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SPREADING NEWS IN 1904

The Media Coverage of Nikolay Bobrikov's Shooting

Mila Oiva, Asko Nivala, Hannu Salmi, Otto Latva, Marja Jalava, Jana Keck, Laura Martínez Domínguez and James Parker

The assassination of Nikolay Bobrikov, the Governor-General of Finland, on 16 June 1904 was a turning point in Finnish history. It was reported in hundreds, if not thousands, of newspapers worldwide. This article follows the spread of that news, particularly its spread over the first week after the assassination. The study draws on the digital newspaper repositories in Australia, Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Mexico, Sweden, the Netherlands and the United States. It also draws on the microfilm and physical collections of Russian newspapers at the National Library of Finland. The article shows how the murder activated the telegram network and initiated a series of news waves. The routes the Bobrikov news travelled, their tempo and the evolution of related stories tell a story of a networked but biased global news scene. In that scene, technological, commercial and cultural factors simultaneously facilitated and controlled what stories reached which papers and how.

KEYWORDS Newspapers; news agencies; global media; telegraphy; terrorism; nineteenth-century periodical press

Introduction

The Russian Governor-General of Finland, Nikolay Bobrikov, was assassinated on 16 June 1904. Coincidentally, James Joyce's novel *Ulysses* (1922) depicts the events on this very same day. The seventh episode of the novel, 'Aeolus', consists of short fragments separated by newspaper-style headlines. 'Aeolus' takes place in the office of the *Freeman's Journal* and relates the news events of the day, such as the burning of the PS General Slocum steamer in New York City the day before, but also the assassination of Nikolay Bobrikov.

The professor, returning by way of the files, swept his hand across Stephen's and Mr O'Madden Burke's loose ties.

- Paris, past and present, he said. You look like communards.
- Like fellows who had blown up the Bastille, J. J. O'Molloy said in quiet mockery. Or was it you shot the lord lieutenant of Finland between you? You look as though you had done the deed. General Bobrikoff.¹

The assassination took place at 9 am (Greenwich Mean Time [GMT]), 11 am Finnish time, on 16 June 1904, and the 'Aeolus' episode is thought to take place at noon (GMT) of the very same day. Joyce unquestionably assumes that the news travelled to Dublin within

four hours, although Bobrikov was still alive when the characters discussed the deed: he did not die until the following morning in the hospital. This article studies the coverage and speed of the early twentieth-century news network by using the assassination of Bobrikov as an example.

Bobrikov was attacked by the Finnish activist Eugen Schauman, who shot himself directly after the attack. The terrorist act was part of a wave of politically-motivated murders in Russia and Finland between 1903 and 1906.² Before its independence in 1917, Finland was a Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire. Russian oppression against the autonomy of the country increased towards the end of the nineteenth century, and was epitomised by the tsar nominating Nikolay Bobrikov (1839–1904) as the Governor-General of Finland in 1898. In retaliation, Finnish nationalists organised themselves and arranged individual violent outbursts, like the assassination on 16 June 1904.

Since the news about the shooting spread widely, the murder of Bobrikov offers an illuminating case for the study of European and transcontinental news circulation at the beginning of the twentieth century. At that time, an efficient telegram network connected the world and press agencies readily forwarded newsworthy information to the global news markets. Earlier research on long-distance mass-communication patterns have shown that the advancement of communication technology and commercialisation of the news scene in the late nineteenth century had restricted and centralised the news flows within the British Empire.³ To expand this discussion to concern global mass-communication, this article studies how unexpected news coming from outside the major global news centres circulated. The system of news delivery emphasised big centres, but the Bobrikov case shows that news from the remotest corners of Europe could garner wide circulation. However, the rhizomatic communication network may have had its centres, but it was not centralised. When the first shot was heard in Helsinki before noon on 16 June, the news were published in Mexico City, thanks to the eight-hour time difference, on the morning of 17 June.⁴ Earlier studies have identified the so called 'scissor-paste' news culture, where circulating textual borrowings had truly made the world smaller by the early twentieth century, simultaneously easing the transfer of culture and influencing the relations of the centres and peripheries of information.⁵ Examining the circulation of the dramatic Bobrikov news illustrates the dynamics of news flows such as in the case of unexpected news coming from the relative 'periphery' of the newsworld.

The news on the assassination of Bobrikov serves as an excellent opportunity for the analysis of early twentieth-century news flows, since the Finnish activists themselves wanted their efforts to get as much publicity as possible and were keen to follow the spread of news. This becomes apparent in the memorial leaflet for Eugen Schauman, published by the Finnish Active Resistance Party in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1905. Since it would not have been possible to publish the leaflet in Finland due to strict censorship regulations, the activists had to operate via Stockholm. The leaflet shows that the activists had systematically gathered newspaper clippings from around the world, resulting in '70 German, 25 English, 60 French, 20 Swiss, 20 Italian, 5 Spanish, 5 Dutch, 2 Hungarian, some Turkish and 25 Southern and Northern American newspapers.'⁶

Previous studies on the assassination of Bobrikov have dealt with the media coverage of the murder, but its international ramifications have gained only passing attention.⁷ The most thorough account on the international news coverage of Bobrikov's murder has

been written by Richard Bach Jensen, who pointed out that many mainstream British, American, Italian, Spanish and French newspapers had mostly sympathetic reactions to the assassination, which are partly explained by the negative national attitudes towards the Russian imperial government.⁸

This article goes further in the study of the Bobrikov case by exploring the tempo and the routes through which news was disseminated in the newspaper networks and particularly concentrating on the viral expansion of the news during the first week following the assassination. This case offers the opportunity to analyse the structures of news flows with the rapid spread of information. It also offers two further avenues for exploration. First, with the digitisation of newspapers on every continent, it is now possible to evaluate the extent of the spread of the news and even to compare it with the results that contemporaries have found in their effort to estimate the proportions of Schauman's transnational fame. Second, the expansion of the news was transformed by many historical features, not only by the extant network of communication technology but also by more hidden strategies of influencing information flows and using them for political purposes.

