

# The Australian Press and the Reporting of APEC: From Seoul to Osaka<sup>1</sup>

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## Introduction

Ask the ordinary Australian what they know about APEC, it's purpose, aims and goals and you are likely to be met with a look of blank incomprehension. It is unlikely that they will be able to tell you who the member economies are or the significance of the dates 2010 and 2020. There could well be several explanations for this. People may simply not be interested in international politics, but I am not convinced that this is the whole answer. If APEC is to succeed, then it will do so only with the support of the people, and this can only come if they are convinced that membership is beneficial. What I intend to do here is to examine the coverage that APEC receives within a certain section of the Australian media industry, to see what opinions, if any, people are likely to form about an organisation that is probably going to have an increasing influence on their lives in the not too distant future. The reasons for doing this will become clear once I have demonstrated why the media is important *per se*. I will begin with a well known example from history.

“ANNOUNCER: The Columbia Broadcasting System and its affiliated stations present Orson Welles and the Mercury Theatre on Air in *War of the Worlds* by H.G. Wells.”<sup>2</sup>

These words were heard by the American people at 8:00pm on the evening of Sunday, October 30th, 1938. Orson Welles had adapted the classic H.G. Wells novel as a radio show to go out as entertainment on Halloween as an alternative to the usual witches and ghost tales. However, things were not to go as planned. Despite making it quite clear at the outset, during commercial breaks and again at the end, that what was being broadcast was fiction, many members of the listening public believed that what they were hearing was fact and panicked. Why should this have happened?

The reason for this phenomenon was due primarily to the dramatic technique used by Orson Welles. He told the story as if it was happening in ‘real time’. He used the broadcasting techniques that the audience was used to hearing when they were listening to factual news

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<sup>1</sup> My grateful thanks go to Professor Stephanie Lawson for her helpful comments on the first draft of this paper.

<sup>2</sup> The original radio script. Reproduced in Hadley C. The Invasion from Mars (1966) p4.

programmes and they reacted accordingly. Welles and the cast had not realized the potency of what they were doing:

“Much to their surprise the actors learned that the series of news bulletins they had issued describing an invasion from Mars had been believed by thousands of people throughout the country. For a few horrible hours people from Maine to California thought that hideous monsters armed with death rays were destroying all armed resistance sent against them; that there was simply no escape from disaster; that the end of the world was near. Newspapers the following morning spoke of the ‘tidal wave of terror that swept the nation’. It was clear that a panic of national proportions had occurred. The chairman of the Federal Communications Commission called the program ‘regrettable’.”<sup>3</sup>

Of course, it could be argued that the effect caused by the broadcast was of its time. Hadley Cantril in his study of the aftermath of the broadcast looks at this aspect. The world had been through a prolonged economic depression and the dark clouds of war were again gathering over Europe. Perhaps anything was possible in those troubled times. Indeed Cantril found that those from the lower socioeconomic groups, those who had already suffered the most from the economic troubles, were the most likely to perceive the broadcast as news.<sup>4</sup> However, what cannot be denied is that when people were presented with information in a form that they usually associated with ‘news’, many were more than willing to take it on face value. The context within which the information was presented was crucial to the interpretation that people placed upon it. News has an effect on those exposed to it. That is the basic assumption of this paper.

This paper is not designed to test this assumption. Time and resources mean that the focus of my attention will be on the frequency and content of the reporting of APEC by certain sections of the Australian media, to examine how it is presented to the people. This is not to say however, that the assumption is not without foundation. The Orson Welles example given above may be taken by some as proof in itself of its validity but it also has a ‘commonsense’ feel to it, and is taken for granted by advertisers.

“Of course, there is evidence that some people respond to certain images or messages in a certain way at certain times. And simple common sense tells us that the media must have some influence, not least because it is not just advertisers, but also governments and media corporations, who spend vast amounts of money on persuasion in the belief that it is worth the expense in terms of likely returns.”<sup>5</sup>

Television newsreaders are billed as figures of authority. The whole approach to and feel of, the evening news broadcast is designed to convey an image of trustworthiness and believability. The mixture of words and pictures shows the world ‘as it is’. Those who work closely with, and wish to be covered by, the press recognise this. The press conference, the photo opportunity, the ‘off the record’ briefing as well as ‘the stunt’, all feature as sources of news and are used as such by those with a stake in getting their name in the papers.

I contend then, that my assumption is valid and will leave it to others to prove otherwise. The media plays one role in how we gather information, it helps us deal with the world and ‘facts’

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid* p3.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid* p157.

<sup>5</sup> Taylor M. Global Communications. (1997) p6.

about which we can have no first hand experience. These need to be matched up with what we can actually 'know' about our immediate surroundings, fitted to our experiences of life and, in this case, politicians. To allow us to live our lives and make choices between alternative ways of spending our time, we allow ourselves to be told what is 'news' and accept it when it is presented in a familiar format. There seems to be no way to escape this conclusion, especially in international relations when events are so far away. The old adage 'never believe what you read in the papers', may be repeated *ad nauseam*, but this is usually by those who do not want you to believe what has been written. However, one must inject a note of caution as to just how deep the media influence can run in the realm of foreign policy. Claims have been made for the influence of the media that are truly outrageous, such as:

"Nevertheless, the media and public opinion have a *profound* influence on the making of foreign policy. Journalists often set the international policy agenda by determining which issues should be covered. If the media covers an international problem, governments have a problem. If the media does not cover an event or policy, governments are less likely to develop adequate policies on such issues."<sup>6</sup>

Common sense tells us that this simply cannot be the case. Governments have policies on all sorts of foreign affairs issues that never make the news. Besides, government departments, especially those dealing with foreign policy, work to fundamentally different timescales than journalists. The media may well set what the current public priority issues are, but to claim that they set the agenda is to exaggerate their influence to a point that can be no longer sustained by reasoned argument.

A further position that I will adopt that needs brief examination in this introductory section, is the nature of news gathering. An appreciation of the way the industry works will allow me to place what follows into the context of the restraints that journalists operate under. If the media coverage of APEC is less than comprehensive, or indeed below what one might expect, one must always remember the bottom line.

"A simple truth underpins the everyday practice of the media institutions and the journalists who work within them - that they are all at some level in competition with each other to sell stories and maximize audiences."<sup>7</sup>

This leads to the inevitable position that news gathering is not primarily a creative practice, nor should we expect it to be so. With a public hungry for news and media organisations driven by competition and the need for profit, it should come as no surprise to learn that such organisations have developed bureaucratic structures to permit them to deal with the flood of information to which they are subjected.

"In sum, newsmaking is bureaucratic work. News organisations cope with the apparent chaos and infinite number of events in each day by developing routines and specialisation."<sup>8</sup>

We may wish to cling to the somewhat romantic notion of the journalist doggedly pursuing the truth for the benefit of the 'public interest', but the reality is less glamorous.<sup>9</sup> Occasionally a

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<sup>6</sup> Hopkinson N. *The Media and International Affairs After the Cold War*. (1993) p1. Emphasis added.

<sup>7</sup> Eldridge J. (ed). *Getting the Message*. (1993) p111.

<sup>8</sup> Smith R. (ed). *Politics in Australia*. (1993) p312.

story comes along where the likes of Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein make their name, but they required the patronage of their employers to allow them to follow the story from beginning to end. The day-to-day process is one of routine.

Decisions need to be taken as to what goes in and what gets left out. News items fight for space. Once it is in, how many column inches or seconds is it worth? Where should it be placed? These decisions are out of the hands of those who produce the raw material. In addition, it must be borne in mind that foreign reporting costs a great deal of money: if it provides no increase in sales/audience figures what benefits can be gained from its inclusion? APEC is just one item amongst many. It has no automatic right to be included, it needs to prove its worth and value.

What follows then, is an in-depth examination into how well APEC has succeeded in getting itself in the news, working on the assumption that it wished to be reported, from its inception in 1989 to the third leaders meeting in Osaka, 1995. In addition, once it has succeeded in getting itself noticed, I wish to show in what light APEC is portrayed.

## Outline

The major portion of this paper will be devoted to, first, a quantitative analysis of the reporting of APEC which will be followed by a qualitative examination. Specific methodologies will be outlined as will the process of interpretation. But media studies is a huge field, dealing as it does with the questions of ownership, commercial pressures and the influence of advertisers, agenda setting, etc. Before proceeding on to specifics, one must narrow the field down so that the variables being looked at are exposed.

As I have already made clear, no attempt will be made to test the impact of media reporting of APEC on those exposed to it. Evidence has been presented that authoritative sources are influential on opinion forming and further circumstantial proof of my case that the press has *an* effect on those exposed to it will appear in the conclusion. Of course, much argument remains as to whether reporting is opinion forming or opinion reflecting, with many journalists making the case that they simply report what the public want and will point to, for example, rising or falling circulation/audience figures to back their case. However, much of the soul searching within the British media following the death of Diana, Princess of Wales calls this simplistic argument into question. After all, if they were simply reporting what the public wanted, and their intrusive methods were justified on these grounds, why did they feel the need to examine their collective consciences? One got the distinct feeling that the media was aware that it was capable of creating its own demand. Whilst this particular argument continues to rage with calls for greater privacy laws, even if the media can be regarded as opinion reflecting, it is not unreasonable to suggest that readers will choose the product that *best* reflects their own views and priorities. Higher socioeconomic groups getting their news from CNN rather than MTV, for example.

