

When Enough is Enough?
Dynamics of the EU Representations in Asia-Pacific Print Media

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This study is a part of the research project “Public, Elite and Media Perceptions of the European Union in Asia Pacific Region: A comparative Study” which is broadly concerned with how information about the EU is organized and structured in media discourses in Australia, Korea, New Zealand, and Thailand, and focuses on how that information compares with public and elite perceptions of the EU in those countries. More specifically, this study draws on evidence relating to the flow and structure of EU news in print media in the four respective countries. To examine that, a systematic analytical approach featuring a set of formal characteristics of dynamics, length, placement, sources, leading topics, degree of centrality and foci of domesticity is employed. Data comes from the daily coverage of the EU in 20 influential regional dailies in the first half of 2004. Results of this research are viewed as a baseline from which to consider dominating images, perceptions and attitudes towards the EU in Asia-Pacific in a greater detail.

Key Words: European Union, Asia-Pacific region, Australia, Korea, New Zealand, Thailand, print media, flow and structure of news, formal characteristics of coverage

I. INTRODUCTION

Addressing the problem of a striking absence of data on perceptions towards the European Union (EU), the research project *Public, Elite and Media Perceptions of the EU in Asia Pacific Region* aims to compare how information about the EU is organized and structured in the public discourses of different media in four Asia-Pacific countries -- Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Thailand, and focuses on how that information compares with public and elite perceptions – a “three-way interaction of individual, medium, and issue”¹. Based on a wide-range of multidisciplinary research and monitoring methods, this two year project aims to meet several objectives: first, monitoring the EU images in the 20 most influential national newspapers and 8 prime time TV news bulletins in the region (daily coverage of the EU in 2004); second, surveying public opinion on the EU in the four respective countries; and, third, detecting national political, business, and media elites’ perceptions of the EU.

The scope of the research addresses perspectives of the *EU and dialogue between peoples and cultures* funding priority of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Jean Monnet Programme. The project is supported by grant agreement with the EU Commission for the period 2004/05. The project is co-sponsored by four EU studies associations in the region – EUSANZ, EUSA-Thai, CESAA, and EUSA-Korea – all of whom are members of the world ECSA body.

II. ASSUMPTIONS AND RESEARCH QUESTION

This paper focuses on the first objective of the research project, i.e., the comparative analysis of EU representations in news media in the four respective countries. News media have been recently attributed new and autonomous capacity to influence the formulation and conduct of foreign policy². In their seminal study “*The Structure of Foreign News*”, Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge noted³:

¹ Neuman et al. 1992, p.19

² Buckley 1998

³ Galtung and Ruge 1965, p.64

“...the world consists of individual and national actors, and since it is axiomatic that action is based on the actor’s image of reality, international action will be based on the images of international reality. This image is not shaped by the news media... alone; personal impressions and contacts, professional relations abroad, diplomatic dispatches, etc., count too – whether less, equally, or more, we do not know. But the regularity, ubiquity and perseverance of news media will in any case make them first-rate competitors for the number-one position as international image-former”.

The media relate to events through coverage (or its lack). Media coverage of international affairs is characterized by mixed trends. On the one hand, the inadequate amount of international news coverage has been a matter of concern starting from the end of World War II⁴. This concern is still valid today -- there is an observed tendency towards cutting back the amount of international news as a response to little public interest⁵, to the high cost of maintaining correspondents overseas, and to the aggressive bottom-line goals of publicly held media companies⁶.

On the other hand, an opposite trend of media expanding their foreign coverage has emerged⁷, especially after September 11. Some observers⁸ communicate a cautious optimism that September 11, a dreadful reminder of how interconnected the world really is, has also resuscitated the notion that what goes on in the rest of the world might well be worth knowing about. Results from a survey among 218 editors of U.S. newspapers indicated that some 95 percent of editors said reader interest in foreign news increased after September 11, and 78 percent said their newshole for foreign news had increased⁹. Arguably, trends observed in foreign news in the U.S. are at least partially applicable to other countries, since shocking event of 9/11 did spur interest to international news worldwide. Although the dominant expectation among journalists and scholars of communication is that the recent

⁴ Hamilton, and Jenner, 2003, p.131.

⁵ Hoge, 1994, p.143.

⁶ Hamilton, and Jenner, op.cit.

⁷ Hoge, op.cit.

⁸ Rieder, 2002, p. 6.

⁹ Seplow, 2002, p. 20.

upsurge in interest towards the international news will eventually wane¹⁰, it is not likely to become anemic again in the foreseeable future¹¹.

Yet, the gloating perspective of a major comeback for all international news is unrealistic. Most of the space allotted for foreign news still goes to stories on "*the unusual and the violent*"¹². As Arnett¹³ observed, a foreign story that doesn't involve bombs, natural disasters or financial calamity has little chance of entering media agenda. Bias against peaceful news is noted – very often peaceful news is minimized, or sometimes even ignored. According to Giensberg¹⁴, covering peace is more demanding in terms of efforts "*to spot truly vital, meaningful stories without the blatant drama of war*". In his words, reporting peaceful news is "*grabbing and holding [public] attention to some faraway place when they don't feel directly threatened or affected by it*"¹⁵.

The great bulk of news on the EU could be classified as 'peaceful news'. As such, its reporting is "*exasperatingly difficult*"¹⁶. Presumably, attention with which this issue is pursued and displayed in national media is claimed to be unobtrusive, and the coverage is believed to be inconsiderable. To verify this claim, this paper aims to analyse the flow and structure of information on the EU drawn from the four print media systems. The flow and the structure of the news are regarded to be important factors in shaping the picture of the world in the minds of general public¹⁷.

III. PROCEDURES AND DATA

Print media has been a traditionally well studied source of foreign news: the seminal studies in the scholarship of international reporting focused on newspapers production — i.e., Cohen 1963¹⁸, Galtung and Ruge 1965¹⁹, Östgaard 1965²⁰. Since these mid-

¹⁰ Ginsberg, 2002, p.50.

¹¹ Seplow, op.cit.

¹² Hoge, op.cit.

¹³ Arnett, 1998.

¹⁴ Giensburg, 2002, p.49.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Rosengren, 1974, p.145

¹⁸ Cohen, 1963.

¹⁹ Galtung and Ruge, 1965.

²⁰ Ostgaard, 1965.

1960s classics, research in the field noted that press has acquired several powerful competitors in the coverage of international affairs. First, television has become the most popular source of news in general²¹, and foreign news in particular, providing cognitively attractive reports in terms of visual support to verbal information. Then, Internet has started growing in its importance as a new media providing a unique opportunity for news consumers to surf for their own news – to select the international news that they want to read, view, or listen via tapping into international newspapers on-line, if necessary using specialized software to translate foreign language articles, or even going to foreign TV channels for videos not otherwise shown at home country²². Nevertheless, in a changing media environment, the newspapers still seem to have a pivotal role²³. Newspapers are still considered to be among the leading sources of information on foreign affairs, especially among the more educated members of the audience²⁴, as well as among the readers who have restricted access to Internet (due to various reasons, be it financial shortage, lack of technical skills, cultural habits, or general absence of access).

