

Australian Foreign News Coverage in the Global News Environment

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Australian Foreign News Coverage in the Global News Environment

An investigation of Australian journalists and gatekeepers

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Abstract

This research project will examine whether the cultural training that news editors receive in their organisations affects their international news selection, and whether this ultimately affects international news reportage in Australia.

The study is based on previous research focusing on three main areas of scholarship, drawn from a wider range of international theatres. These three bodies of work focus on: (1) factors affecting the selection, construction and presentation of international news; (2) how news editors and news directors function as gatekeepers of international news within newsrooms, and how they prioritise international news; and (3) whether cultural training occurs in Australian newsrooms, and if so, how it influences the gatekeeper's news selection process, and through it, world news coverage in the Australian news media.

This study partially replicated research completed by Australian media scholar Peter Putnis in 1996 (Putnis 1996), and extended it to three Brisbane news bulletins: a commercial television bulletin, a public radio news bulletin, and a commercial online portal. The data obtained from the news bulletins were gathered during a constructed week to analyse whether the selection and framing around the presentation of international news in Australia had changed since Putnis' seminal work.

In addition to the aforementioned qualitative analysis of media content, a number of news editors and media experts across Australia were interviewed to determine their self-perception of gatekeeping responsibilities; and assess their degree of agency as gatekeepers in conjunction with institutional news priorities and directions. Within this framework, the gatekeepers were asked how important cultural training was for them and how they believed such training changed the reporting outcomes.

These interviews were then used to develop a radio documentary that was broadcast on the national community radio network. Using these interviews as both data for qualitative research and source content for a media production demonstrates

how such information-gathering methodologies are shared and used in both journalism studies research and journalism production.

The argument proposed in this study is that international news is not prioritised in Australian journalism; and that a lack of world news coverage persists because Australian news editors believe international news is not important to their audiences—even though Australia is a multicultural country. It then argues, based on interviews with news editors and news directors, that cultural training is needed to create awareness about events happening outside Australia. These research aims are demonstrated through both the series of radio documentaries, and the exegetical component of this work.

Statement of originality and ethical clearance

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself. The research for this thesis was authorised by the Griffith University Ethics Committee under protocol number HUM/15/13/HREC.

Signed



Eduardo Roberto Jordan Pérez

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It has been such an adventure, and let more adventures come through!

Eduardo.

Preface

Seven years ago, I decided to study journalism in Australia. I had no experience in the field, but I had a sense of how the news was produced. My ideas and understanding of journalism were so naïve compared with what I now know.

When I lived in Mexico, I watched and listened to the news via different media outlets, and I thought publishing international news was common in any news organisation. I listened to radio and watched television news bulletins to catch up with the world surrounding us. In 2010, when I began my life in Australia, I decided to watch news bulletins to learn more about what happened across the nation. One day, the breaking news from a television news bulletin was about a cat found one year after disappearing from its household. Also, I remember watching news about a penguin in New Zealand that ate sand, and was at risk of dying. This gave me food for thought: (1) the breaking news might mean Australia was in a good, safe position at the time, and (2) the Australian audience was not looking for as much international news as audiences elsewhere in the world, as I was familiar with. This seeming discrepancy between what is ‘important’ and what is covered has fascinated me and has fashioned my research focus, which include the central idea and the development of this research project.

This research project comprises of: (1) an exegetic essay containing previous research of international news, gatekeeping theory, and the MacBride report and its effects in journalism, as well as the discussion and analysis of the employed methodologies of this research project, and (2) a practice-led component (a radio documentary) complementing the research contained in the exegetic essay. While there is not a particular method to approach this project, I would suggest reading chapters 1, 2, and 3 from the exegesis first because they analyse the topics considered in this project, and the methodologies conducted for this thesis. Then, continue by listening to the radio documentary attached to this exegesis. Finally, reading chapters 4, 5, and 6 will bring an in-depth analysis of the research project itself with the results of the qualitative and quantitative methods used for the previous literature provided in previous chapters, and the radio documentary.

Chapter 1: Introduction

There is a long history of journalism studies research that focuses on what news is selected for publication, how it is mediated and framed, and ultimately presented to the audiences.

