<i>Times Colonist</i>

	mining ethics			
31	Crisis in the works; Workshop discusses impacts of industry on Third World water sources	Naeema Siddiqua	12-Mar-07	<i>Daily Herald Tribune</i>
32	The sustainable executive: CSR importance grows	Derek Sankey	7-Mar-07	<i>National Post (f/k/a The Financial Post)</i>
33	Mining for a change	Michael Dougherty	24-Nov-06	<i>Yukon News</i>
34	Social activist educates Islanders on impact of mining companies	Lorie O'Halloran	28-Nov-06	<i>The Guardian</i>
35	Glamis approves Mexican gold mine: Green light comes as company reports big jump in profit	Shirley Won	1-Aug-06	<i>Globe and Mail</i>
36	Old man rues the day he struck gold; 'We thought we were going to uncover riches and wealth'	Andrew Buncombe	27-May-06	<i>Hamilton Spectator</i>
37	Production halted at Glamis Gold mine		13-May-06	<i>Globe and Mail</i>
38	Who are the resources for?	Michael Dougherty	12-May-06	<i>Yukon News</i>
39	Mayans resist gold's glitter	Mica Rosenberg	13-Mar-06	<i>Calgary Herald</i>
40	The cost of gold: 30 tons an ounce (Part 1 of 2)	Jane Perlez and Kirik Johnson	26-Oct-05	<i>Yukon News</i>
41	The cost of gold: 30 tons an ounce (Part 2 of 2)	Jane Perlez and Kirik Johnson	26-Oct-05	<i>Yukon News</i>
42	How mining critics are kept quiet: Opponents of Canadian exploration operations in faraway countries claim they have had their lives threatened by hired militias, writes Kelly Patterson	Kelly Patterson	10-Oct-05	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>
43	'It's hypocrisy': The Ottawa Citizen's Kelly Patterson spent the past three months investigating allegations of human rights abuses in dozens of developing countries	Kelly Patterson	9-Oct-05	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>

	where bloody conflicts have ignited over Canadian mining ventures			
44	The Good Samaritans: Spending millions on aid and development, Canadian mining firms have become 'the government' in some areas, writes Kelly Patterson.	Kelly Patterson	9-Oct-05	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>
45	Building a track record of tragedy: MPs urge government to think twice before backing controversial mines	Kelly Patterson	3-Oct-05	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>
46	The trouble with junior: Small-scale companies dogged by controversy	Kelly Patterson	3-Oct-05	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>
47	Mine accused of breaching anti-terror law	Kelly Patterson	1-Oct-05	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>
48	Open veins: Bloody conflicts are erupting around the world over Canadian mining projects	Kelly Patterson	1-Oct-05	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>
49	Canadian mines alleged to have paid off terrorists	Kelly Patterson	1-Oct-05	<i>Star Phoenix</i>
50	MUN-based group to protest Inco's record		20-Sep-05	<i>St. John's Telegram</i>
51	Life-changing experiences in a developing country	Mark Weber	31-Aug-05	<i>Red Deer Express</i>
52	Canada's hidden free-trade deal	Rusa Jeremic	12-Aug-05	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>
53	Mining minister tours northern projects	Gordon Hoekstra	4-Aug-05	<i>Prince George Citizen</i>
54	Glamis seen as golden opportunity; analysts bullish despite negative publicity	Roma Luciw	9-Jun-05	<i>Globe and Mail</i>
55	'Humanize globalization. Globalize solidarity'	Michael Dougherty	3-Jun-05	<i>Yukon News</i>
56	Glamis Gold project divides Guatemala: Indigenous peoples, Catholic Church side against government,	Kelly Patterson	27-Apr-05	<i>National Post</i>

	Canadian miner			
57	Canadian mine strikes lode of unrest: The debate over the presence of a gold mine in Guatemala has resulted in a call for 'urgent action' by Amnesty International, Kelly Patterson writes.	Kelly Patterson	26-Apr-05	<i>Ottawa Citizen</i>
58	South America's priests split on how to fight for the poor: New pope will face a challenge in reconciling Catholic Church's role in social justice	Kevin Sullivan	14-Apr-05	<i>Vancouver Sun</i>
59	New gold battle rocking Latin America: Local environmentalists battle mining companies attracted to the area by surging world gold prices	Mark Stevenson	12-Apr-05	<i>Vancouver Sun</i>
60	MINING FOES DIGGING IN; Latin America eyed for its gold		10-Apr-05	<i>Calgary Sun</i>
61	Canadian mine in eye of storm	Celeste Machenzie	27-Mar-05	<i>Toronto Star</i>
62	Skye sees prospects in Guatemalan nickel project	Wendy Stueck	8-Mar-05	<i>Globe and Mail</i>
63	Glamis boss plays 'pure gold' card; Says his bid for Goldcorp would result in stock market premium	Peter Kennedy	10-Feb-05	<i>Globe and Mail</i>
64	Providing safe water: Turning fog into water in Guatemala	Derek Swartz	7-Feb-05	<i>Welland Tribune</i>
65	Safewater: Fogquest volunteer Rick Taylor has learned being Canadian in Guatemala isn't necessarily a benefit	Derek Swartz	2-Feb-05	<i>Welland Tribune</i>
66	Clashes reported in Guatemala over Glamis mining project	Wendy Stueck	13-Jan-05	<i>Globe and Mail</i>
67	In-between land, in-between time?	Michael Dougherty	5-Nov-04	<i>Yukon News</i>

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