Now, much of what is being written in the field of media studies nowadays is concerned with television, primarily because of the growth of satellite broadcasting. However, my area of

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<sup>9</sup> This is not to belittle the efforts of journalists. Many cover extremely dangerous situations and have paid with their lives especially in war zones. Undoubtedly this requires a great deal of dedication to their profession. Such sacrifices cannot be lightly dismissed.

interest is the more traditional 'press' by which I mean the daily newspapers. Newspapers, of course, have greater freedoms than television. They can have opinions, editorials and bias which television news is supposed to avoid. For all intents and purposes, they inhabit a different world. Deadlines are daily not hourly. In addition, the words spoken during an average news bulletin would barely fill the front page of a broadsheet newspaper. Newspapers can cover a wider range of stories and elect to look at many in greater depth. In many ways they may be described, not in the language of the broadcast news, but as being more like daily documentaries.

"Because press stories are generally longer and carry much more detail than broadcast news, the structure of press stories is more complex."<sup>10</sup>

But they, above all, strive to get their message across and aim for the all important 'plausibility'.

I take as a starting point the (admittedly contestable) idea that Australian press coverage of foreign affairs has increased of late. This position comes from someone in a position to judge, with Gareth Evans, in his book published whilst he was the Australian Government Minister at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), claiming:

"There has been a marked improvement in the (Australian) media's coverage of foreign affairs and trade issues in the past few years. The amount of column inches devoted to foreign news in Australia's newspapers has increased even in the tabloids...There has also been an increase in the number of Australian correspondents based in Asia."<sup>11</sup>

This claim is both objective and subjective. At a nuts and bolts level, Evans is saying that the overall level of coverage has increased, but it should also be clear that he is saying the *quality* of reporting has improved. The task here is to see if APEC has managed to get a fair slice of this 'new, improved' cake.

However, even if the quantity and quality of overseas reporting in the Australian press has improved in recent years, which may be taken as tentative proof of Australia's increased willingness to accept a changed world and its place in it, in reality things are rarely that cut and dried. In his chapter, 'The Rhetoric of Asia' in 'Seeking Asian Engagement', Anthony Milner briefly looks at some of the headlines that have accompanied 'Asian' stories in the Australian press. This he does in the context of the 1983-1996 Labor Government's attempts to integrate Australia into Asia, a process in which it was hoped APEC would play a major part. Milner's selection of headlines allows him to claim a shift, not to a new 'dynamic' Australia, but in traditional Australian foreign subservience.

"Accompanying this rhetoric from the national leadership, the Australian public was served a heavy dose of 'Asia' in the media. The headlines spoke of 'Strategies for an Asian Australia', 'Think Asia', 'Can We Be Part of Asia?', 'PM Points Youth Towards Future in Asia', and 'Keatings Asian Vision'. The articles themselves often presented intelligent assessments of what would be required for a successful engagement in Asia - the need for knowledge of 'Asian societies, 'Asian languages, and 'Asian' business techniques. Another trend in articles on 'Asia' was a certain obsession with whether

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<sup>10</sup> Bell A. *The Language of News Media*. (1991) p148.

<sup>11</sup> Evans G & Grant B. *Australia's Foreign Relations*. (1995) p51.

'Asians' would accept Australians in their region. Again the titles suggest the flavour: 'What Do Indonesians Think of Us', 'Keating's Republic Push Gets the Nod in China'.....'Ugly Australia in Asia'. The list could go on and on - and it gives a disturbing impression that the old cringe toward Europe and the United States was steadily being replaced by a new national cringe towards 'Asia'."<sup>12</sup>

Now the continual use of inverted commas when referring to Asia may well give us a clue as to Milner's opinion on the subject. Indeed, as I will show again later, many such studies exist where the selection of articles used to 'prove' a point is highly questionable, but he is also able to show that on certain occasions, the Australian press coverage of certain Asian leaders can certainly be contradictory and is often less than deferential.

"Australian newspaper readers came into frequent contact with these expressions of what they saw as a rejection of the Australian leadership's 'Asian' ambitions, and in some cases the leadership's explicit claims to have already achieved 'Asian' acceptance. The 'Asian' statements were seldom read (as some of them might have been) in a positive way. When Australians saw such headlines as 'Malaysia Steps Up Fight to Keep Australia Out of Asia', a sense of the cultural, as well as political, distance between Australia and much of the Asian region can only have been reinforced."<sup>13</sup>

It can be seen that Milner appears to be operating on the same assumption as myself: that reporting has an effect on those it is aimed at. His use of the expression 'can only have been', is evidence that it is an untested claim. However, if the Australian press, in common with all others in liberal democracies, is capable of 'doublespeak' what general impression does it present of APEC?

But why study newspapers at all? A case could be made that newspapers are becoming less relevant in the modern world. Many people rely on television and radio as their primary sources of news. This is especially true of rural Australia where the population can be thinly spread and widely dispersed. Why should I be concentrating on press coverage and what will I miss by this narrow survey? Several points emerge.

One of the main problems with researching broadcast media is the availability of, and access to, archive material. The period I am looking at has an overall time frame of seven years. Press material is readily available and easily viewed. Video and audio cassettes for this extended survey would take a prohibitive length of time to cover, even assuming they exist. The newspapers that I shall concentrate on have been catalogued and data bases exist that allow accuracy in quantitative analysis. The relevant articles for qualitative analysis can be obtained with relative ease. This allows me to overcome practical problems, but with the population density problem of Australia I have mentioned, can I be sure that the survey net is spread wide enough?

This is not as big a problem as it at first seems. The rural communities of Australia represent a small percentage of the total population. The vast majority of the country's population is concentrated in the two most populous states in the south east corner. Here the papers I shall examine are readily available so they have a market potential that makes them suitable for my purposes. But there is another reason why I chose to disregard broadcast media and which has already been alluded to: broadcasters have a different ethos from newspapers. Television

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<sup>12</sup> Milner A in Cotton & Ravenhill (eds). Seeking Asian Engagement. (1997) p34.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid* p39/40.

newscasters rattle through stories with no time for reflection. Their strength is the 'here and now' with satellite links around the world. Newspapers have the time and space to be more thoughtful. The point is that newspapers present themselves as a 'package' with different types of article alongside each other. Television does provide background programmes but these are presented separately from the 'news'.

Television, it has to be acknowledged, has an immediate impact. The mixture of words and pictures can provoke powerful images that many would argue are far more enduring than a small piece tucked away on the inside pages. Newspapers are produced once a day and the time required to write, print and distribute them means that, by definition, they contain 'old news'. But should this necessarily bother us? As I mentioned earlier, newspapers are like daily documentaries. The problem with television is that in many instances, when it is involved in news production, it is required to present balanced reports. This is particularly true during, for instance, election periods. Newspapers do not have such constraints. Within the limits of libel laws they can report how they wish. Editorials are not merely included, they are expected. Newspapers take a position on a subject. Not every subject to be sure, but whilst television editors have to ask whether a piece is both *fair* and accurate, newspaper editors only have to concern themselves with the accuracy of the story. And, of course, the 'accuracy' of a particular report depends on the context in which it placed. A double page spread may include several 'factual' articles alongside background and comment. Therefore, when the final product is being put together, attention must be focused on the overall delivery. The criteria the press work to, can then determine which 'facts' get reported. Therefore, despite the so-called 'information age' where instant access to stories via CNN and the Internet is perfectly feasible, the different approach taken by newspapers and their enduring popularity (not to say relative cheapness) with the public means that they remain an interesting and legitimate area of study. However, there are certain aspects of the newspaper industry that I wish to specifically exclude.

The question of ownership will not concern me here. To be sure, there rages an argument within Australian politics as to the extent of ownership and in particular cross ownership of newspapers and TV stations. The major players include the Murdoch Group, Fairfax and Packer, but how much direct input into the everyday stories that I will be looking at, can those remote from the shop floor actually have? Many would overstate the influence of owners and have us believe that it amounted to day-to-day interference in the industry, but I would concur with Smith when he states that:

"...direct intervention of this sort is less common than is popularly believed. Some media owners are more interventionist than others. In a loose media organisation not dominated by one individual, intervention is less likely to occur than in tighter organisations dominated by individual owners. HWT was a good example of the first sort of organisation, Murdoch's News Ltd the second. However, even interventionists like Murdoch cannot be in every news room they own on every day to ensure that the news is written the way they want it to be."<sup>14</sup>

Owners may indeed set the general political position of a paper and ensure that this is followed by the careful selection of staff. However, as most papers are sold for, and concentrate on, their domestic coverage, it will be assumed that this is the area that most owners will wish to be involved in. Any influence that politicians try to exert over coverage is also likely to be in

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<sup>14</sup> Smith R. cited above. p305.

the domestic sphere. This, after all, is what tends to decide the outcome of elections with foreign affairs playing a very secondary role. Therefore, APEC is unlikely to be the major area of interest to even the most enthusiastic of owners. I will, I believe, be on fairly safe ground adopting Smith's view when he asserts that:

“ The view of politics that the media present Australians is fundamentally the work of journalists, editor, photographers....and other media workers.”<sup>15</sup>

But I will only be looking at the finished product, is the process important?