Jordan Pérez (2011, p. 9) looked at how an event, such as the invention of the wheel, might be a breaking news item around the world, and how this event might become international news in our contemporary newsrooms. The analysis demonstrates how decision makers in the newsrooms deliberate on a wide range of factors outside of the invention itself. These factors, which arguably evaluate the external ‘value’ of a news item as it relates to news audiences, are referred to as ‘news values’. As such, these ‘news values’ are defined as ‘the criteria that determine which events are worthy of becoming news and which are not’ (Westerståhl & Johansson 1994, p. 72), within a given new media theatre. Harcup and O’Neill (2017) state that ‘[n]ews values can be seen less as a reflection of what type of information citizens want or need’ (p. 1473). These news values have been widely explored, and form the basis of contemporary news section (Galtung & Ruge 1965; Golan 2010; Harcup & O’Neill 2017; Wang 2010; Wu 2000). However, the selection of news to be published is not guided by these news values as abstract ideals but through their subjective interpretation by news editors (or news directors, in different organisations) who determine what news items are to be selected, developed and published; or rejected. This process of news selection is called gatekeeping and the news editor/director as the selector is referred to as a gatekeeper (Shoemaker & Vos 2009).

It is the relationship between the abstract news values and their subjective interpretation by gatekeepers that is at the heart of this study, which aims to understand how a news editor’s or news director’s experiences with diverse cultures fashion their selection of international news. In examining duties and responsibilities of the news editor during routine process of selecting and presenting international news in Australian newsrooms, this study focuses on how external factors, such as cultural training, might affect that process. The outcome of this project then, is a quantitative analysis of international news coverage from three news publications—

Seven News Queensland, *ABC Brisbane 612 AM*, and *Brisbane Times*; a qualitative analysis of how the gatekeepers views their role in producing such content; and finally a demonstration, through the production of a series of radio documentaries, how such information gathering techniques central to journalism studies research can be central to journalism production and practice.

This introductory chapter considers four key concepts central to this study, ‘international journalism’, ‘news values’, ‘gatekeepers and gatekeeping’ and ‘cultural training’; provide brief synopses of the three news organisations studied—*Seven News Queensland*, *ABC Brisbane 612 AM*, and *Brisbane Times*; and provides an overview of this project.

1.1 General concepts

To understand the basis of this project, it is important to clarify four terms and key concepts central to this study, ‘international journalism’, ‘news values and determinants’, ‘gatekeepers and gatekeeping’ and ‘cultural training’, and within this context it is critical to primarily understand and define the concept of ‘international news’.

There is a large body research on international journalism (e.g. Galtung & Ruge 1965; Kim & Barnett 1996; Nossek 2004), which outlines that *international news* is an abstract concept that news consumers know. Larson and Hardy (1977), in their research about coverage of global news on television, state that ‘[a]ny story that mentions a country other than the United States, in whatever context, is considered an international news item’ (p. 241). While this definition is US centric, it informs the basis of a working definition of international journalism, especially when viewed in conjunction with a wide range of literature focusing on international news coverage outside the US (such as Galtung & Ruge 1965; Putnis 1996; Putnis, Penhallurick & Bourk 2000; Wu 2000). Therefore, extrapolating Larson and Hardy’s definition (1977), *international news* can be defined as any news event that happens in a country other than where the news event is being published, and within the confines of this research project, international news is viewed as stories developing outside Australia. Although this definition is broad, it serves the purpose of this research project.

Within this definitional framework of international journalism, this study looks at the two key notions of ‘news values’ and ‘gatekeepers and gatekeeping’, and how the normative ideals of news values are ‘subjectively’ interpreted by individual gatekeepers. In that vein ‘news values’ are defined as benchmark criteria used to evaluate the newsworthiness of a given news item, and the notion of international coverage ‘determinants’ are presented as a specific set of news value used in evaluating newsworthiness of international news – see section 2.1 in the literature review for more details. ‘Gatekeepers and gatekeeping’ are defined as the process of accessing the suitability of news for publication, where the news editor or news director is viewed as the final gatekeeper responsible for selecting the line-up of news – see section 2.2 of the literature review for more details. This interplay between news values or determinants and their interpretation by gatekeepers is used to obtain a snapshot of the actual selection and presentation processes of foreign news coverage in Australia.

Finally the notion of ‘cultural training’ as introduced by Sean MacBride in his seminal ‘Many Voices, One World Report’; and further extrapolated by Hancock and Hamelink (1999), is defined as providing gatekeepers with training that would enable them to understand ‘cultures and conditions in the developing countries’ (UNESCO 1980) to better understand and provide greater equitability in covering the ‘global south’ – see section 2.4 of the literature review for further discussion.