Marshall and Kingsbury²⁵ enlist numerous advantages of the print media. First, it is concrete and tangible. Although often quickly disposed of, it has a permanent and retrievable quality. Once obtained, the print medium is available for references on numerous occasions, and it can be read selectively. Information presented and read in print form requires the active participation of the reader in the interpretation of the linguistically highly structured information and is, therefore, likely to demonstrate a high retention rate. Keeping in mind the above mentioned features, newspapers are still extensively monitored as sources of foreign news, especially in international comparative projects²⁶.

Mirroring the research design of the ground breaking study “*Foreign News in the Media*” administered by UNESCO in 1979²⁷, ***Public, Elite and Media Perceptions of the EU in Asia Pacific Region*** project provides data from the daily coverage of the EU in five most influential newspapers and on two main evening television news bulletins of the day in Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and

²¹ Stempel and Hargorve, 1996, p.549.

²² Hamilton, and Jenner, op.cit., p.133.

²³ Stempel and Hargorve, op.cit, p.557.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Marshall and Kingsbury , 1996, p.57, 61

²⁶ i.e., Sreberny-Mohammadi et al., 1985; Shulz, 2001; Kevin, 2003.

²⁷ Sreberny-Mohammadi et al., 1985

Thailand. It would be ideal to monitor all print outlets and all TV programmes in each country in their daily coverage of the EU, but design of large scale international comparative news studies must be “*limited in nature and scope in order to facilitate realistic execution*”²⁸ .

Extremely diverse print media backgrounds in Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Thailand²⁹ posed an obvious difficulty in choosing appropriate sources for analysis. Two initial sampling criteria were the influential reputation of the print outlet in a country as well as the high circulation numbers. Ruled by the assumption that study has to be designed in such a way as to “*provide soundly based representative data*”³⁰, other considerations for sample compilation were ownership, political diversity (right, conservative and left), national and regional distribution, a range of styles and formats (tabloid/broadsheet), and even linguistic diversity (Thai or Korean vs. English). The final selection as how best to represent national media situations was left to the judgment of the researchers in each location. Chosen for analysis newspapers are presented in Tables 1-4:

Table 1: Newspapers selected for analysis in Australia

Newspaper	Owner	Reach	Daily Circulation 2003
<i>Herald-Sun</i>	News Limited	Victoria (Melbourne)	547,902
<i>Sydney Morning Herald</i>	Fairfax	New South Wales (Sydney)	223, 277
<i>The Australian</i>	News Limited	National	133,000
<i>Australian Financial Review</i>	Fairfax	National	87,500
<i>Canberra Times</i>	Independent	ACT (Canberra)	39,189

²⁸ Ibid., p.10

²⁹ 2 national daily newspapers, 28 major capital city daily newspapers, 38 regional dailies, 315 non-daily regional papers, 155 suburban newspapers in Australia; over 10 general daily news papers, 5 international papers, over 100 special papers (e.g., economy, sports, IT, culture, etc.), about 50 only internet papers (cf. “oh-my news”, “no-cut news”, etc.) in Korea; 30 nationwide or Bangkok-based and 120 Provincial newspapers, including 32 Thai language dailies, 2 English dailies, and 6 Chinese dailies in Thailand; 11 daily newspapers, 3 national Sunday papers, and over 60 community newspapers in New Zealand

³⁰ Ibid.

Table 2: Newspapers selected for analysis in Thailand

Newspaper	Owner	Reach	Daily Circulation 2004
<i>Thai Rath</i>	Watcharapol Company Limited	national	1,000,000
<i>Matichon</i>	Matichon Public Company Limited	national	600,000
<i>The Manager</i>	The Media Public Limited Manager Group Company	national	280,000
<i>Bangkok Post</i>	The Post Publishing Company Limited	National / in English	80,000
<i>The Nation</i>	The Nation Multimedia Public Limited Group Company	National / in English	50,000

Table 3: Newspapers selected for analysis in Korea

Newspaper	Owner	Reach	Daily Circulation 2004
<i>Donga Ilbo</i>	Donga Corporation	national	2,068,647
<i>Joongang Daily</i>	Joongang Corporation	national	2,076,958
<i>The Chosun Ilbo</i>	Digital Chosun Corporation	national	2,320,191
<i>Korea Times</i>	the Hankook Ilbo	International / in English	2,000,000
<i>Metro</i>	Metro Seoul Holdings Inc.	City (Seoul)	400,000

Table 4: Newspapers selected for analysis in NZ

Newspaper	Owner	Reach	Daily Circulation 2004
<i>New Zealand Herald</i>	Wilson and Horton/ APN	Regional/Auckland	211,000
<i>Waikato Times</i>	INL/Fairfax	Regional/Hamilton	41,000
<i>Dominion Post</i>	INL/Fairfax	Regional/Wellington	99,000
<i>Press</i>	INL/Fairfax	Regional/Christchurch	92,000
<i>Otago Daily Times</i>	Allied Press	Regional/Dunedin	45,000

The *Public, Elite and Media Perceptions of the EU in Asia Pacific Region* project will provide a snapshot of the EU being covered within one year time frame – year 2004. The EU is considered to be a consistent news maker in 2004 -- EU Enlargement, signing of the EU constitution, European Parliament elections, appointment of a new European Commission are just few among many events scheduled for this year.

The scanning of the newspapers started on January 1 2004 in the four countries. This particular paper will present the results of 6 months of media monitoring in Thailand and NZ, 4 months of monitoring in Korea, and 3 months of monitoring in Australia. The discrepancy in the periods of monitoring is due to the handling of the sheer amount of news volume in different countries. The final results of 12 month of data scanning may present a more detailed picture, however, the regularities in patterns of coverage observed during the initial period of monitoring let us make preliminary comparisons and conclusions which serve as a baseline for further investigations.

Data

In this paper we followed definition of foreign news used in UNESCO report “*Foreign News in the Media*”³¹. As such, for the news items to be included into the sample, they have to deal with events or situations in the EU outside the home country, or events in the home country in which EU takes parts, or which are presented as having relevance to the EU situations.

Benjamin Page³² underlined the importance of paying attention to the “*totality of information*” that is made available, because much of it may make its way, directly or indirectly, to the public. Developing this thought, Neuman et al.³³ add that the “*people learn from their media encounters – perhaps, not a lot each time, but the result of a habit of news attention is an accumulation of political information*”. Grounded in this assumption, definition of news on the EU in this paper was expanded to include stories mentioning the EU at least once, even marginally. Such an approach to sampling has been rarely undertaken before, since many media

³¹ Sreberny-Mohammadi et al., op.cit., p. 14

³² Page, 1992, p.112

³³ Neuman et al., op.cit., p.115.

scholars exclude from coding and analysis of foreign news stories with only a brief, minor reference to other countries³⁴.