The process will be taken as a constant in this study. Editors, for example, may have changed during the period of focus as will journalists and this can affect style and content of reporting. But I am looking for trends and patterns. How do journalist that are new to the story find their feet? The easiest way is to ask colleagues who have covered it before and research in the library of your own organisations. This breeds a certain continuity. Journalists and editors may indeed want to 'make their mark' and the best way to do this is with the 'big story'. Much of what concerns me can be seen as mundane, everyday reporting where the path from journalist through to final print is best viewed as part of the bureaucracy of news gathering, highlighted earlier.

My aims, however, remain ambitious. It is my intention to examine the patterns of reporting. How has reporting of APEC grown, or indeed at times, shrunk? Do patterns of reporting exist? One would guess that leaders meetings would generate interest of themselves but is APEC purely a November news item? Not only does the frequency of reporting need examination but is the coverage becoming more even throughout the year? Can styles of reporting be detected? Are these positive or negative and why are they written in a closed style that makes it impossible for them to be neutral? Obviously much of what follows will have a very significant subjective element and reporting language is open to many different interpretations, not least by those that originally produced it, but that should not dissuade anyone from carrying out such an exercise.

The spotlight of my efforts will be focusing then on a particular section of the Australian press. The papers to be covered will be outlined and justified in the coming sections. The quantitative analysis will, by implication, be an examination of the editor's choice of which stories to included as APEC fights for the limited space available, whilst the qualitative analysis is a look at the way the journalists themselves see the APEC process. To carry out the qualitative process, material gleaned from the papers themselves will be supplemented by information received during interviews that I have conducted.

What follows then, is not in the mould of 'All the President's Men'. Journalists and other news staff covering APEC, it will be assumed, are primarily concerned with getting on with their jobs. How they view APEC is important because of what it can tell us about Australia's relationship with the Asia Pacific region. Implicit in the assumption that press coverage of a story has an effect on its audience, is the fact that the press cannot stand in 'splendid isolation' from the society which they are responsible to. They are part of that society and their views of it are just as susceptible to influence as those of the general public. Therefore,

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<sup>15</sup> *ibid* p310.

whilst governments may wish one impression to be portrayed, and given Australia's involvement in the APEC process one would assume that overall they would like to see APEC portrayed in a positive light, what actually comes out may be quite different.

## **When the Papers Say**

When carrying out an exercise such as this, decisions need to be taken concerning what one's universe and sample are going to be. The project needs to be representative whilst remaining manageable. Clearly the universe in this case is all the newspapers published in Australia from 1989 to 1995 but this would present an enormous array of data. Australia is a sparsely populated, vast country. Papers published in the different State capitals can vary enormously. However, as stated above, the highest concentration of people is to be found in the south east corner and the most populous state is New South Wales. The population of NSW (when taken to include the Australian Capital Territory) is approximately 6,500,000. This represents 36% of the population of Australia. When looking for newspapers that are potentially accessible to the largest percentage of people, those produced in Sydney would seem to be prime candidates.

Australia's largest circulation daily newspapers are the tabloids produced in Sydney. It would be possible to use these as my sample but they is not really aimed at the audience I am interested in. I wish to look at the type of reporting that those who can be expected to be opinion formers and decision makers, are exposed to. Those that market researchers are prone to calling A's, B's and C1's. This is because these are the type of people that are likely to have to deal with extended horizons in, for example, their working lives in that they may be looking to Asia for business opportunities, potential markets or investments. One can safely assume that when looking for business or finance news, as well as 'in depth' coverage, these people will turn to a 'quality' paper and then expect that paper to report at the very least what is factually accurate. This assumption dictates that I take a broadsheet paper as my sample and indeed the logical choice is the Sydney Morning Herald (SMH). What I lose in mass circulation by this choice I make up for with greater audience targeting. This is consistent with not actually testing the impact upon the audience.

The way I have chosen to approach this task is to look at the total number of articles produced under certain headings rather than the total number of column inches. This is mainly for practical reasons. The quantitative data was obtained from the SMH database catalogue provided by the State Library of NSW. However, the database only contains basic information such as title of the article, date, author and location as well as subject categories. It will not tell you the exact size of the article, although it will provide information as to whether it was small (less than half a page), medium (half to a full page), or large (more than a full page). None of the articles catalogued under the heading 'APEC' was over a page in length and only one was over half a page long. All the others were less than half a page in length. So whilst the exact length of each article is not being examined and the total number of column inches devoted to APEC over the 1989-95 time scale is also not available, I can say that all of the articles are 'brief'. Therefore, when looking at the numbers of articles produced that deal with APEC, I do not lose a great deal by moving away from the standard measure of column inches.

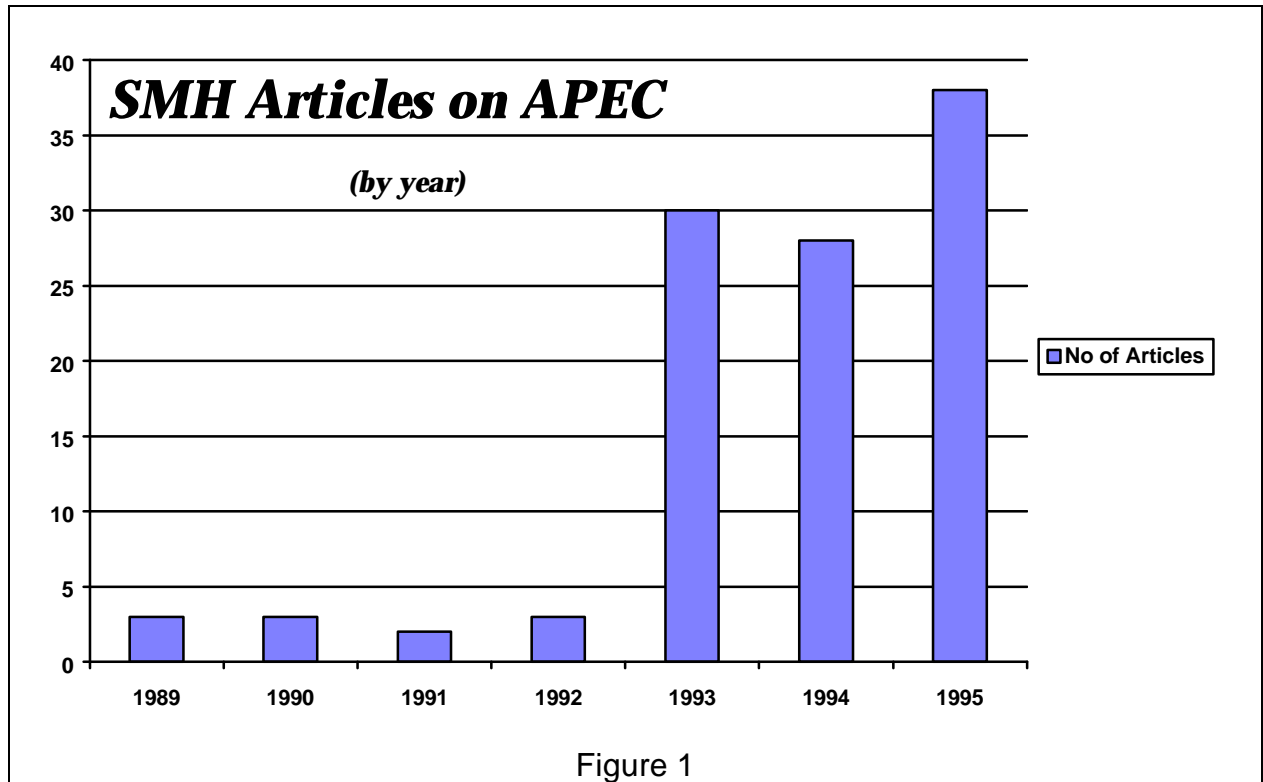


Figure 1 shows the number of articles printed year on year that deal with APEC. This turns out to be pretty much what one would expect with there being very little coverage in the early years. APEC was a new organisation and its main event was an annual meeting of Foreign and Trade Ministers, which is not the sort of thing to get the journalistic pulse racing. When I put the question to a journalist as to how Australia managed to get ministers from 11 other countries to come to Canberra less than a year after Hawke's original proposal the reply came:

“ I mean it's not like organising 11 heads of state to come here. Trade ministers have a propensity to travel because they're out there selling their goods. I don't think getting 11 trade ministers together is an incredibly difficult feat.”<sup>16</sup>

But things soon change and coverage increases significantly in 1993.