Sources and Methods

This article uses digitised collections of American, Australian, Austrian, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Mexican and Swedish newspapers and the microfilm and physical newspaper collections of Russian newspapers at the Finnish National Library.

We collected the data by searching the news about Bobrikov's murder from 17 to 24 June 1904, following the shots of Eugen Schauman on 16 June around 11am, and Bobrikov's death later the next morning. For the majority of the searches in the digital newspaper collections, we have used search terms such as 'Bobriko*,' which captures all the different spelling variations of the Russian surname, or 'Schauman.' Some of the collections cover all the newspapers published during the studied period (for example, the Finnish collections), while the coverage of the digitised collections of all newspapers published during the studied period vary. The overall content of our subcorpus is described in [Figure 1](#), which clearly shows the peak of publicity on 18 June. It is obvious that the subcorpus does not contain all the news published on the murder due to the differences in digitisation projects. Therefore, our subcorpus includes many Danish news sources from the first days of the period, but, for instance, far fewer Swedish sources. It must be noted that the Finnish material includes news in two languages, Finnish and Swedish. Furthermore, the news of small provincial newspapers have the same 'weight' in our data as the ones published in prominent newspapers.

Tracing the source locations mentioned, the publication dates and the topics of the news surrounding the murder, we have identified the routes and news pace, as well as the temporal rhythms of the evolving murder news. We have used the Stanford developed data visualisation tool Palladio⁹ for visualising the news on a map.

In addition to network visualisations, we explored our subcorpus with *passim* software, developed by David A. Smith for aligning similar passages of text within a corpus.¹⁰ We detected passages of similar news and clustered the material so that similar passages (hits) are aligned in one cluster. In each cluster, there are at least two instances of similarity. There are also other methods for text reuse detection,¹¹ but they

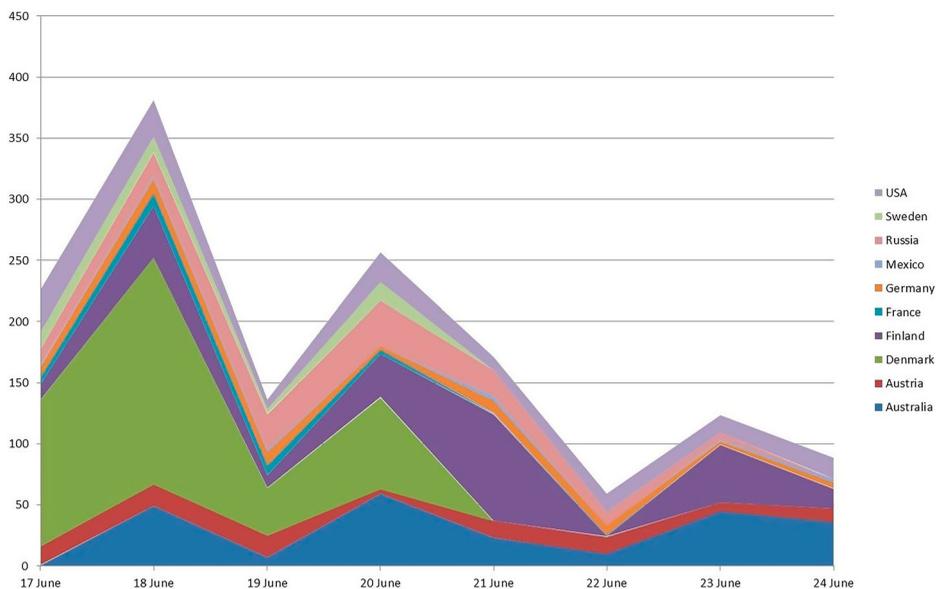


FIGURE 1

Subcorpus of the news on the assassination of Bobrikov: number of news per day. Image: Hannu Salmi

often demand significantly more CPU power. Passim has been successfully employed for finding text reuse in nineteenth-century newspapers.¹² It also recognises text similarities in cases of substantial OCR (Optical Character Recognition) noise, which allowed for the automated processing of our data that contained OCR errors. In our text reuse detection, only news from Australia, Austria, Finland, Germany, Mexico and the United States were analysed since, in these cases, we were able to collect the full texts of the news in addition to metadata.

Information Channels and News Amplifiers

The news about the shots fired on the Finnish senate stairs spread quickly around the world. By the next day, 17 June, the murder was being reported on in hundreds of European newspapers and as far away as Mexico City, Honolulu and San Francisco.¹³ The well-functioning telegram and news agency network made the dissemination of news fast and effective. In 1904, the telegram networks of Europe, the Americas and East Asia were dense; the intercontinental undersea cables throughout the Atlantic and, for example, from London to India and Australia were numerous.¹⁴ The telegram lines from Europe to Africa and India were constructed in the 1860s, and those from South America to Europe, China and Japan in the 1870s.¹⁵