This approach to data allows considering a detailed and comprehensive coverage of the EU. As a result, a computerized search in Australia, NZ, and Korea and a manual search in Thailand found 1,550 news items that mentioned the EU for the monitored periods mentioned above.

Methodology

In order to “*capture the range of meaning-construction behaviour*”³⁵, the ***Public, Elite and Media Perceptions of the EU in Asia Pacific Region*** project employs the systematic integration of multiple methodologies from content analysis of print and TV news stories to national surveys of public opinion and in-depth interviews with national business, political and media elites. As an element of the research methodology, content analysis of media production is stated to be “*necessarily complex and requires diverse, eclectic methods*”³⁶, therefore, there are many ways of categorizing news.

Content of media representations is often approached from a two-fold perspective – first, the analysis of manifested, surface, extensive characteristics of an issue coverage, or *formal characteristics*³⁷; and, second, the analysis of the latent, in-depth, intensive mechanisms of image formation, or *substantive features*³⁸ (Table). The goal of this paper is to investigate the former perspective -- the importance of the scientific study of the flow and structure of international news is widely recognized. A comparable set of variables previously used in news content analysis is employed to trace the formal features: among them, the ‘surface’ characteristics of amount, or flow, of coverage (*volume, dynamics, length, placement, sources, and leading topics/key events*) and ‘in-depth’ structural characteristics (*the degree of representation centrality and the focus of domesticity in reporting*)³⁹. The study of the *substantive features* (defined in our study in

³⁴ i.e., Shulz 2001, de Vreese 2003, Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. 1985

³⁵ Neuman et al., op.cit., p.19.

³⁶ Cook, 1998, p.13

³⁷ Peter et al., 2003.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ for references, see Sreberny-Mohammadi et al., 1985; Peter et al., 2003; Kevin, 2003, de Vreese, 2001, de Vreese, 2003, Shulz, 2001)

terms of *information input, frame, prototypical zones, actors, evaluation (conceptual metaphors), journalistic attitudes, and news values*) is a subject for the follow up studies.

III. RESULTS

1. Volume of coverage:

This research observed the large quantitative difference in coverage of the EU between the Australian sample and the rest. The average number of items per month is 153 articles in Australia, 83 in Thailand, 57 in NZ, and 25 in Korea (Figure 1). Despite the quantitative difference, monthly distribution of the news stories showed a somewhat similar pattern in their dynamics – an increase of the EU coverage in all 4 countries during the monitored periods (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Average number of news items per month

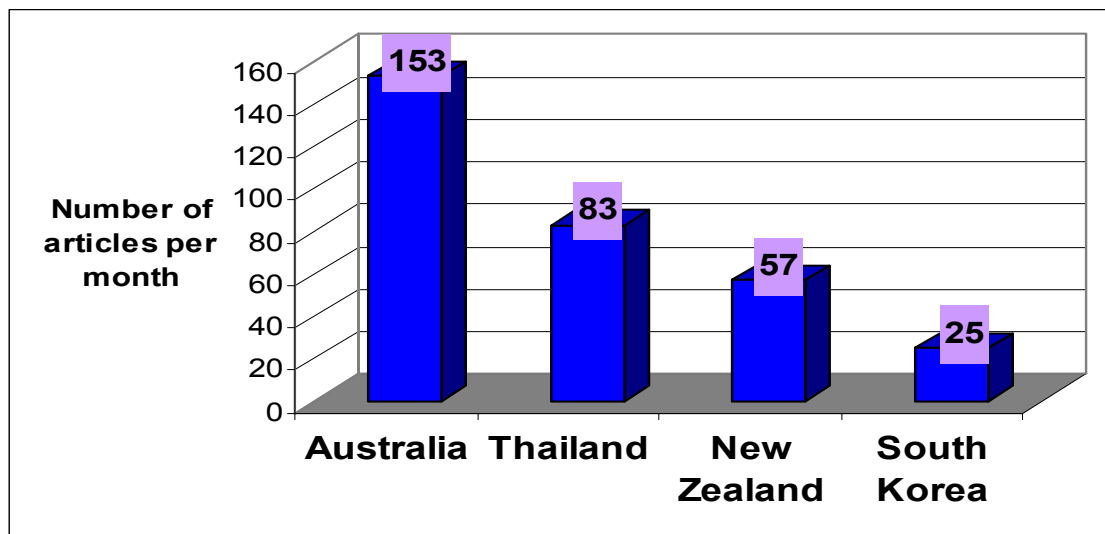
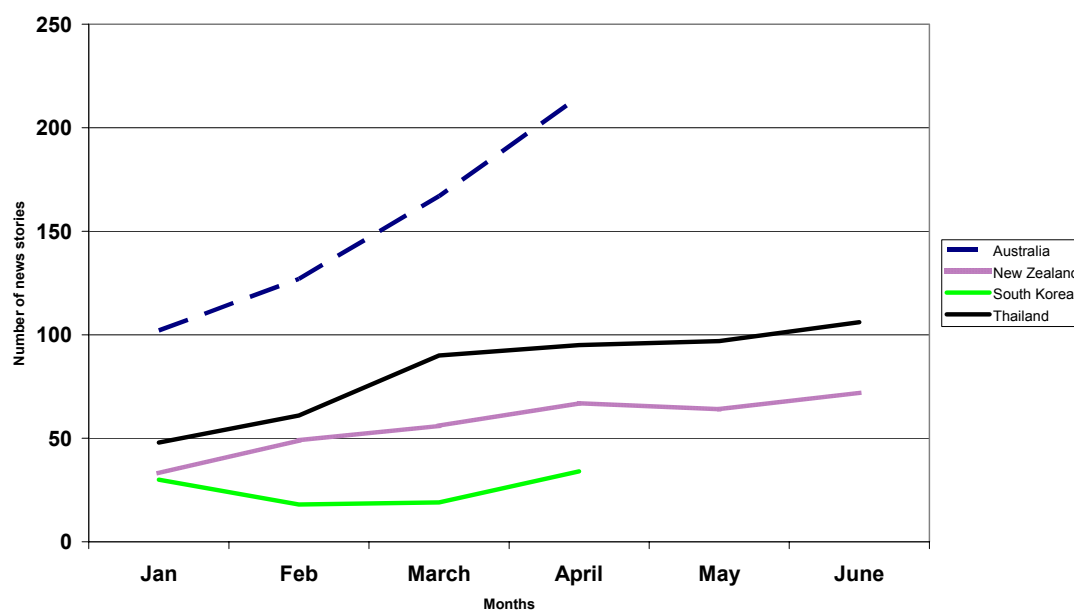


Figure 2.