Again this is not unexpected. The first APEC leaders' meeting was held in Seattle in 1993, an event bound to stimulate interest. Having the leaders of the most powerful economies in the world gathered in one place, three G7 leaders as well as China, is not something that the press could afford to ignore. Certain events almost *demand* to be included in the news and Seattle would fall into that category. Figure 1 shows that between 1993 and 1995 the level of interest remained at between 28 and 38 articles a year. But this is by no means the whole story.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Dwyer. AFR. Interview with the author.

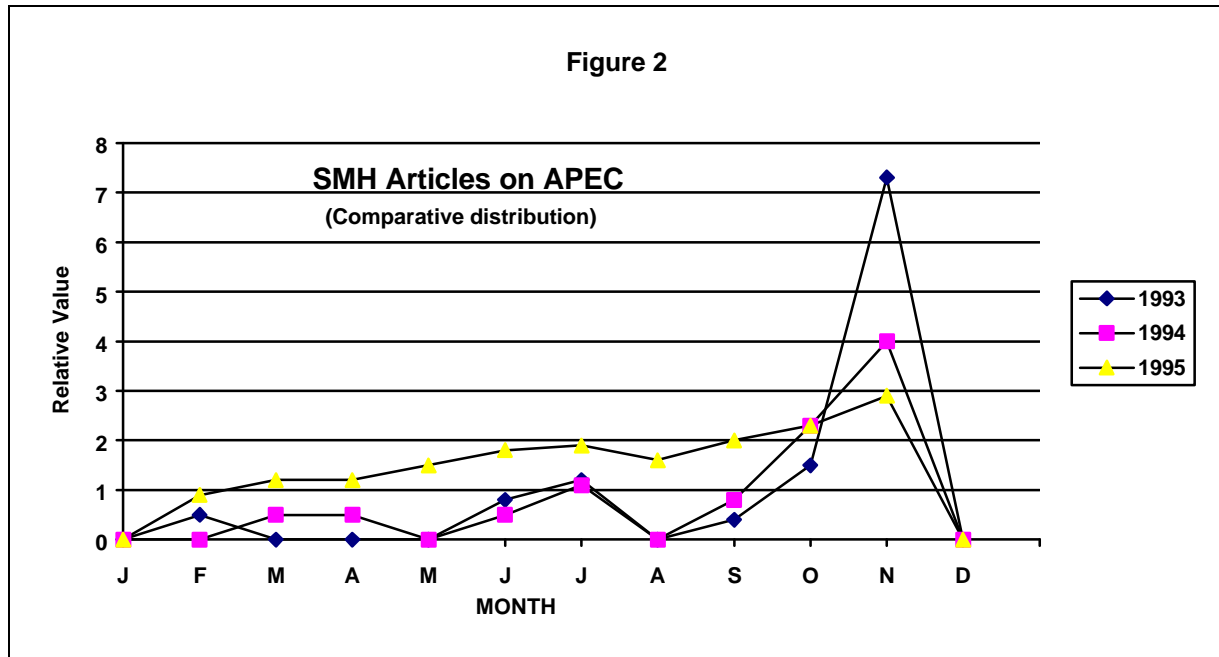


Figure 2 looks at the spread of APEC reporting over the year. It shows the comparisons, month by month for the years 1993 to 1995. Each year has a peak of interest during November which coincides with the annual leaders meeting, but other patterns of reporting also emerge. When we refer back to fig 1, we can see that for the three years covered when there were leaders meetings, 1994 generated the least amount of SMH interest. This might be regarded as odd because the Bogor meeting of 1994 produced APEC’s most historic agreement to date: the 2010 and 2020 target dates. So 1994 could either be termed a ‘perverse response’ or simply reflect the cynicism of SMH journalists and editors. But fig 2 indicates that something else was going on.

It is quite clear that from the initial peak of interest in the November meetings, coverage of this annual event has fallen year-on-year, but overall the trend in APEC coverage is rising. What has happened is that coverage has become more evenly distributed throughout the year. During 1993 there were long periods when APEC did not appear in the paper at all, and certain months when it appeared only once or twice. By 1995 this has changed. The November peak, whilst still existing, is now much smaller. However, outside of the December and January traditional ‘slow’ times, each month has at least two articles relating to APEC. It would appear to be becoming a more relevant topic to those whose job it is to report it. However, none of this gives us any indication as to whether the level of reporting of APEC in the SMH can be seen as poor or favourable when compared to other related topics. It is to this that I now turn.

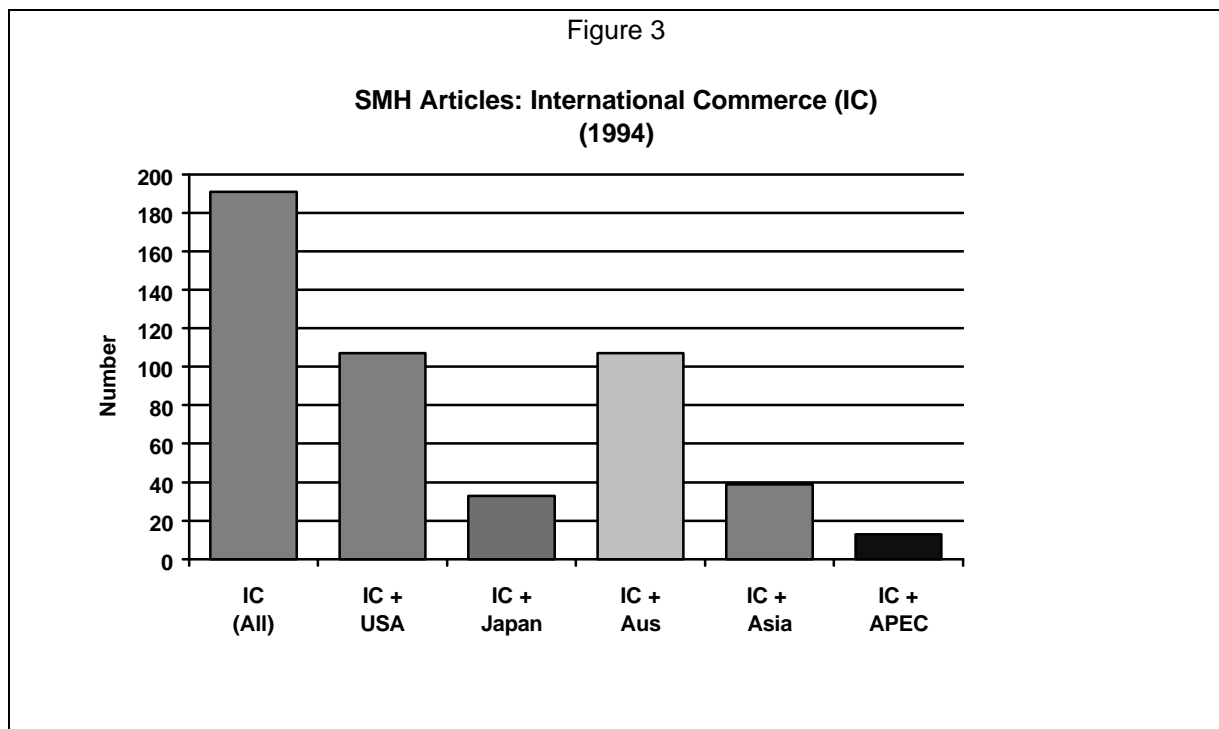
The problem is really one of how to get a ‘background’. Using the data base, it is easy enough to bring out all the articles that are catalogued in some way by the term ‘APEC’, but what is needed is a comparative analysis. A far more general, but relevant, term is needed, by which the SMH articles are catalogued and under which heading a large proportion of the APEC items could be expected to fall. Other terms could then be placed inside this ‘background’ and the level of APEC coverage can be compared.

1994 was the year chosen for the comparison, essentially as it was removed from the hype of the first leaders conference but contained the significant ‘Bogor Declaration’. This may be regarded by some as a not entirely typical year in APEC history but it lies somewhere between the fanfare of 1993 and the ‘routineness’ of later years. But what yardstick would allow a meaningful comparison? Obviously exceptionally broad headings such as ‘politics’ or ‘international relations’ would cover such a multitude of sins that APEC could almost be expected to drop off the scale. Something narrower needed to be found.

The answer was provided by turning to the ideas behind APEC itself. The major guiding philosophy behind APEC is to achieve:

“With respect to our objective of enhancing trade and investment in Asia-Pacific, we agree to adopt the long-term goal of free and open trade and investment in Asia-Pacific...We further agree to announce our commitment to complete achievement of our goal of free and open trade and investment in Asia-Pacific no later than the year 2020.”<sup>17</sup>

It should be clear from this that APEC sees it’s primary task as economic. Therefore the background subject heading chosen was ‘International Commerce’(IC). Now, it has to be remembered that the classification system that was used to build the SMH database was devised by a person or persons unknown, but I do not think that it is unreasonable to work on the principle that it was at least a consistent system. So items from 1994 that had been catalogued under the subject heading IC were called up and 191 were shown. The set was then refined five times so that, firstly, items catalogued under both IC and Australia were shown. Then IC and the USA, IC and Asia, IC and Japan and finally IC and APEC. The results are illustrated in figure 3.