The widespread telegram network did not guarantee the equal dissemination of information, as geographical location in relation to the telegram 'freeways of information' influenced how fast the news reached an individual newspaper and its readership. For

example, the news published in *The Mexican Herald* on 17 June came via St. Petersburg, most likely through the London office of the news agency Reuters. Obviously, the city of Helsinki on the eastern side of European time zones gave Western media more time for publishing. Simultaneously, news spread more slowly to geographically closer locations in Finland. The news about the murder reached the biggest cities in Finland—Vyborg, Tampere and Oulu—on 17 June, but for smaller cities, such as Hamina, Mikkeli, Vaasa, Joensuu, Mariehamn and Kotka, it took another day.¹⁶ The readers of newspapers close to the big streams of information were accustomed to getting the information fast, while the readers of the more remotely located newspapers would have to wait a day to two for news. Often the international information channels were beholden to private enterprises, and, therefore, the most profitable routes were well served, while less profitable routes could experience poorer connections and service of information.¹⁷ In Finland, the telegram network had reached all the major cities and towns by 1889. However, because telegram prices were high, the major source of information were still other newspapers.¹⁸

If the news did not spread at an even pace in all directions, but instead through information channels that enabled news to travel 10,000 km from Helsinki to México City faster than 150 km from Helsinki to Hamina, what kinds of channels did the message about a terrorist attack in a remote corner of Europe use and activate? At the beginning of the twentieth century, foreign news was often a composition of several short telegram notices of news agencies, extracts from other newspapers and the occasional letter of newspaper correspondents and private individuals. There were less curated journalistic essays and more separate, smaller news pieces, where the readers could see how the information evolved in telegrams sent in subsequent days. Some, although not all, newspapers informed their readers about the used sources, such as news agencies and other newspapers, or they simply stated the cities from which they had received the information (or wanted to give an impression to the readers that they had). For example, in the Russian press, the time and place of the news became important criteria for the news.¹⁹ This way of curating the news enabled us to trace the various routes the news about Bobrikov's murder took across the globe to various newspapers. To analyse which information channels activated the murder of Finland's Governor-General, we handpicked information on the news sources from approximately half of the over 1,400 news items analysed for this article.

The information channels were centred around influential cities, news agencies and newspapers, which were connected by telegram lines. The visualisation (Figure 2) of the cities in which the news was published are connected with lines to the cities that were mentioned as sources, which gives a rudimentary idea of how the news spread within twenty-four hours after the murder. The Danish newspapers, which are heavily emphasised in our database due to the diligent digitisation of all the Danish newspapers, gives an idea of the actual number of all (including non-digitised) news in Europe and an illustration of news channels. They demonstrate that along with the obvious news sources of Helsinki (where the murder took place) and St. Petersburg (the capital of the Russian Empire, of which Finland was a part), other cities were also prominent sources. London and Berlin were often mentioned as sources, even though our research database does not even contain British newspapers.

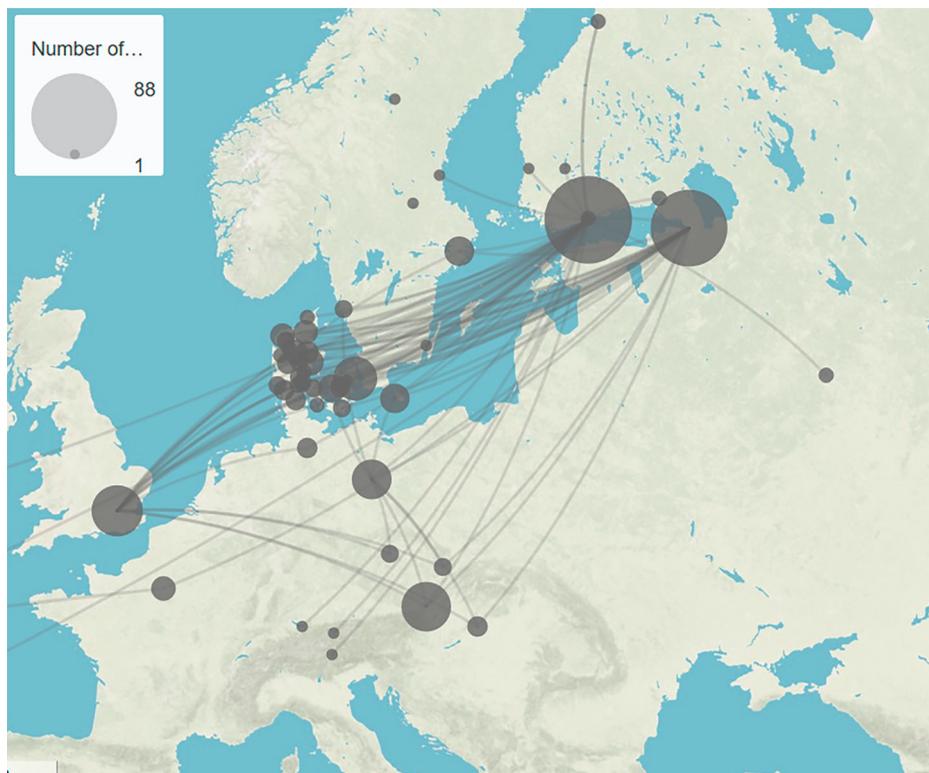


FIGURE 2

The cities where news about Bobrikov's murder was published and their sources in Europe on Friday, 17 June 1904. The size of each bubble depends on the number of articles of Bobrikov's murder published on that day, and the lines point to the city that was mentioned as a source for the news. The figure was made with Palladio. Map © OpenStreetMap contributors. Image: Mila Oiva