2. Key events:

The assessment of the daily flow of news on the EU reveals a “*complex tapestry of issues and events, some of which appear and reappear over the monitored period, and other which flash briefly and then disappear*”⁴⁰. Certain EU related events that triggered a more extensive coverage and tend to reappear regularly in selected print media were considered to be the ‘key’ events. Their list is presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Key events that triggered a more extensive coverage

	Thailand	NZ	Korea	Australia
EU key events	EU participation in WTO, EU and China	EU participation in WTO, CAP reform	EU participation in WTO	EU participation in WTO
	EU measures against the terrorism (Madrid blast)	EU measures against the terrorism (Madrid blast)	EU fighting the terrorism	EU measures against the terrorism (Madrid blast)
	EU Enlargement	EU Enlargement	EU Enlargement	EU Enlargement
	EU actions around adoption of Constitution	EU actions around adoption of Constitution	EU actions around adoption of Constitution	

⁴⁰ Neuman et al., op.cit., p.39.

	<p>Cyprus conflict</p> <p>EU actions against Microsoft</p> <p>EU elections</p> <p>EU vs US on GM debate</p> <p>Bush visit to the EU</p>	<p>Cyprus conflict</p> <p>EU actions against Microsoft</p> <p>Kyoto protocol ratification</p> <p>EU elections</p> <p>EU as a member of negotiation quartet in the Middle East</p>		<p>Cyprus conflict</p> <p>EU actions against Microsoft</p> <p>Kyoto Protocol ratification</p> <p>EU Presidency</p> <p>EU as a member of negotiation quartet in the Middle East</p> <p>Russia and EU relation to it</p> <p>Steps in aviation industry</p>
<p>Local events with EU involvement</p>	<p>Bird flu and the EU reactions</p> <p>ASEAN/ASEM and the EU on Myanmar</p>	<p>NZ as a political actor in the Pacific, discussion on the EU role as another important actor in the Pacific, and on the EU as a model of political integration for the Pacific Forum countries</p> <p>Development of the NZ-Australia CER and considering the EU as a model of international integration</p> <p>NZ debate on the immigration and looking for possible solutions at the EU</p>	<p>EU aid to North Korea</p> <p>EU – largest market to Korea and one of the major investors</p> <p>EU role in FTA and its consequences to Korea</p> <p>Activities of EUCCK</p>	<p>Relations with the EU in the context of US-Australia free trade agreement</p> <p>New accounting standards</p> <p>Migration debate</p> <p>Bird flu and the EU reactions</p>

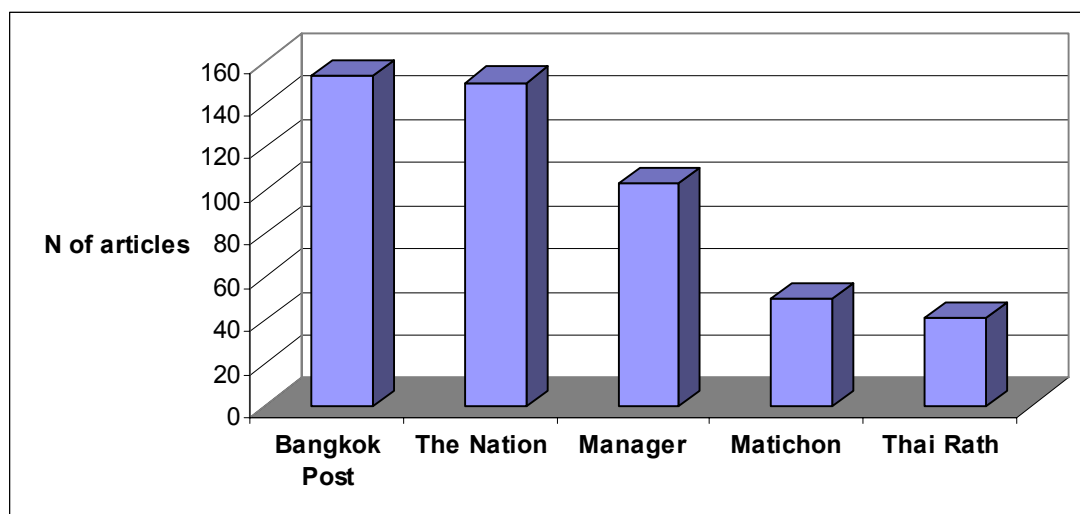
The basic cross-national menu of ‘key’ events which appeared in the coverage of all four countries included events of EU Enlargement, WTO talks and EU role in the organization, and actions of the EU against terrorism (following Madrid attack).

3. Newspaper distribution

The total amount of the news stories per media outlet was used to explicate the print media sources whose editorial policies are in favour of presenting more news on the EU.

In Thailand, the highest circulation belongs to Thai language outlets -- tabloid *Thai Raith* and quality newspapers *Matichon* and *Manager*. However, those outlets were not identified as leaders in the EU coverage (Figure 3). Instead, two English speaking quality newspapers, *Bangkok Post* owned by The Post Publishing Public Company Limited and *The Nation*, Thai's independent newspaper, lead in the EU coverage, but have the smallest circulation out of five choices for monitoring. Predictably, the EU is more visible on the foreign news agenda of those two capital-based newspapers the elite and foreign readership of which is more interested in and connected to the EU issues.

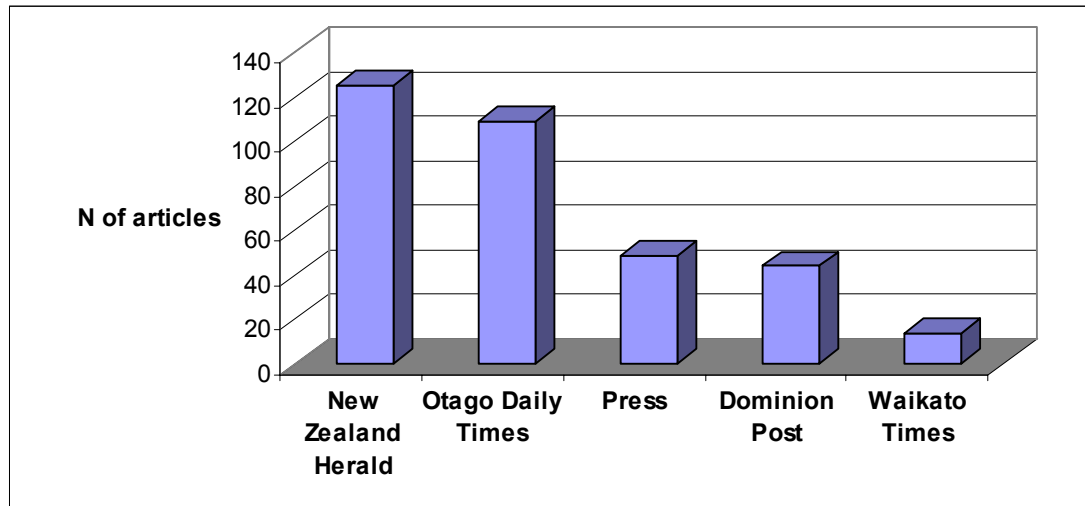
Figure 3. Thai newspapers



In NZ, the two leaders in EU coverage are *the New Zealand Herald (NZH)* and *the Otago Daily Times (ODT)* (Figure 3). The *HZH*, owned by Tony O'Reilly's Irish Independent Newspapers, has the highest circulation in New Zealand. Although primarily distributed in Auckland and its regions which hosts almost one fourth of NZ population, the *NZH* is available in the top half of the North Island. It is also popular in Wellington, where it is read by policy- and decision-makers. The *ODT* is a regional newspaper which does not have the highest circulation. Owned by Allied Press, the *ODT* is based in Dunedin city which hosts one of the largest universities in NZ, and