<sup>17</sup> APEC Economic Leaders Declaration of Common Resolve. Bogor. Nov 1994.

It will be seen from fig 1 that APEC was reported 28 times in the SMH during 1994. When articles were searched for under the combined IC/APEC heading, 13 were found. As this represents just over 46% of the total APEC articles for that year, it is safe to say that the IC heading has caught as many of the APEC articles as would be necessary to allow meaningful comparisons. No other background heading could be found that covered as many APEC articles. Now, it is obviously the case that the same article may be counted several times, ie it could appear as both IC and APEC as well as IC and Australia and this may provide a distortion, but this does not distract from the fact that the APEC/IC category is a very small percentage of the 191 IC total. With the domestic focus of papers it is no surprise that IC/Australia category represents 56% of the total number of IC articles for 1994. The others followed as; IC/USA - 33%; IC/Asia - 20%; IC/Japan - 17% and IC/APEC - 7%. This is worrying for two reasons. First it is clear that APEC does particularly badly when looked at against the background of IC. Reporting is far more concerned with dealing with the topic on a country-by-country basis or the Asian region. APEC is not being seen as relevant to trading issues, further proof of which will come later in this section. The other worrying trend is the relatively poor performance of Japan, which is Australia's largest trading partner. It could be that relations with Japan are good and therefore not newsworthy and relations with the USA are bad and so get reported, but that cannot be the whole story. One suspects that language and cultural differences make it easier to cover the USA rather than Japan as well as the influence of Australia's historical preferences. However, it is not all bad news for APEC.

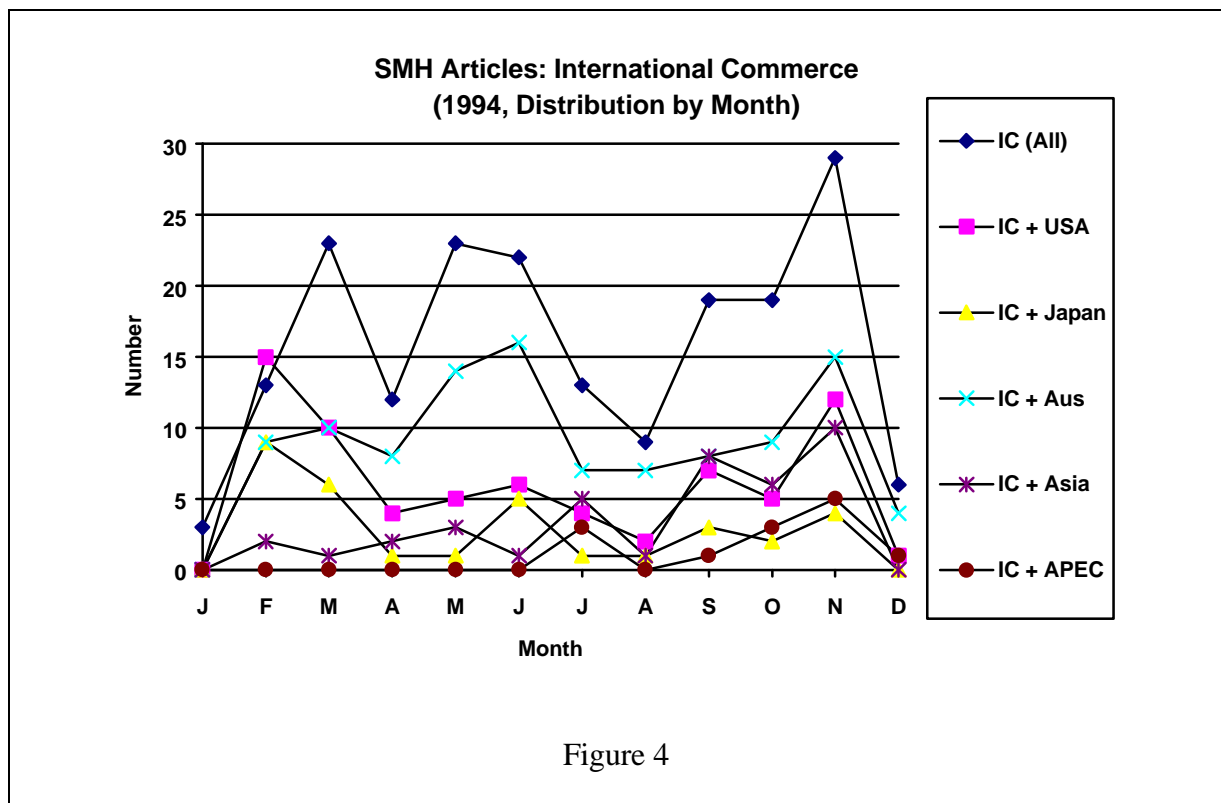


Figure 4

Figure 4 shows the distribution of the articles from fig 3 spread over the year. Coverage is not constant but we should not expect it to be. Domestic reporting takes priority and as Taylor says:

“The problem is that foreign news gathering is an extremely expensive business, involving the deployment of personnel and equipment for undetermined periods of time in costly foreign hotels and with large expense accounts. Decisions have to be made by news organisations as to whether the stories are important enough - and sufficiently relevant - to command public interest at home. How can they know, especially as foreign policy *issues*, the stuff of diplomacy, sometimes never flare up in the form of *events*, the real stuff of journalism? Besides, sending journalists to one spot means not sending them to others.”<sup>18</sup>

Quiet periods occur at the beginning and end of the year as well as in August when Australia’s major trading partners are taking their summer breaks, but coverage of IC occurs throughout the year. What is also readily apparent is that APEC has a marked effect during November. All the other overall peaks and troughs come and go with no regard to APEC, but all categories show an upward movement that coincides with the leaders meeting. Here APEC *must* be reported and it cannot be divorced from the trade between Australia and her major partners. If it is being reported under politics during the rest of the year, the November effect demonstrated in fig 4 shows that, at least then, APEC is being seen as intended. But this is not the case for the rest of the year. Fig 4 shows long periods when no reports of APEC as a subject of IC appear in the SMH. Fig 2 shows that APEC articles existed but where are the reports of APEC appearing in the SMH?

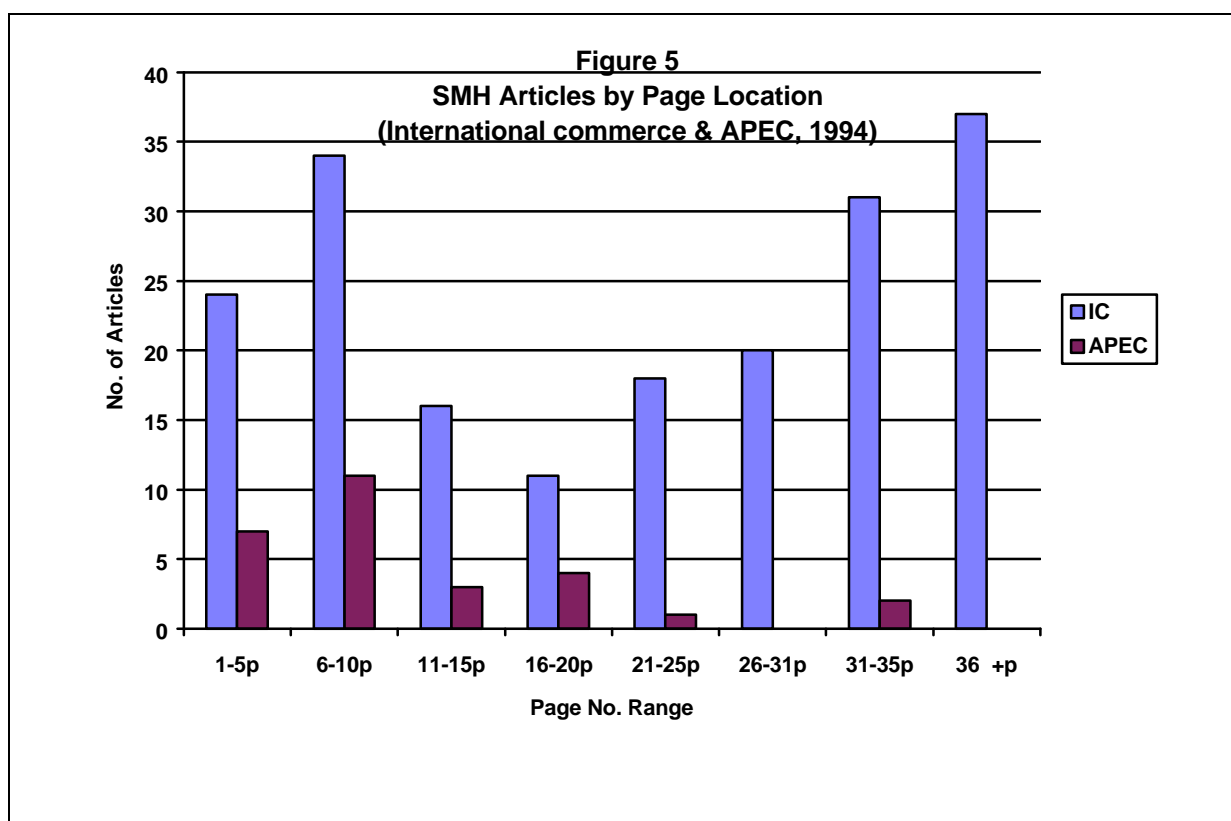


Figure 5 plots the page location of *all* the APEC SMH articles in 1994 and the page locations of all the IC SMH articles for 1994. Something strange is happening. Each type of article has its fair share of appearances at the front of the paper. The number of articles then rises as you