London and Berlin were important nodes in the news network because the central offices of the major news agencies of Reuters and Wolff, as well as prominent newspapers cited across different languages, were located there. The news agencies were important players in distributing information on international events. In the nineteenth century, both newspapers and news had become commercial industrial products. As modern newspapers started to appear daily, they needed more and newer content to be published. The news agencies started the global mass-production of news, because no individual newspaper could cover all the news as rapidly, completely and reliably as news agencies.²⁰ In the news flows on Bobrikov's assassination, the Russian Telegram Agency (Rossiiskoe Telegrafnoe Agentstvo, established in 1894)²¹ was the major source of news published right after the incident. For example, a Hamburger newspaper, *Börsen-Halle*, reported that it had received the news about the murder through the Russian Telegram Agency and the Reuters London office, which had received the information from St. Petersburg.²² The Finnish Swedish-language newspaper *Tammerfors nyheter*, published in the city of

Tampere, disclosed that it had received the news from another Swedish-language newspaper, *Hufvudstadsbladet* in Helsinki, which had received the information from the Russian Telegram Agency in St. Petersburg, which in turn was reporting on a message from authorities in Helsinki.²³ So, in addition to the major news streams the use of the same language could ease the flow of news.

Figure 3 demonstrates the centrality of the news agencies in spreading the news during the days after the assassination. It illustrates the news channels through which newspapers, like *Aftenbladet* in Copenhagen, *Neue Freie Presse* in Vienna and *Pester Lloyd* in Budapest, received the news about the murder right after the incident. Based on sources cited in all the studied newspapers, it is evident that the state officials in Helsinki spread the information about the assassination right away to St. Petersburg, the capital, and also to the Russian Telegram Agency. In 1904, there was only one news agency, the Finnish Telegram Agency, operating in Finland after Bobrikov suppressed the rights of another agency in 1901. Institutionally, the Finnish news agency was tied into the Russian telegram agencies, as it was only allowed to receive foreign news through them.²⁴ Therefore, the most logical connections of news travelling from Finland to foreign news agencies were through the Russian news agencies as well.

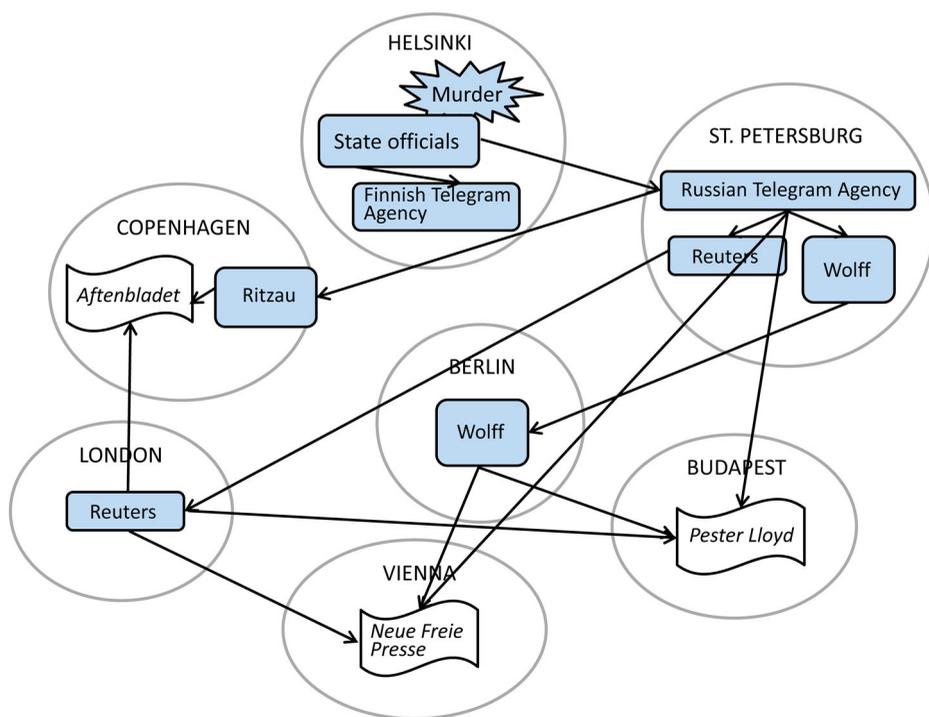


FIGURE 3

Sources of *Aftenbladet* (Copenhagen), *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna) and *Pester Lloyd* (Budapest) news about Bobrikov's murder on Friday, 17 June 1904. Image: Mila Oiva and Hannu Salmi

The Russian Telegram Agency forwarded the news both to other news agencies and also directly to newspapers. The Reuters St. Petersburg office sent the message to the London office, from where the information was spread very effectively. Reuters distribution amplified the news and ensured that it quickly reached different continents. Many Central European newspapers cited Reuters from London, which had gotten its information from the Reuters bureau in St. Petersburg. Reuters was one of the first intermediary companies, which developed a global newsgathering network of offices and correspondents and sold news to the newspapers all over the world.²⁵ The Wolff Bureau in Berlin was another important information hub amplifying the news. It is interesting that Reuters had such a central role in disseminating the news coming from the Russian Empire, as in their cartel agreement, the globally dominating news agencies of Havas, Reuters and Wolff had nominated the news coming from Russia to Wolff instead.²⁶

The news agencies were important news transmitters because only a few newspapers, like the *Times* and the *Daily Mail* in London and *Le Petit Parisien* in Paris,²⁷ could afford their own correspondents, as salaries and international cable costs could be very high. Many average-range newspapers relied on the services of news agencies or clippings from other newspapers.²⁸ Often the texts published in different newspapers were similar, if not identical, due to the same sources.