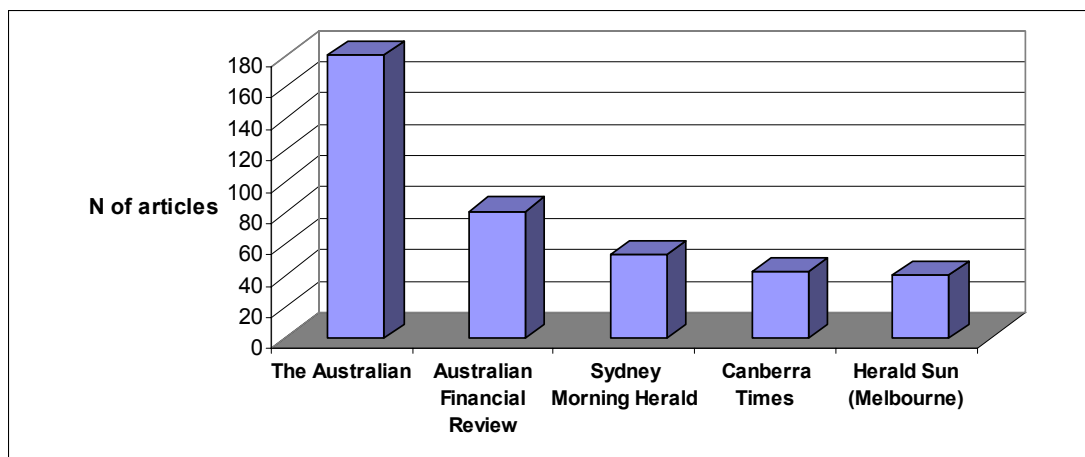
boasts a long history of the European settlement. Presumably, high interest in learning and education, as well as European heritage of the targeted readership shapes editorial priorities of the newspaper. The other three newspapers were identified as non-leaders. They are owned by Fairfax group, which currently prioritizes the focus on local rather than international news.

Figure 4. NZ Newspapers



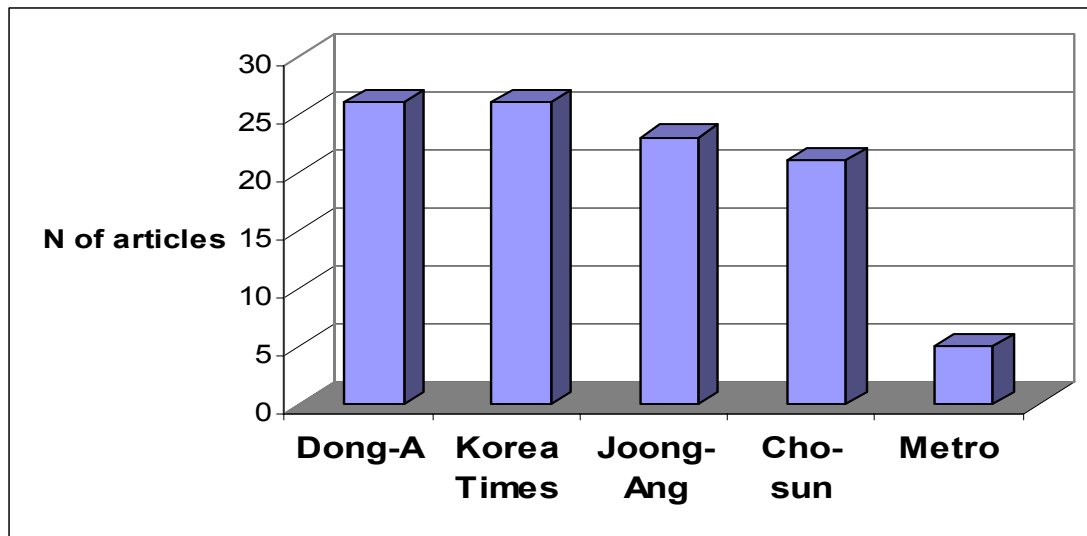
In Australia, the outlets that emphasize the EU coverage are *The Australian* and *The Australian Financial Review* (Figure 5). *The Australian* is a national quality broadsheet with a relatively high circulation numbers. It presents reputable, though generally conservative news reportage and is typically considered to be Australia's highest quality newspaper by media elites. The *Australian Financial Review* is a daily that caters for the business market. It fills a niche in the print media market, explicitly targeting the business, finance and technology sectors. It is the leading publication of its kind. Both outlets are owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Limited. The assumed interests of the readership outline the higher attention to the EU items on their pages.

Figure 5. Australian newspapers



In Korea, the identified leaders in the EU coverage are privately owned quality newspapers *Donga*, one of the world's ten biggest dailies by circulation -- 2 million copies, 98 per cent of them subscriptions, and international English speaking *The Korea Times* (Figure 6). *The Dong-A Daily* in Seoul is a family owned quality newspaper which maintains around 1,500 domestic plus 20 foreign editorial offices. Extensive investment into the production of foreign news explains the higher visibility of the EU on the newspaper pages. *The Korea Times*, the oldest independent and most influential English-language daily in Korea is published by one of the largest-circulation newspaper companies in Korea, the Hankook Ilbo (The Korea Daily). It brings foreign and business news for the Korean, foreign businessmen, diplomats, and tourists. Currently, the newspaper circulates in more than 160 countries. Predictably, the more cosmopolitan orientation of the newspaper readership facilitates the inclusion of the EU items on its agenda.

Figure 6. Korean newspapers



Arguably, the owners of the newspapers' emphasizing the EU coverage invest more support into high quality foreign news stories as being essential for the success of their newspapers.