<sup>18</sup> Taylor. cited above. p67/68.

move to the section of the paper devoted to foreign news and then falls as you get to the middle of the paper. This is what one would intuitively expect, but then the lines diverge. How is this explained? The re-emergence of articles on IC towards the rear of the paper coincides with the business and finance sections. Obviously articles covering IC are appearing under these broad banners but APEC articles are not. They are almost exclusively confined to the pages dealing with current affairs, politics and foreign affairs. The specialised journalists reporting in the business and finance sections are not giving APEC any space. It would appear that they do not see it as relevant to them. Now one can surmise that APEC is either not getting its voice heard, or that matters of grand policy matter little to those dealing with the day-to-day realities of the Australian business world. Either way one can reasonably conclude that APEC, an organisation built on the idea of economic growth for the region, is seen by those who report it as being primarily concerned with politics. So what styles then are being used within the stories?

## What the Papers Say

Qualitative analysis is always problematic. It involves a large number of subjective decisions being taken and therefore the results are always open to question. As yet, there is no universally accepted method for interpreting press reporting and this means that the subject is continually being reinvented. However, the reasons for its study are easy to find and to show why this is the case, an analogy with film making will highlight the area of concern.

Film directors have long know that the position of a camera when filming a scene is crucial. If, for example, the camera captures a shot in a room whilst being placed outside a window, it gives the viewer the impression of someone spying in. If, alternatively, the same scene is shot with the camera placed above the actors, ie in a place where it is not feasible for an observer to be, then the audience will assume that only those in shot are present. Styles of writing, most dramatically in fiction but also when reporting events, can have similar properties. How the piece is written will allow the author to convey what it is that they see as important and impart a perception that will be received.

The way this manifests itself in reporting is by the use of 'closed' writing. Open writing is used when the writer wants to allow the reader freedom of interpretation. No firm conclusion is drawn and the reader is left to make up their own mind about a subject. Newspaper reporting tends to be the opposite of this. In a talk given by the renowned BBC reporter, Kate Adie, she said that one of the cardinal sins a television journalist could commit was to appear "not too sure"<sup>19</sup> when doing a piece to camera. The same condition applies to press reporters. They want to give the impression that they are on top of their brief: editors do not like stories that are ambiguous or unclear. Almost by definition then, newspaper writing is 'closed' and if the reader wishes to put another interpretation on an event then they will have to get further information from elsewhere. This may appear to be platitudinous but the effects of a closed style are very real. To illustrate what I mean it is best to turn to the film industry again.

James Bond films are designed for entertainment and to have a broad appeal. There are clear lines of demarcation between the good guys and the bad guys. By whatever method the good guy wins, the end justifies the means. The villains are so particularly evil that the methods of

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<sup>19</sup> Kate Adie. Talk given to the University of East Anglia Politics Society. 4 Dec 1997.

the hero are not open to question. Use of minimum force and the discussion of morals does not enter the narrative. The audience is being led along a path toward an inevitable conclusion. On the other hand, a film such as *Trainspotting* takes a very different approach. It deals with a subject where things are not black and white and has a so called 'anti-hero' as the main character. The film leaves far more scope for the audience to interpret this character's actions. They can be seen as either good or bad depending on the viewer's own point of view and in relations to their own experiences. It is my assertion that newspaper reporting is more in the style of James Bond (closed) than it is *Trainspotting* (open). Obviously I have chosen examples at opposite ends of a spectrum in order to demonstrate a point and I will be working with three different types of article which vary in their degree of 'closedness', but the basic assertion is that, in general, articles appearing in newspapers are *designed* to lead readers to a specific conclusion.

What then am I trying to show and what is the best way of going about it? My assumption that reporting is a closed style of writing leads inevitably to the conclusion that articles about APEC will essentially be either positive or negative: there can be very little room for neutral articles on the subject. This is not to say that for and against articles cannot appear alongside each other, just that an individual article will *automatically* assume a particular position. As I have said, I am not in a position to test the effect of this on the audience, however, having previously demonstrated that APEC does not do particularly well in the amount of time and space devoted to it, I will now show that it is sending off both positive and negative signals to the press and this is reflected in the reporting.

Such studies are not new. Peter Beharrell<sup>20</sup>, for example, took a long, hard look at the reporting of AIDS in the British press. He showed that overall, the reporting had been negative and he did this by highlighting the language in particular reports. In effect, Beharrell relied upon the 'feel' of the report rather than any in-depth sociolinguistic methodology. This, I believe is justified, especially so in the case of the Beharrell study where he was helped by the fact that some of the language used was particularly forceful. Therefore, I will adopt the same approach and rather than try to establish some definitive 'proof' that an article is showing APEC in either a good or a bad light, I will stick with this 'intuitive' aspect. This is not as loose as it may appear. The nature of the journalistic style of writing means that it has to be clear, concise and accessible. Positive phrases such as 'historic declaration' and 'unanimous commitment', as well as corresponding negative phrases, mean that such an approach can yield reliable results. There are, however, some areas in which I will diverge from Beharrell.

He takes a distinctly 'cluster-bomb' approach to his research. Articles are quoted, seemingly at random, and there is no indication as to the positioning of a particularly quoted section within the report being studied. No reasons are given for this and we can only assume that they have been chosen as examples of how far newspapers were willing to go in their stigmatisation of those who are HIV positive. In addition, there appears to be no overall continuity. Articles are quoted from all sections of the British press and over an indeterminate timescale. At one point he writes that:

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<sup>20</sup> Beharrell P. AIDS and the British Press in Eldridge J (ed). cited above.

“Within a relatively short period the following items appeared in different sections of the (Daily Express) newspaper, implying other priorities and perspectives than those established by the editorials.”<sup>21</sup>

But it turns out that this ‘relatively short period’ was, in fact, ten months which I suggest, for journalists, was a considerable period of time. And whilst he refers to eight articles in this particular example, no indication is given as to the total number of articles that appeared during the survey. The reader is left with the impression that Beharrell has set out with the intention of proving his hypothesis that AIDS has been reported negatively and demonstrates this with specifically selected articles whilst not providing sufficient evidence that he was presenting a true picture. I hope to avoid this charge being laid at my door by using a ‘smart weapon’ technique.

I shall expand the number of possible articles that I include in this section by also looking at the Australian Financial Review (AFR). To be sure, this title is owned, along with the SMH, by the Fairfax Group, but seeing that I am claiming that editors and journalists are the important people when it comes to setting the tone of individual articles, this is of little consequence. I will, however, be concentrating my analysis on certain specific events.

To keep the topic manageable, I have elected to examine *all* the major articles published by both papers relating to three APEC meetings. These are, the inaugural meeting in Canberra in 1989, the first leaders’ meetings in Seattle in 1993 and the leaders’ meeting in Bogor the following year. As suggested above, this seems reasonable given the increased coverage that APEC receives during these periods. This gives me a total of 36 individual pieces of journalism. These have then been divided into three categories: reports; background articles and editorials. These distinctions are fairly easy to make and should not cause any controversy. But what I will do is examine the *same* section of all the stories covered in order to strengthen my conclusions and not simply concentrate on those passages that show APEC in the best or worst light.

The lead paragraph is the most important part of *any* story. The headline may grab the attention but it is the lead that determines whether the story gets read or not. Indeed, the headline is a product of the lead and not the other way round.

“The three components of headline, lead and body copy are presented and read in that order, but were produced in the order lead-body-headline.”<sup>22</sup>

If this is indeed the case, then headlines are only of secondary consideration. What Bell is saying is that *all* stories are produced this way.

“The lead is a micro-story. It compresses the values and expertise of journalism into one sentence. Understanding how the lead works is to understand the nature of news stories.”<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid* p236.

<sup>22</sup> Bell. cited above. p186.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid* p176.

This ties in with my claim that the ‘feel’ of a story is easy to deduce. It has to be all there in 20 or 30 words. If this then, is how the industry works, it is possible to determine the whole tone of *any* article simply by reading the lead paragraph and this is how I have chosen to proceed.