Dissemination of a news piece in the network of news agencies was not self-evident, however. Often news coming from the remoter corners of the world did not receive wide global attention. In order to spread, the news needed to be in some way interesting or sensational to readers. It seems that a politically-motivated murder of a high Russian official was assumed to be interesting and relevant to readers all over the world. The information needed to be relevant for the senders of the first telegram, but there was also a process of selecting and filtering the news along the news channels. For example, Reuters' information was compiled at the regional offices, and subsequently, sent on to the London main office, where editors chose which news to be forwarded further to subscribers and overseas agencies, who in their turn selected and occasionally re-edited the news.²⁹

The telegram networks and news agencies formed important and vital news channels that spread the word about events effectively right after they had happened. Above all, the news about the assassination of Bobrikov, which happened in what was considered the far reaches of Europe, was global news because of contemporary communication technology and the exhaustive telegram network. As the days passed, the news about the assassination took new forms, and new routes and mediators emerged.

The Rhythm and Cycles of Travelling Information

The assassination initiated a series of news waves that spread around the world. This included not only the news about the assassination and Bobrikov's later death at the hospital, but also stories about the murderer, Eugen Schauman; the letter he left behind; condolence telegrams to Bobrikov's widow, sent by Imperial family members, ministers and clergy; and the news about the news in other newspapers. All of this resulted in cross-thematic waves of information related to the murder. So, as the days passed, one news piece (Bobrikov's murder) turned into a series of related stories and pieces of information.

During the first two days, 17–18 June, the telegram distributed by the news agencies in St. Petersburg, Berlin and London dominated the flow of information. In the Sunday issues of 19 June, more human-interest material began to emerge; for example, the telegrams of Tsar Nikolai II and his wife, Alexandra, to the widow of Bobrikov. Schauman's letter to Nikolai II was also published in Stockholm by *Aftonbladet* on Monday, 20 June, which was widely circulated in the press during the subsequent days.

The news about condolence telegrams from the Tsar, the Tsarina and other significant people to Bobrikov's widow spread widely throughout the European press on 19 and 20 June.³⁰ The telegrams were first published in the St. Petersburg-located *Novoe Vremja* on 17 June. If the telegrams were first made public in St. Petersburg, and not by the recipient in Helsinki, it seems that their publication was considered as an important step in the Russian officials' media strategy. It was significant for the Russian officials to emphasize in public how the assassination caused grief in the victim's family and demonstrate that the rulers showed support and empathy.

During the subsequent days, the significance of other newspapers as a source of information increased. They created a discussion forum, citing each other and reporting to their readers what the newspapers in other countries wrote about the event. Berlin and Vienna were important sources of information and relay stations for news circulation on Bobrikov's murder especially since newspapers, such as the *Berliner Lokalanzeiger* and the Viennese *Neue Freie Presse*, were widely read across Europe (Figure 4).

Other newspapers became important in the Bobrikov news chains because they published new and interesting aspects on the topic of Bobrikov prior to his assassination. For example, the St. Petersburg-based *Novoje Vremja* was widely cited in the newspapers across Europe³¹ since one of its correspondents, Juri Beliajev, had recently talked to the governor-general about the situation in Finland, and the newspaper published the discussion at the same time as the news about the murder was spreading on 17 June. It seems that this was a lucky coincidence, as Beliajev had published a series of articles on Finnish vacation destinations during the week, and thus, he had been in Finland preparing for his article series on a totally different matter.

The acknowledged centrality of and connections to the news agencies affected whether or not the original information printed in a newspaper became distributed more widely. The Moscow newspaper *Moskovskie Vedomosti* published a series of journalistic essays and opinion pieces, and even a report by its own correspondent with a detailed map of the site of the murder. Pieces such as this were not widely distributed in the foreign press. It seems that the *Moskovskie Vedomosti* did not have agreements with news agencies—indicated by the fact that the sources of the evident telegrams published in the newspaper were not mentioned in the newspaper—and that could have influenced the willingness of the news agencies to spread the information published in *Moskovskie Vedomosti*. The other Russian newspaper producing original news, *Novoe Vremja*, clearly had an agreement with the Russian Telegram Agency, because it cited the agency as a source, and its news production circulated widely abroad.

The significance of Stockholm as a news source in the dissemination of information on Bobrikov's murder increased as time passed. When the news broke for the first time, Stockholm newspapers were not often mentioned. Later, interest in the Swedish newspapers increased when *Aftonbladet* published the letter of the assassin. In his letter,