1.2 Content analysis sample and creative component overview

The content analysis is drawn from one capital city, Brisbane, and is limited to two news bulletins and an online publication—*Seven News Queensland*, *ABC Brisbane 612 AM*, and *Brisbane Times*. While the Brisbane-centric quantitative analysis is not presented as universal, it forms the foundation for the wider qualitative study evaluating the self-perceptions among international news gatekeepers drawn from across Australia. Within this context, the three media organisations were selected to provide the widest possible coverage within the time and cost constraints, and other logistical limitations of conducting a statewide media analysis. *Seven News Queensland*, *ABC Brisbane 612 AM*, and *Brisbane Times* provided a sample consisted

of both commercial and publically funded media; and a cross-section of television, radio and online.

Seven News Queensland was selected primarily to enable a direct comparison with research conducted by Peter Putnis (1996) focusing on Seven's news coverage in Sydney and Brisbane. The channel has one of the highest rating news bulletins in the country, and in Brisbane, *Seven News* remains one of two leading news providers locked in a ratings war with *Nine News*. As a media network, Seven Network had the most views TV network Australia wide in 2016, winning 31 of the 40 ratings weeks compared with nine weeks claimed by Nine (Knox 2017); and by early August 2017, the channel had already secured 20 weeks compared to three weeks by Nine (Knox 2017a). Seven Network is Australia's largest commercial television network, forming part of a diverse portfolio of media assets belonging to Seven West Media Corporation, following West Australian Newspapers Holdings Limited's (WAN) of acquisition Seven Media Group in 2011. Seven West Media Corporation's other media assets include *The West Australian*, and Pacific Magazines, Australia's second largest magazine publisher (Seven West Media 2011).

Brisbane Times is part of Fairfax Media Limited, a news and media corporation whose operations are spread across Australia and New Zealand (Fairfax Media Limited 2016). The corporation owns metropolitan newspapers and news portals, such as the *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age*, and *The Canberra Times* (Fairfax Media Limited 2016). In radio, Fairfax Media Limited owns more than 50 per cent of the Macquarie Radio Network, which includes 4BC in Brisbane, 3AW in Melbourne and 2GB in Sydney (Fairfax Media Limited 2016). Within Australia's newspaper market, the 2012 Finkelstein inquiry on media regulation noted that in 2011, Fairfax Media controlled 25 per cent of metropolitan and city circulation, and 28 per cent of all daily newspaper circulation, positioning it as Australia's second largest newspaper company (Finkelstein & Ricketson 2012, p. 58). While Fairfax lacked News Limited virtual monopoly on print news, this study opted to include Fairfax's *Brisbane Times* instead of the News Limited owned Queensland's newspaper of record *The Courier Mail* for two reasons – the cosmopolitan nature of its sister publication the *Sydney Morning Herald* that shares content with the *Brisbane Times* and its unique position as the state's only major standalone online publication.

ABC Brisbane 612 AM is the Brisbane based radio station of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC). The ABC is a public-funded media organisation established in 1983 under the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983* (Australian Government 1983). As a publically funded broadcaster, operating under the ABC Charter, the broadcaster holds a unique position within the Australian media landscape and as such provides a unique perspective to this study. Section 1 of the ABC Charter, requires the broadcaster to ‘contribute to a sense of national identity and inform and entertain, and reflect the cultural diversity of, the Australian community’ (Australian Government 1983); while section 2 stipulates that it take into account the ‘multicultural character of the Australian community’ (Australian Government 1983) in its coverage.

The creative component of this study exploring the intersections between journalism studies research and journalism production draws primarily from work by Lindgren (2011) and Redman (2011), who included a creative component in their research projects. Lindgren (2011) produced a radio documentary and a website about the asbestos tragedy in Australia, and Redman (2011) produced a guerrilla-style documentary about Family First, a political party that ran for senate seats in the 2004 federal elections. The series of radio documentaries produced for this thesis sought to compare the qualitative data collected through *Seven News Queensland*, *ABC Brisbane 612 AM*, and *Brisbane Times* news coverage, alongside self-perception of gatekeeping practice as articulated by gatekeepers themselves from different media organisations in Australia; and media experts familiar with such gatekeeping practices – including former ABC foreign correspondent and former Managing Editor of Global Mail, Monica Attard; Canberra University Emeritus Professor of Communication, and expert on international news coverage in Australia Peter Putnis; former ABC foreign correspondent and Queensland University of Technology media expert Lee Duffield and Monash University academic and the author of ‘Foreign Correspondents and International Newsgathering’ Colleen Murrell. The radio documentary was published in a current affairs community radio program, *The Wire* – See section 3.3 for a more detailed discussion and rationale of the documentary.