4. Sources

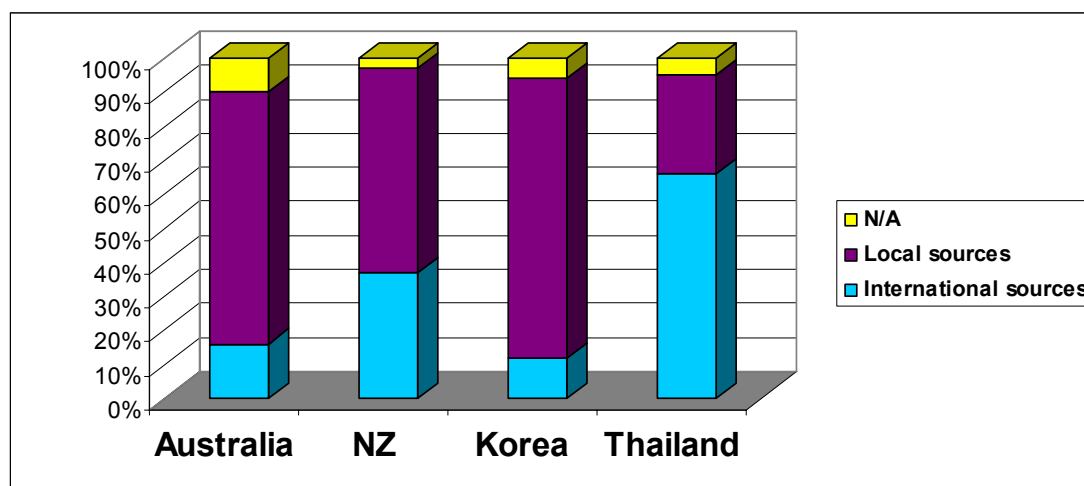
Leon Sigal⁴¹ once has written that “*sources make the news*”. In our project it was found difficult to identify exact sources of the EU news – some news was accredited to more than one international source (e.g., AFP/Reuters/AP). In this case we coded the first international agency mentioned. Some news items mention their sources as a combination of an international wires materials with an analysis provided by a local author (e.g., Economic editor // Reuters). In this case we coded a news story as a local source. Finally, in some cases the sources were unknown or impossible to identify. These items were coded separately.

The preferred sources of news were found to differ from country to country. International agencies do not seem lead in Korea, Australia, and NZ (Figure 7). Out of those three, NZ has a much more substantial share of international sources – 37 per cent in comparison to 12 per cent in Korea and 16 per cent in Australia. In these countries Western agencies are the second most important source of news on the EU, coming after the home agency (NZPA in NZ, or MATP in Australia), or the outlet staffers – either writers inside the country (i.e., editors, the regular opinion columnists, financial writers, etc.), or correspondents in foreign locations (“*in-house foreign correspondents who ensure their organizations have timely, tailored,*

⁴¹ Sigal 1986

*international intelligence*⁴²). The picture is different in Thailand where newspapers derive 66 per cent of their EU items from the international sources. Arguably, the high costs of foreign news gathering and production will continue to perpetuate dependency on international news agencies among media organization with fewer resources.

Figure 7. Sources of news



According to the UNESCO report⁴³, one of the most contentious aspects of the entire debate on international news reporting has been the role of the Western news agencies as the dominant creators and “gatekeepers” of such news. Our findings show that the big three major Western news agencies: Reuters (based in London), AP (based in New York) and AFP (based in Paris) supply a bulk of news on the EU used by four countries (Table 6). The choice of sources is often conditioned by historical connections and beneficial arrangements. For example, from 1947 NZPA, a NZ home news agency, is part owners and partners in *Reuters*⁴⁴.

Table 6. Supply of news on EU from international sources, in number of news stories

	Thailand	NZ	Korea	Australia
Reuters	99	53	1	7
AP	43	10	4	11
AFP	92	8	2	24
AAP		3		
The		3		5

⁴² Hamilton and Janner, *op.cit.*, p.134.

⁴³ Sreberny-Mohammadi et al., *op.cit.*, p.50.

⁴⁴ Taira, 2003, p.117.

Independent				
The Times				15
The Guardian	2	2		
BBC	6			
NYT	3			
Washington Post		3		
LAT		5		
Bloomberg		3		
Newsweek		2		
Other Western ⁴⁵	19 + 63	34	5	

According to van Ginneken⁴⁶, international news agencies “*have a quasi-monopoly in providing prime definitions of breaking news in the world periphery. Even if they are not first on the spot, they are usually the first to inform the rest of the world*”. Arguably, the observed parallels in the four media systems between the patterns of media attention towards particular EU events suggest that those big international news agencies noticeably contribute to the pool of EU representations circulating in the respective media discourses.

5. Placement

The placement of foreign news in national newspapers is partially conditioned by country’s and media outlet’s traditions in reporting foreign news⁴⁷. We found that placement of news mentioning the EU in the *Business*, *National* and *Word* sections exists in all four countries, although in varying amounts.

Word/Foreign News placement for EU news prevailed in Thailand. It is a predictable type of placement that puts news on the EU mostly into the category of “pure foreign news”. *Business/Economy* section placement led in NZ and Korea. This type of placement often contextualized the EU within a domestic discourse foremost as an important economic partner. In those three countries quiet a low level of coded material was found in the *Opinion/Features* section. On the contrast, Australian print media balances the placement of the EU representations between the

⁴⁵ UK, independent writers, US, Australia

⁴⁶ Ginneken, 1998, p.113.

⁴⁷ Kevin, op.cit., p.64.

three sections of *Word/Foreign News*, *Business/Economy*, and *Opinion/Features* featuring almost equal distribution of news items on the EU. Australian pattern of placement is also characterized by a bigger diversity in placement besides those three sections. Arguably, a diverse and balanced placement observed in Australia does a better job in exposing and contextualizing the EU as a foreign partner -- the general public predictably has diverse interests.

Finally, prominent placement in a newspaper, especially on page one above the fold, promotes substantial reader attention⁴⁸. Our findings show that only Thai print media gave the EU issues the most prominent attention. It has included the EU items on the front pages of the newspapers on a regular basis. This did not happen in other three countries.

6. Length

Length of a news item is considered to be on of the constituent part of “dominance” and “greater attention” to an issue. For the purpose of our study, we calculated the average length in words. Since Korean and Thai languages use hieroglyphs, only news texts from English speaking newspapers in Thailand and Korea (*The Bangkok Post*, *The Nation*, and *The Korea Times*) were accounted in word.

The medium to long stories presenting the EU as a major focus in the domestic context tend to be the most influential pieces of news in informing the public opinion – they provide better contextualization of the foreign event as a foreign policy event, outline significance of that foreign counterpart to the country, and potentially may influence the directions of the domestic public debate with regards this particular overseas partner. The medium to long stories presenting the EU in the EU context are considered to be the second most influential news – they single out the foreign counterpart from many others, and, educate the readership about it. Consequently, the length was calculated for the news stories that focus on the EU with EU is as a major theme, and stories that focus on the home country with EU featured as a major theme (Table.7).

Table 7. Average length of news items representing the EU, in number of words

	Thailand	NZ	Korea	Australia

⁴⁸ Page, op.cit., pp.112-113.