In appendix A, the lead paragraphs from the two titles, are presented under the headings outlined and grouped by the events covered. Negative articles are presented in **bold** type, positive ones in *italics*. The categorisation was carried out as outlined above, by examining the language used. Where, for example, both positive and negative language was used within a lead, the intended overall impression was ascertained for the purposes of this classification. Appendix A is included to allow the reader to draw their own conclusions concerning the validity of my choices.

It can be seen that I believe there to be 17 positive stories and 19 negative stories, an even split. However, closer examination is warranted and this is set out below.

Results	
Reports	
Positive 9	Negative 9
Background	
Positive 5	Negative 10
Editorials	
Positive 3	Negative 0

This shows some stark contrasts.

The first thing to note is that the number of positive and negative reports is equal. Reports usually rely on official sources, people who create the news. They are written to tight deadlines and the journalist has little time to do other than report what she has been briefed. This assertion is verified by the fact that of the 18 separate reports recorded here, at least 14 (78%) have explicitly or implicitly used official sources. The split in positive and negative reporting can, therefore, be explained by the fact that at certain times some official sources want to paint APEC in glowing terms, whilst others have different agendas. But when it comes to background articles the picture changes.

The background articles run 2 to 1 against APEC. Those who are writing these longer, in-depth analyses are, on the whole, a lot less appreciative of APEC. These articles take longer to write and offer more scope for the writers own opinions to come through, and they tend to be sceptical. This is borne out by journalists’ reaction to the question of whether they thought that Bob Hawke cobbled the original APEC idea together on the back of a plane:

“Correct.”<sup>24</sup>

“Yes, more or less...Suddenly, out of the blue, Hawke, in Seoul of all places, announced this and actually speaking to people in the (Australian) Embassy in Tokyo...MITI were extremely angry that (he'd) done it in Seoul.”<sup>25</sup>

Or when they are asked what they think the driving force is now behind APEC.

“I think it's gone. That's the whole problem with APEC now, there is no driving force.”<sup>26</sup>

“I think (the Americans and the Japanese). Surely that's a reflection of reality, strip out the figures...The Americans are not going to get a NAFTA model out of APEC....So the Americans are running a very schizophrenic trade policy. NAFTA is a classic exclusionary trade grouping. It's the sort of model the Europeans can understand. The Europeans hate open regionalism.”<sup>27</sup>

Journalists are not stupid. Although they may be in favour of the overall concept, they are not slow to pick up problem areas. The initial APEC proposal and its nonsense exclusion of the Americans has left a lasting memory with those who are tasked to report the topic. They see it as an increasingly US/Japanese led grouping: when asked about the role of the US:

“Well, Seattle was important to lock in the US. It (Seattle) locked the US into the whole process.”<sup>28</sup>

“There was no way the Japanese were ever going to join anything that didn't allow the Americans in. That would have been absolutely suicidal. There is no way the Japanese would ever have worn it. MITI might have dreamt about it, but the Gaimusho would never have allowed it.”<sup>29</sup>

So we can see why, when given the opportunity to write a more analytical piece, the result tends to be more negative. They have seen APEC turn from an Australian initiative into one that has no clout without the USA and Japan, and is not automatically beneficial to Australia. Even if Australia stands to gain from a particular decision, it is often put into the context of the ‘big boys’ getting their own way and Australia benefiting as a consequence. But one last category of newspaper writing needs looking at: the editorials.

All the editorials that appeared in the two titles, were positive. Of course, there were only three of them during the periods covered, but editorials are produced when ‘the paper’ wants to comment on events it sees as having great significance. Therefore each one is important. It would appear then, that those who are slightly further removed from the APEC process, see APEC as beneficial to Australia and wish to see it succeed. It is not clear why this should be the case but it raises questions for further research and implies that negative reporting of APEC in the Australian press cannot be simply written off as journalists doing what they do

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<sup>24</sup> Graeme Dobell. ABC. Interview with the author.

<sup>25</sup> M Dwyer.

<sup>26</sup> M Dwyer.

<sup>27</sup> G Dobell.

<sup>28</sup> M Dwyer.

<sup>29</sup> G Dobell.

best: bringing bad news. Besides, Australia is not the only country in which APEC has a problem getting itself in the news. In the USA, with its traditional Atlantic focus, the problem can be even worse. When Bill Clinton failed to attend the Osaka meeting, due primarily to domestic budgetary problems, the whole show was ignored. As reported in the SMH just after the event:

“The President gave it a miss. The Secretary of State made a token appearance before rushing back to the United States. And neither the President nor large parts of the US media even know how to spell out the APEC acronym - Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation. Without President Clinton’s attendance, the Osaka summit and APEC just haven’t rung a bell in the US.”<sup>30</sup>

## Conclusion

It would appear then, that APEC has a problem when it comes to getting itself reported in the Australian press. The organisation is not being seen as ‘sexy’ enough for greater coverage. In the period I have covered, things have gradually improved and coverage has become more even throughout the year and not simply confined to the November meeting. One would hope that this pattern has continued with the Philippines and Canadian meetings, but that is beyond the scope of this paper and will have to wait. As I have shown above, the anecdotal evidence is that the Australian press is not alone in its limited coverage of APEC. If APEC were to come through as the solution to this year’s financial problems in SE and N Asia, then it may be given the publicity kick start it needs.

I have also shown that ‘reporting’ is not a universal category. Whilst the style of reporting always tends to be closed, the position taken seems to depend on the type of article being written. Reports were equally positive and negative, background articles were more likely to be negative and editorials were unanimously positive. Therefore, it cannot be the case that the Australian newspaper industry is simply hostile to the idea of APEC. The quirkiness of the reporting must have its causes elsewhere. What APEC has is a presentational problem. If it wishes to promote itself as an important, regional vehicle for free trade and greater prosperity, then it must sell itself to the people of the region. It cannot expect to be reported by virtue of its existence. Journalists and editors like clarity in stories: the who, what, where, when and why. This is easier to achieve if the story is about bilateral dealings rather than the multilateral discussions that APEC is based upon. This complex process takes time and patience, leading to big ideas (the Bogor Declaration) and small real steps forward (the Individual Action Plans). It is therefore not surprising that APEC’s incremental approach makes for ‘dull’ news. The EU deals with disagreement on many issues by use of the Qualified Majority Voting system. This recognises that not all members will agree on all issues and that this should not be a block on progress. Some members will have decisions implemented against their will, this gives journalists an ‘angle’. Journalists assigned to APEC, because it will not move without unanimity, have to rely on such incidents as Paul Keating’s comments about Dr Mahathir’s failure to attend the Seattle meeting: it was a storm in a tea cup but something that reporters could get their teeth into. This is a shame because, overall, it does not appear to be the case that Australian reporters are anti-APEC.

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<sup>30</sup> AFR. 20 Nov 1995. p5.

When asked, for example, what benefits they see as having come from APEC, various journalistic responses emerge:

“I think APEC suddenly made a lot of business people aware of doing business in Asia and we did see a lot of Australian business, who up to then had been fairly insular in their views or always viewed the EU/US as our markets, suddenly became aware that there was money to be made there. Politically, it’s been quite important for Australia....I think you’ve got to come back to what APEC is, at its core is a group of very rapidly developing Asian countries. Coupled onto that are the Australia’s, New Zealand’s, US and Canada’s of this world. Now APEC in a sense is critical in that it allows those countries access to that core of rapidly developing, huge market potential.”<sup>31</sup>

“(APEC) is a goal, a guide and a goad...I tend to accept Keating’s line that we wouldn’t have got the GATT outcome without APEC...In terms of what APEC delivers internally within the region, what APEC delivers is the start of managing the US/Japan relationship (and) managing China in the future. If (APEC) didn’t exist, yes, you’d have to invent it.”<sup>32</sup>

So, for APEC to be reported, it needs to be either controversial (not really a way forward) or to be seen as relevant, in dollar terms, to the ordinary, Australian people. This is the sort of thing that is getting written about in the business and financial sections of the papers, where APEC is conspicuous by its absence. It is being seen as the stuff of high politics and not the everyday. Until APEC decisions start to affect everyday life, it will continue to be regarded as something that governments just ‘do’. Annual leaders meetings cannot be ignored, but until firm action is taken to implement the 2010/2020 vision, it will remain as so much hot air.

Finally, however, the relationship between the press and APEC, although less than smooth, remains crucial. Politicians use the press to speak both to their constituents and to each other. They know that what they say will be reported and analysed. In October 1995, a delegation from the Japanese ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) visited Australia to discuss agricultural protection. The timing of the visit was crucial, coming as it did just prior to the Osaka meeting where Individual Action Plans were to be presented. As is well known, certain Japanese agricultural sectors carry great political weight, enjoy considerable protection from foreign competition and, in return, they continue to support the LDP. According to an internal DFAT briefing paper prepared for Australian Public Servants hosting the visit:

“1. The visit of the LDP delegation is aimed at demonstrating to the agricultural lobby in Japan that the LDP is fighting hard to protect Japanese agriculture from further liberalisation.