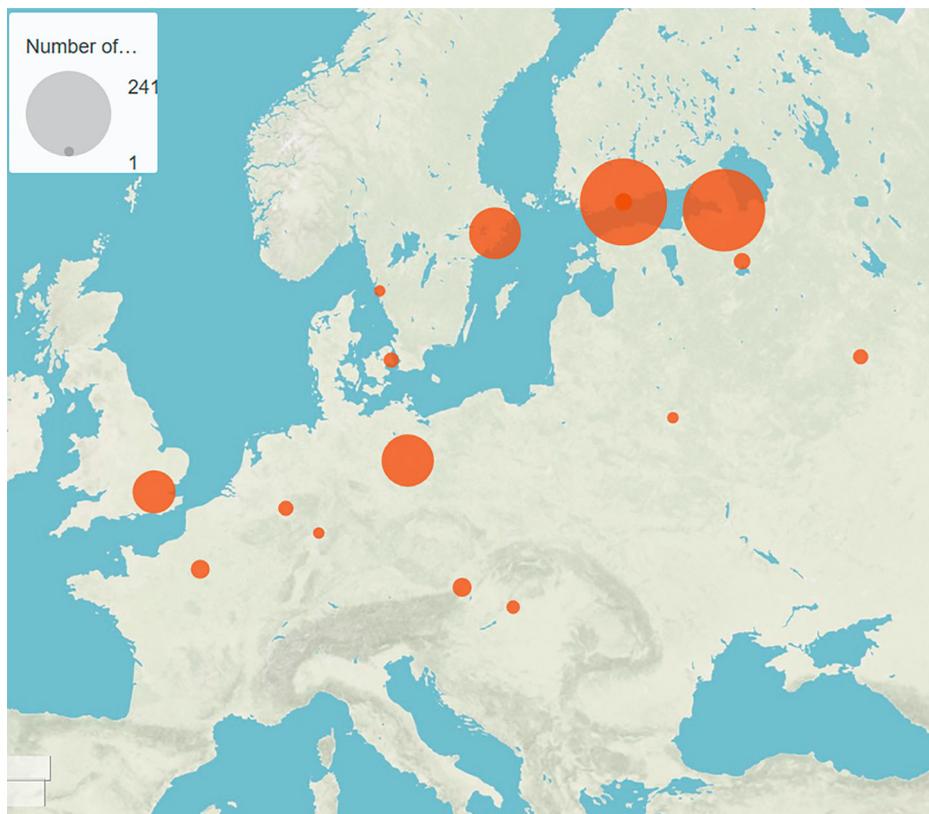


FIGURE 4

Source cities of Bobrikov's murder news on 17–24 June 1904. The figure was made with Palladio. Map © OpenStreetMap contributors. Image: Mila Oiva

Schauman justified the murder and explained that he was acting alone. The letter text spread widely across Europe during the days following *Aftonbladet's* publication,³² causing increased diplomatic tension between Sweden and Russia.³³

Russian newspapers published a series of telegrams about the ways in which the Swedish newspapers, like *Dagens Nyheter*, *Svensk Dagbladet*, *Nya Dagligt Allehanda* and *Aftonbladet*, discussed the Bobrikov assassination.³⁴ The tone of the cited Swedish news was neutral, and so was the Russian reporting on them. In 1904, Russia was at war with Japan, and the Russian newspapers were accustomed to telling their readers what the Western newspapers wrote about the battles, because the public was interested in knowing what was reported about them internationally. The fact that major European newspapers amplified Stockholm-based *Aftonbladet's* news increased Russian interest in the Swedish news. Simultaneously, several Danish newspapers titled their coverage of the incident 'Death of a Tyrant,' condemning the Russian presence in Finland, and Danish social-democratic newspapers published a poem applauding the assassination of the governor-general.³⁵ However, because the Danish news did not spread further, it did not cause global interest in Russian media nor any diplomatic tensions.

Text Reuse and News Circulation

To explore the spatial ramifications and thematic differences of the news surrounding the Bobrikov assassination further, and in particular outside of Europe, our final strategy in analysing the itineraries of the news is based on text reuse detection. In the case of Finnish, German and Mexican materials within our subcorpus, manual extraction was possible, but the Australian and American collections contained so much news that the extraction had to be done computationally. Because the newspaper corpora are not segmented by articles, this was done by extracting those pages that included a reference to Bobrikov and/or Schauman, leaving texts from non-related articles in the corpus. The English passim results were also further filtered to include only those clusters that contained at least one hit containing the string 'Bob' in order to eliminate any false positives.

Text reuse detection revealed news clusters—chains of the same news—printed repeatedly in different newspapers. Examining the topics and geographical distribution of the clusters revealed influential centres of news, topics and approaches. Altogether, we detected 1,296 hits referring to Bobrikov's assassination, which fell into 334 clusters of similar texts (on average, 3.9 hits per cluster). Obviously, since the subcorpus only included news from 17 to 24 June, many of the repetition chains were in reality longer than a week and went on past 24 June. It is also clear that there were clusters that lived only a few days. Furthermore, it should be noted that the coverage and volume of digital newspaper repositories varies significantly and, therefore, only a partial view on the virality of Bobrikov news can be deciphered on the basis of the subcorpus. However, already this sample gives an idea of how the news spread and what the role of copying in the news flows immediately after the assassination was.

Our text reuse analysis of English-language Australian and American newspapers revealed that although the majority of the news repetitions were occasional reprints, there were also influential texts that circulated in the press more than others. Most of the clusters are very short, since 262 clusters, over 78 per cent, have only 2–4 hits. On the other hand, there were rather extensive repetition chains, since 16 clusters included 10 hits or more. The largest cluster covers as many as 41 hits, which is a large amount, considering that the material derives from a very short period of time. The second largest cluster includes 29 hits, and the third largest has 25 hits. The number of clusters that have more than five hits have been presented in [Figure 5](#).

The three most viral news items on the assassination are all from the Australian collection of digitised newspapers. One possible reason for the high centralisation of Australian news is the exorbitant telegram costs. Australian foreign news distribution was concentrated in the hands of few news distributors that controlled the news scene efficiently. Therefore, Australian newspapers offered their readers a substantially more limited amount of foreign news than, for example, American newspapers.³⁶ In Australia, the cluster with 41 hits started its spread on 19 June, which means that all hits were published within 6 days. The real peak was on 20 June, when the text was published 23 times. On Sunday, 19 June, the news was first published in Sydney by both the *Sunday Times* and *The Sunday Sun*. Both papers suggested that they had gotten the news exclusively from London 'by cable,' although, *The Sunday Sun* divided the text into several pieces. The readers of the *Sunday Times* got the following message:

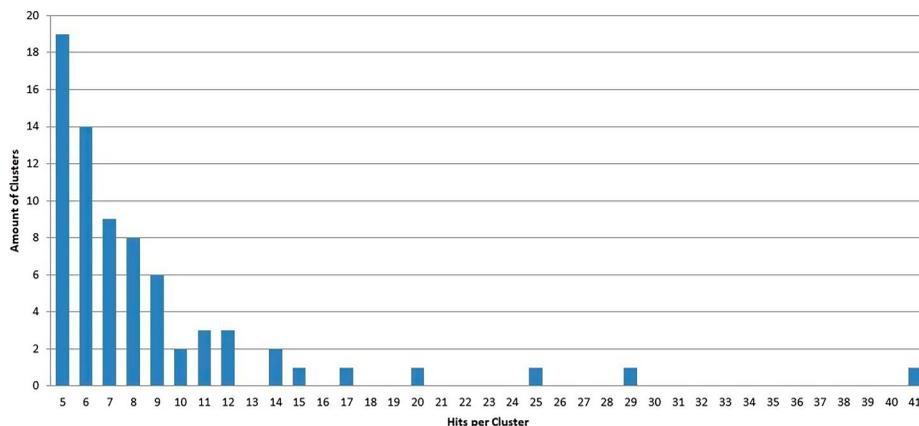


FIGURE 5

Text reuse in the subcorpus on Bobrikov's assassination, 17–24 June 1904. Image: Asko Nivala and Hannu Salmi

General Bobrikoff underwent an operation in hospital for forty minutes. The bullet used was explosive, and caused terrible injuries. Schaumann [sic. Schauman], who fired the fatal shots, belonged to the Swedish party, comprising 300,000 adherents, chiefly of the higher classes. Governor-General Bobrikoff recently admitted privately that concessions to Finland were necessary but inadvisable. In accounting for the widespread disaffection, he blamed Swedish, and even British, influences, which he said had inspired the younger Finns. He, however, expressed his satisfaction that the Senate consisted of the old Finn party.³⁷

This article elucidates on the image of the event that was circulated by the English-language media in general: Bobrikov was an embodiment of the Russian oppression in Finland. From Sydney, this news travelled rapidly to other regions in Australia, and was printed the next day in Perth and Kalgoorlie in Western Australia, in Launceston, Hobart and Zeehan in Tasmania, in Brisbane and Maryborough in Queensland, in Adelaide in South Australia and in Melbourne and Victoria. The news was thus first wired from London to Sydney and from there to other regions in Australia. This centralised mechanism of news delivery explains the exceptional size of the cluster.

This news was of course already a continuation of previous reports on the assassination in Finland. For example, a cluster with 11 hits started on 18 June with 5 notices published simultaneously in New South Wales. All were short telegrams, dated 17 June in London, reporting that 'a son of an ex-senator of Finland yesterday fired three times at General Bobrikoff, the Governor-General of Finland.'³⁸ The last reprint of the telegram came out in Cootamundra, New South Wales, five days after its original publication on 22 June, at a time when there was already much new information circulating in other papers in Australia.³⁹ There were several simultaneous, overlapping temporal rhythms in the news flows, which were influenced by many factors, for example, on how many times per week the papers were published or which kinds of information channels were

available to them. For example, when people in Cootamundra read about the violent act in Finland, the readers in Fremantle, Western Australia were already receiving information on the motives of the act. On 23 June, they could also read about the letter that Schauman had left behind.⁴⁰

The largest text reuse chain in America has 20 hits and covers the whole timespan from 17 to 24 June. The cluster includes news both from Mexico and the US. Eight American papers published the news, *The St. Louis Republic*, *The Saint Paul Globe*, *Bismarck Daily Tribune*, *The Daily Morning Journal and Courier*, *The San Francisco Call*, *Iowa State Bystander* and the *Palestine Daily Herald*, as well as *The Mexican Herald* in Mexico. The news in *The St. Louis Republic* started with: 'St. Petersburg, June 16.—General Bobrikoff, Governor-General of Finland, was shot and mortally wounded at 11 o'clock this morning at the entrance to the Finnish Senate, at Helsingfors. It is said he cannot live.'⁴¹ What is striking in these texts is that they all received the message from St. Petersburg, where the news was dated 16 June.

While news to Australia travelled via London, news to the US and Mexico came from St. Petersburg. None of the text reuse clusters include similar contents between Australia and America; not only were routes of information different but so were the contents. Compared to the European dissemination of news, our results indicate the transatlantic and global news networks were almost as quick as in Europe, but they were different in nature. Immediately after the assassination, the information had lesser routes for the faraway markets, and these routes were also different in the case of America and Australia. While the telegram network was tied into the pre-existing technological and political reality, as noted by Glen O'Hara,⁴² the Bobrikov news case demonstrates that the routes the news arrived had an effect on the emphasis of the news distributed.

Text reuse detection could not find, for example, any similar passage of text between Australian and American corpora, although, they are all in the same language. However, there were overlaps between papers from the US and Mexico, which highlights to the same origin in St. Petersburg, from where the original English language telegram was sent.

Conclusion

The assassination of Bobrikov turned into a global news event during the first week after the shooting. Our case reveals how the murder activated the telegram network and initiated a series of different kinds of news waves spreading around the world. Some news became amplified and spread widely through the global news channels, provoking cross-references and increased diplomatic tensions, while other news remained local. The routes that the Bobrikov news travelled, the cross-references, tempo and the evolution of related stories draw a picture of a linked but varied global news scene. Within that scene, technological, commercial and cultural factors simultaneously facilitated, directed and controlled what stories reached which papers and how. Although big centres dominated news flows, the Finnish case indicates that news from more remote locations could garner international attention if they had current political relevance.