EU, Major	404	497	2,935	828
Local, Major	475	336	2,780	454

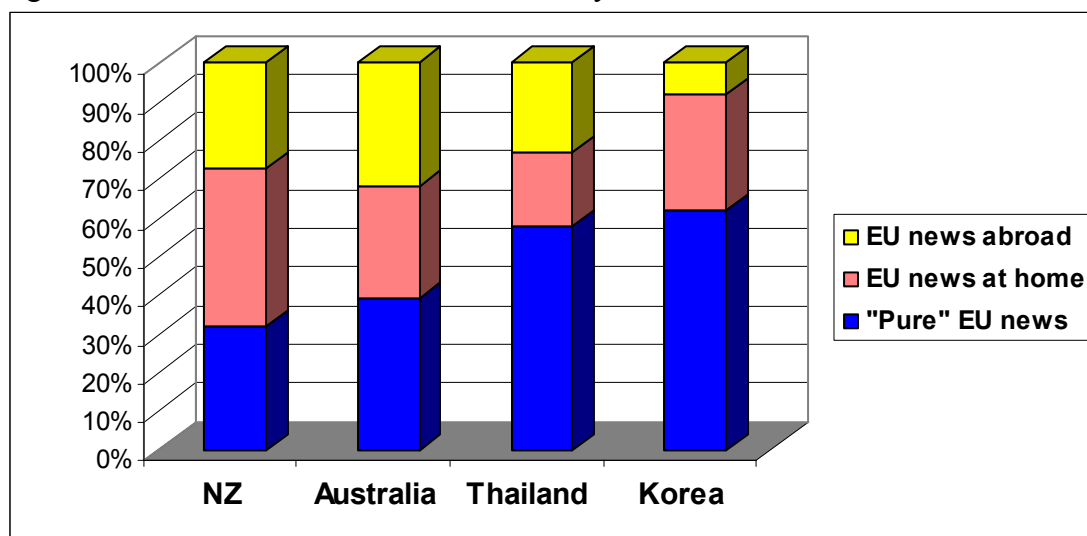
Only in Thailand, the average length of articles with EU as a major focus is considerably shorter than the length of articles with local focus where EU is a central theme. In New Zealand, Korea, and Australia the situation is reverse.

7. Foci of domesticity

The coders were asked to assess news presented from a national, EU or neutral (or 3rd country) perspective. Thus, to investigate *the focus of domesticity* of news⁴⁹ a distinction was made between 1) “*pure*” EU news, or stories focused on the EU without any involvement of the country of the news outlet; 2) “*EU news at home*”, or domestic news that is characterized by the inclusion of information on the EU; and 3) “*EU news abroad*”, or EU news within the context of the third party (neither EU nor the country of the news outlet),

The distribution of news stories on the EU according to the focus of domesticity in reporting could be seen in Figure 8. The results are reported in percentages based on the total number of items.

Figure 8. Distribution of the foci of domesticity



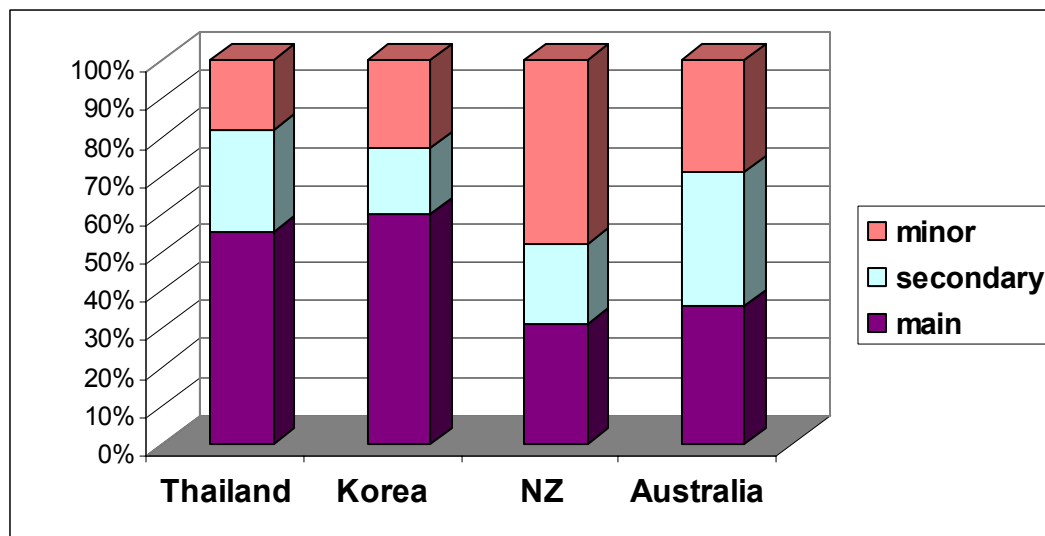
⁴⁹ de Vreese, 2001, p.284; Peter et al., op.cit.; Kevin, op.cit, p.54; de Vreese, 2003; Shulz, op.cit.

7. Degree of centrality

For each reference of the EU, coders were asked to state whether the topic was the main focus, of the news item, secondary, or merely a minor reference. Thus, to assess the degree of centrality of news a distinction was made between 1) *main perspective* e.g., a story focuses solely on the event in the EU; 2) *secondary perspective*; events in the EU are described as equally important to other events in the story; and 3) *minor perspective* the EU have been alluded in passing as a minor reference angle in reporting.

The distribution of news stories on the EU according to the degree of representation centrality could be seen in Figure 9. The results are reported in percentages based on the total number of items.

Figure 9. Distribution of the degrees of centrality

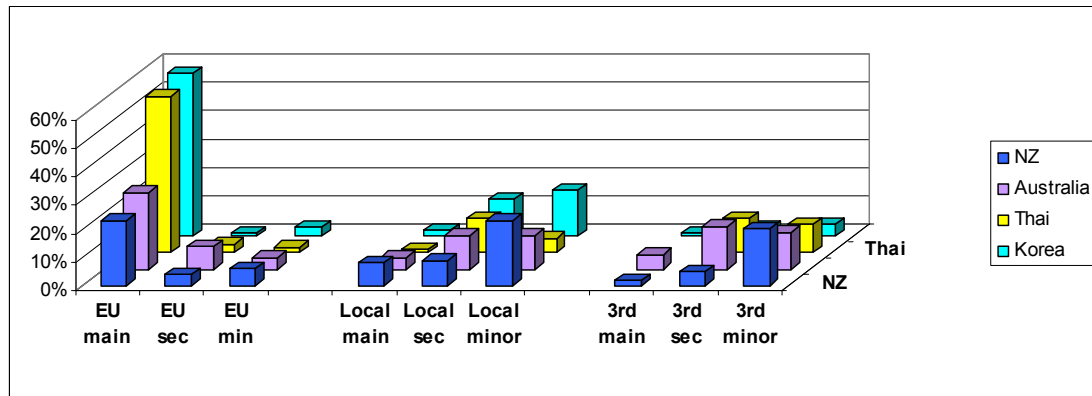


8. Multiple processing

Three-on-three relation between domesticity and centrality produces nine associations in multiple-processing: article focusing on the EU where the EU is main, or secondary, or minor focus; article focusing on the home country where the EU is main, or secondary, or minor focus; and article focusing on the third party where the

EU is main, or secondary, or minor focus of attention. Figure 10 reports in reports the results in percentages based on the total number of items.