2. It is therefore important that the delegation report back the strength of Australia’s determination to ensure that the Action Agenda (to be agreed by APEC Ministers and Leaders in Osaka in November 1995) contains a clear and unequivocal commitment to comprehensive coverage, ie that agriculture be covered by the liberalisation commitment.”<sup>33</sup>

But this was not a diplomatic battle to be fought behind closed doors. According to the same paper it was very much out in the open.

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<sup>31</sup> M Dwyer.

<sup>32</sup> G Dobell.

<sup>33</sup> DFAT Internal Briefing Paper. Visit to Australia of the LDP Parliamentary Delegation on Agriculture. LDP Delegation 19 October 1995. 10 Oct 1995.

“5. Kabun Muto (the delegation leader) gave a briefing to Australian journalists before he left Tokyo. His main point was that, in the aftermath of the Uruguay Round, **Japan could not commit itself to complete liberalisation of agriculture by 2010, the deadline in the Bogor Declaration for free trade by the industrialised members of APEC.** An article by Peter Hartcher of the Financial Review is at Attachment C.”<sup>34</sup>

So the relationship between APEC and the Australian press remains a complex, two-way process. If APEC is not working with the press, then others with different agendas will, and do, use the media. It is up to those working on APEC promotion in Australia, to determine how the relationship matures.

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<sup>34</sup> *ibid.* Emphasis in original.

Appendix A

<b>Sydney Morning Herald - Seattle</b>	
Reports	Background
<p>“Washington, Friday: An embargoed report to the Asia-Pacific leaders meeting in Seattle this month warns that their fledgling APEC trade group is in danger of withering away unless it adopts a bold new agenda for its future.” (061193)</p> <p>“Seattle, Friday: The Prime Minister’s call for the APEC group to become a more substantial economic ‘community’ was rebuffed by APEC ministers here yesterday.” (201193)</p>	<p>“Let’s not be deluded by the weekend’s hoop-la: APEC is not some looming breakthrough to freer trade, it’s little more than a fall-back position in the event of the failure of the GATT negotiations.” (221193)</p>
	Editorials
	<p>“When the leaders of the 15 members of the APEC group sit down in Seattle this week they will mark a new phase in the development of the organisation. They will be transforming a group which has been gradually establishing itself and groping for a definition of its role into an active forum for the resolution of regional pressures, and a major participant in world politics. It is to be hoped that APEC survives the strain.” (171193)</p>

<b>Sydney Morning Herald - Bogor</b>	
Reports	Background
<p>“The Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr Mahathir Mohamad, was in one of his blunt moods.” (091194)</p> <p>“The Federal Government has sought to reassure Australia’s two most highly protected industries - cars and textiles, clothing and footwear - that the historic APEC agreement on free trade will benefit their industries.” (171194)</p>	<p>“The Prime Minister, Mr Keating, last week revealed his vision for Australian foreign policy in Asia to an enthusiastic reception from business and the media.” (031194)</p> <p>“Australia has broad strategic and national security for APEC far beyond the immediate goals of trade liberalisation and increased economic cooperation.” (091194)</p> <p>“APEC’s summit decision to create a regional free trade zone is like an earthquake; it will reshape the political as well as the economic landscapes of the Asia-Pacific region.” (161194)</p> <p>“The meeting in Indonesia from which the Prime Minister has triumphantly brought back a piece of paper which is supposed to establish peace in our time, or at least peace in our region, along with a future bright with the prospect of economic prosperity, has been given a great deal of media coverage in Australia. However, despite the pats on the head he has apparently received from the US President, there has been nothing like the coverage of the Bogor meeting in other than Australian newspapers and specialist publications.” (181194)</p>

## Sydney Morning Herald - Canberra 1989

### Background

“Spare a thought for Gareth Evans. His Foreign Affairs Department had been working for months on a proposal for the Asia-Pacific initiative on economic cooperation when, late last year, the Prime Minister muscled in and took over the idea.” (061189)

“According to the Chinese proverb, a long journey begins with a single step. But most observers at this week's first APEC meeting in Canberra lacked the patience of the Chinese. They doubted if even a small step had been taken on what will be a very long march towards greater economic cooperation among the economies of the Pacific Rim.” (101189)

## AFR - Bogor

### Reports

**“It is bound to irritate the Prime Minister, Mr Keating, but his celebrated row with Malaysia’s Prime Minister last year is likely to make Dr Mahathir Mohamad, a sought after figure during next week’s APEC summit.” (071194)**

“A backdown by the US has allowed APEC to take the first steps towards a new consistency towards foreign investment in the Asia Pacific region with an agreement by the 18 countries to a non-binding code of principles.” (141194)

“AFR Jakarta Correspondent reveals details of the document APEC leaders will use today in their historic declaration on free trade.” (151194)

**“APEC risked internal tensions and could become a ‘divided, squabbling’ organisation if it opted for a free-trade area that discriminated against outsiders, a leading academic, Prof Ross Garnaut, warned yesterday.” (151194)**

*“As the 17 leaders of the Asia Pacific region left the Bogor Palace with their extraordinary agreement in hand, it was the man who waved them goodbye who stood tallest.” (161194)*

*“In a historic decision, APEC leaders agreed to bring down all trade barriers, pushing the dynamic Asia Pacific region forward as the world’s economic powerhouse of the next century” (161194)*

*“The Australian Government yesterday scored a qualified personal success with the APEC leaders summit embracing an Australian call for a ‘standstill’ on protectionism pending the achievement of free trade in the region.” (161194)*

**“Australian industry is waiting for refinement of the broad detail of the APEC declaration before giving its verdict on the Jakarta deal.” (161194)**

### Background

**“The ‘free trade’ vision of the APEC leaders from the elevated heights of Bogor will be unmatched by any idea of how to achieve such a goal on the ground.” (091194)**

**“Paul Keating’s place in Australia’s political history has been sealed with yesterday’s Asia-Pacific free trade agreement. Whether it will be an honoured place or an accursed place will depend on the economic, political and security consequences that flow now from the Bogor pact.” (161194)**

### Editorials

*“The APEC free-trade deal is an unqualified step in the right direction. But the citizens of the 18 nations that signed on to the Bogor agreement could be forgiven for feeling slightly overwhelmed. They are now committed to opening their economies to real competition from the most dynamic countries in the world. Great change is inevitable.” (161194)*

<b>AFR - Seattle.</b>	
<b>Reports</b>	<b>Background</b>
<p><b>“The United States has hardened its trade demands on China, threatening to inject added tension between Washington and Beijing at this month’s historic APEC leaders summit.” (041193)</b></p> <p><i>“Chile has claimed the support of the US in its bid to join the 15 members of APEC and become the first South American country to be admitted to the group” (041193)</i></p> <p><i>“The ‘wise men’ of the APEC group are to call on its 15 member nations - including Australia - to attempt the ambitious goal of coordinating their macro-economic policies, according to Japan’s representative.” (041193)</i></p> <p><b>“The prospect of APEC becoming an ‘economic community’ at this month’s leaders meeting in Seattle diminished further yesterday when a senior APEC official said a name change was not on the agenda.” (041193)</b></p> <p><i>“This week’s Seattle summit of Asian and Pacific leaders marks the fulfilment of Paul Keating’s vision to build a pan-Pacific economic grouping in which Australia will sit as a fully fledged member of the world’s most important trade grouping.” (151193)</i></p>	<p><b>“The great free trade debate of the 90’s may be all over by the time the leaders of the APEC nations gather in Seattle for their informal summit on Nov 19. The US House of Reps is scheduled to vote two days earlier on the North American Free Trade Agreement.” (031193)</b></p> <p><i>“The eyes of the world will be on Seattle this time next week when the APEC country leaders prepare to gather at a retreat known as Blake Island.” (121193)</i></p> <p><b>“The potential admission of Mexico to the APEC forum would worsen an already severe trade imbalance within the grouping, with the Pacific proving a substantial barrier to regional integration.” (171193)</b></p> <p><b>“For the Asia-Pacific region, the Nov 21 meeting of APEC leaders, though dramatic and welcome, in a more fundamental sense is an incremental rather than watershed event.” (231193)</b></p>
	<p><b>Editorials</b></p> <p><i>“APEC is, as Senator Cook says, a fall-back option if GATT fails. But it also has an important role to play in the more likely event that the Uruguay Round of the multilateral trade negotiations is successfully completed.” (221193)</i></p>

<b>AFR - Canberra 1989.</b>	
<b>Reports</b>	<b>Background</b>
<p><i>“The Asia-Pacific nations have emerged from talks in Canberra with a unanimous commitment to liberalising world trade and with agreement to act as a united force in crucial multilateral trade negotiations in Geneva.” (081189)</i></p>	<p><b>“What does the sudden appearance on these shores of six senior officials from two economic superpowers, Japan and the US, mean for Australians? The answer is not too much.” (061189)</b></p> <p><i>“Simply persuading the 11 other governments and three regional organisations to send ministerial delegation and senior officials to the APEC conference in Canberra was a diplomatic achievement for the Australian Government.” (101189)</i></p>

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