In 1904 and 1905, the Finnish activists were keen to follow the spread of the news on Bobrikov's assassination. As their observations show, they were able to confirm that the news was told at least in 230 papers in Europe and North and South America. In reality,

the news coverage was much wider. At that time, for example, their source networks did not reach Australia. Our analysis of digitised newspapers has revealed a network that was difficult to grasp by contemporaries and that was transformed by political, cultural and technological forces. There were already existing routes for rapid news delivery but also asymmetries that involved different contents and rhythms. The assassination of Bobrikov was a global media event but it was geographically biased and rhizomatic in nature.

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Notes

1. Joyce, *Ulysses*, 129 (ep. 7.601–2). On the Irish reception of Bobrikov's assassination, see Newby, "The Cold Northern Land of Suomi," 73–4.
2. Jensen, "The 1904 Assassination of Governor General Bobrikov," 3–4.
3. Potter, "Webs, Networks and Systems," 622, 638.
4. In its reporting *The Mexican Herald* referred to a Russian source in St. Petersburg, where from the news had been wired on 16 June at 6:16 pm, see "General Bobrikoff, Govenor General of Finland, Shot by Son of Senator," *The Mexican Herald* 17 June 1904.
5. Smits, "Looking for The Illustrated London News," 82, 85–6.
6. Eugen Schauman. *En skrift ägnad hans minne af finska aktiva motståndspartiet*, 23.
7. See, for example, Polvinen, *Valtakunta ja rajamaa*, 331; Zetterberg, *Viisi laukausta senaatissa*, 279–80; Paasivirta, *Finland and Europe*, 186.
8. Jensen, "The 1904 Assassination of Governor General Bobrikov," 4–7.
9. Palladio visualisation tool <https://hdlab.stanford.edu/palladio/>.
10. See <https://github.com/dasmiq/passim> and note 12.
11. For example, Vesanto et al., "Applying BLAST to Text Reuse Detection," 54–8.
12. Smith, Cordell and Maddock Dillon, "Infectious Texts," 86–94.
13. See, for example *Wiener Zeitung*, *Le Figaro*, *Prager Tagblatt*, *Dagens Nyheter*, *The San Francisco Call*, *The Hawaiian Star*, and *The Mexican Herald*, all 17 June 1904.

14. Potter, *News and the British World*, 2. See also *Carte générale des grandes communications télégraphiques du monde*.
15. Silva and Diogo, "From Host to Hostage," 56; Rantanen, "The Globalization of Electronic News," 612.
16. See, for example *Päivälehti*, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, *Wiborgs Nyheter*, *Tammerfors Nyheter* and *Kaleva* 17 June, and *Koitar*, *Mikkelin Sanomat*, *Vaasa*, *Karjalatar*, *Ålands Sjöfartstidning* and *Etelä-Suomi* 18 June 1904.
17. Potter, *News and the British World*, 28; O'Hara, "New Histories of British Imperial Communication," 614.
18. Rantanen, "*STT:n uutisia*" *sadan vuoden varrelta*, 20.
19. Rantanen, "The Globalization of Electronic News," 613.
20. *Ibid.*, 608–9.
21. Rantanen, "*STT:n uutisia*" *sadan vuoden varrelta*, 61.
22. *Börsen-Halle* June 17, 1904.
23. *Tammerfors nyheter* June 17, 1904.
24. Rantanen, "*STT:n uutisia*" *sadan vuoden varrelta*, 23–4, 60.
25. Potter, *News and the British World*, 30.
26. Rantanen, "The Globalization of Electronic News," 615, 617–8.
27. Potter, *News and the British World*, 111; Jensen, "The 1904 Assassination of Governor General Bobrikov," 7.
28. Potter, *News and the British World*, 112.
29. *Ibid.*, 30, 87–8.
30. See, for example *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna), *Pester Lloyd* (Budapest), *Prager Tagblatt* (Prague) on 19 June 1904, and *Sjællands-Posten* (Ringsted, Denmark) on 20 June 1904.
31. See, for example, *Le Matin* (Paris), *Varde folkeblad* (Varde, Denmark), *Uusi Suometar* (Helsinki), *Moskovskija Vedomosti* (Moscow) 18 June, *L'Humanité* (Paris) and *St. Petersburger Herold* (St. Petersburg) 19 June, and *Hejmdal* (Aabenraa, Denmark) 20 June and *Linzer Volksblatt* (Linz) 24 June 1904.
32. See, for example *Grazer Volksblatt* (Graz), *Morning Oregon* (Portland, Oregon, US), *Neue Freie Presse* (Vienna), *Prager Tagblatt* (Prague), and *The Times* (London) on 21 June, and *L'Aurore* (Paris) 22 June 1904.
33. Zetterberg, *Viisi laukausta senaatissa*, 280–1.
34. See, for example *Novoje Vremja* and *Novosti i Birzhevaia Gazeta* 19 June 1904.
35. *Fyns Social-Demokrat*; *Vestjyllands Social-Demokrat* and *Hejmdal* 20 June 1904.
36. Potter, *News and the British World*, 31, 35.
37. *Sunday Times* 19 June, 1904.
38. See for example *The Maitland Daily Mercury* 18 June 1904.
39. *Cootamundra Herald* 22 June 1904.
40. *The Mail* 23 June 1904.
41. *The St. Louis Republic* 17 June 1904.
42. O'Hara, "New Histories of British Imperial Communication," 615.

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