Figure 10. Multiple processing of the degree of centrality and foci of domesticity



IV. DISCUSSION

In Thailand and in Korea, most of the news stories portray the EU issues as a major theme in the EU context. Arguably, the share of news of this news category known as “*pure foreign news*” is an indication of a cosmopolitan orientation of the foreign news reporting⁵⁰. However, a prominent positioning of an issue as a “pure” foreign news without a national “*hook*”⁵¹ that grounds that issue in a domestic discourse alienates that issues from the immediate interests of the readers – foreign news is usually viewed as news about “*worlds out of sight, out of mind and out of touch*”⁵².

NZ and Australian media feature a more balanced distribution of foci of domesticity. A significant percentage of the news stories in both countries portray the EU in the local context. NZ has the largest share of the representations that mentioned the EU in the home context alluding to it in passing as well as the highest share of the news treating the EU as a major theme within a domestic context. Australia closely follows.

Researchers debate whether or not one should consider the appearance of EU news mainly in “domestic” focus as an indication of the lesser or bigger degree of the

⁵⁰ Shulz, op.cit, p.9

⁵¹ Kevin, op.cit..

⁵² Lippmann 1922

EU issues on foreign policy agenda. Nevertheless, in the reporting of this nature there is a bonus of developing an intrinsic interest towards the European issues -- although being far away, Europe comes 'close to home'. We argue that "localizing" the EU guides the perception of the Union as a partner whose development has a major direct impact on domestic affairs. Moreover, it may induce the self-images of NZ and Australia as "equal counterparts" to the EU -- either partially due to the NZ's and Australia's Anglo-Saxon heritage, or due to their self-perceptions of belonging to the club of Western industrial nations.

Australia, NZ and Thailand show percentage of news that reports the EU in the context of the third agents -- 32 per cent, 27 per cent and 23 per cent respectively. Korea devotes only 8 per cent of the EU coverage. In way, this traditional for foreign news genre representation -- the majority of international news stories involves two or more countries -- illuminates the vision of the EU as an important actor on the world stage with many international connections.

The data yielded by this paper provides answers to the formulated above research question. The initial assumption is partially confirmed -- daily coverage of the EU in the four countries of Asia-Pacific region seems to be of an unobtrusive nature. For instance, the total amount of EU reporting in five most influential newspapers in Korea is relatively low. Thailand shows a similar trend. Although Thai data registered a high monthly average, it has been achieved mostly due to the EU reporting by two elite English-speaking capital-based newspapers which in reality have a limited appeal due to the elitist nature of their readership. On the other hand, Thai-language newspapers with the highest circulation presented a small amount of news items on the EU. In both Thailand and Korea a big bulk of news focused on the EU outside the local contexts.

New Zealand leading papers, although featuring a relatively high number of news stories per month, focus most of them on NZ mentioning the EU in local context and often in passing. This approach to presenting a foreign counterpart has its own advantages -- by "*pegging the story to local economy, local business, local culture*"⁵³ the news handlers make the readers care about this remote foreign place. But this tactic has its downside -- according to Ginsberg⁵⁴, certain important compelling foreign stories that have no obvious local or domestic pegs risk to be overlooked in

⁵³ Ginsberg, op.cit., p. 53.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

this approach. A dominant positioning of the EU as a minor reference, arguably, undermines the overall visibility of an issue, inducing the perception of its insignificance and marginality.

Australian print media presented the largest sample of news per month. It seems that Australian media does a better job in introducing the EU in its diversity to their readers. It is achieved via a more balanced placement of news in newspapers bodies, as well as via a more balanced distribution of degrees of centrality and foci of domesticity. This more weighted coverage could be partially attributed to the fact that Australian population is more diverse in terms of European immigration in comparison to other three countries. Media organizations assume that their readers will be more intrinsically motivated to learn diverse news from and about Europe. In parat, the situation with reporting Europe could be a reflection of an overall diversity and quality of international reporting in Australia recognized by journalists all around the world (Kunkel 2001).

There is no doubt that the differences in terms of EU visibility in the four print media systems are the results of varying editorial priorities and different degrees of support invested in the foreign news production in general. Under existing political circumstances in the four countries, it is up to a media organization to define the volume and content of attention devoted to European affairs. Yet, we are clear that this research is not a critique for national media for failing to provide an “ideal” coverage of the EU – before tackling the lack of external attention, EU firstly has to overcome its own internal “*communication deficit*”⁵⁵. We recognize the fact that media organizations in the countries outside the EU are faced with a challenging task of gathering and presenting prominent and engaging news about the Union, a place geographically remote and increasingly complex, under the constraints of time and money. Even when the EU enters the field of national policy debate, it is still difficult to comprehensibly represent intricate decision making patterns surrounding the EU and their probable effects to the national interests.

The key question “Is the more the better?” remains open. People, naturally (and perhaps necessarily), do not have an equal level of interest in every topic⁵⁶. Thus, it is unrealistic to assume that ‘ideal’ reader will read all EU news, and that the information obtained through news will be the only influence on his/her opinion on

⁵⁵ de Vreese, on-line report

⁵⁶ Neumann et al., op.cit., p.116.

the EU. Albeit, not all 193 countries currently listed in the geography annals⁵⁷ get equal representation in the national media. In this light, EU more or less regular appearance on the pages of selected newspapers provides a certain visibility to this part of the world (maybe to the detriment to the visibility of other places, i.e., Africa, or South America). As such, Iyengar⁵⁸ believes that in the arena of public affairs, where people are highly dependent upon the media for information, more accessible information is information that is more frequently or more recently conveyed by media, and individuals select information that happens to be more conveniently “located” or accessible. If information can be easily retrieved from memory, then it tends to dominate judgements, opinions and decisions.

It seems that the contest between minimal and maximum media effects is irresolvable⁵⁹. Flow and structure of EU news partially established via systematizing the formal characteristics of EU coverage could not be the only inference to measure of the extent to which citizens of four Asia-Pacific countries incorporate the EU in their decision-making and daily lives. However, it does demonstrate media contribution to what constitutes “*political common knowledge*”⁶⁰ of citizenship in order to participate in the domestic debate on foreign policy.

V. CONCLUDING REMARK

Any research which is concerned with the role played by the national media in portraying important foreign counterparts helps to reveal the pictures of the foreign worlds in the minds of general public. The systematic study of flow and structure of print news on the EU presented in this paper provides a baseline from which to consider the insights into the images, perceptions and attitudes towards the EU dominating in the region in a greater detail. Although still being in the initial phase of its trajectory, media stage of the research project *Public, Elite and Media Perceptions of the EU in Asia Pacific Region* has already presented valid findings and observations that

⁵⁷ Geography About website

⁵⁸ Iyengar, 1991, p.131

⁵⁹ Neumann et al., op.cit., p.116.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p.3.

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