1.3 Structure of this research project

This thesis is divided into six chapters and three appendices. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the project, outlining key concepts in the study and providing an overview of both the aims and research methodologies engaged. In addition, it provides a brief rationale for the study.

Chapter 2 contains the literature review, which examines key research on three central components germane to this study: (1) international news coverage selection and presentation, (2) the gatekeeping process in journalistic news selection, and (3) the Many Voices One World report (commonly known as the MacBride report) and the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO).

The literature on the selection and presentation of international news will draw for a rich collection of research including seminal research conducted by Johan Galtung and Marie Holmboe Ruge (1965), who articulated a series of determinants of global news coverage in their ground breaking and much cited analysis of the coverage of three crises in four Norwegian newspapers. This section will present three main determinants appearing in most of the previous research—geographical proximity, proposed by Sreberny-Mohammadi et al (1985) in a report commissioned by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); cultural affinity and the hierarchy of nations, first proposed by Galtung and Ruge (1965).

The literature on gatekeeping process draws from a large number of media studies that borrow the concept of gatekeeping as a decision making process, an idea first articulated by the social psychologist Kurt Lewin (1947) where he detailed a housewife's decision-making process in selecting dinner, through a series of gatekeeping decision in buying and preparing food for her household. This section presents a number of international studies in an attempt to provide a global perspective of gatekeeping and also includes a discussion on the role of global news wholesalers, such as Reuters and Associated Press (AP) and how they affect the gatekeeping process in newsrooms. Finally, the chapter gives a brief overview of Sean MacBride's Many Voices One World report (UNESCO 1980) and its articulation of

the reporting gulf between the so-called First World and Third World nations. The chapter also includes two recommendations from the MacBride report on cultural and language competencies journalists and gatekeepers should master in order to provide greater equity in international reportage and through it ultimately serve journalism's global fourth estate mandate.

Chapter 3 contains the methodology of this research project. First, it will give a brief rationale on the methodological theories around journalism using theory from Creswell (2013). This chapter will discuss the methodological rationale of the three components of this study – the quantitative analysis of media content for the three selected media outlets; the qualitative interviewing of gatekeepers and media experts which contextualize the findings of the qualitative research; and the theoretical rationale around the use of those qualitative interviews in the production of a radio documentary which demonstrate methodological synergies between journalism studies research and journalism production, bringing additional and useful knowledge to this academic project.

Chapter 4 contains the results for this research project, bringing together the data collected through the quantitative (i.e. a content analysis) and the qualitative (i.e. semi-structured interviews) methods to best understand the realities and complexities of international news coverage in Australia. It will analyse what type of global news *Seven News Queensland*, *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* and *Brisbane Times* publish during a constructed week, and compare the empirical data with the self-perceptions of gatekeeping collected through the interviews with news editors and news directors responsible for gatekeeping international news.

This chapter is followed by Chapter 5, the discussion, which analyses and contextualises the results, and explores that data through theoretical frameworks discussed in Chapter 2. This chapter will also discuss how the selected determinants of international news coverage behave in Australia, as well as how news editors and directors believe they perform in this area. Moreover, it will discuss the impact of any cultural training news editors and news directors gain within their media organisations, and how such training could change the way they perceive and ultimately select international news for publication. In this section the discussion will

test MacBride's hypothesis in the Many Voices One World report that such media training helps gatekeepers provide more equitable coverage of the global south. Finally, the chapter discusses how the proposed radio documentary helps to understand the importance of the news editor in producing news bulletins and how it bonds both methods within the practical component.

The thesis is summarised in the conclusion, which also offers thoughts on the limitations of the project, along with suggestions for future research in this fertile and under-researched field of Australian news analysis.

In addition, five appendices have been included in this thesis, which will help further understanding of how this research project was completed. Appendix A provides the raw data from the content analysis, which was partially replicated from Putnis (1996). Appendix B contains the details of the interviewees contacted for this research project. Appendix C provides transcripts of the radio documentary as they were broadcast on the community radio program, *The Wire*. Appendix D contains the questions asked to the news editors and media experts for this research project. Finally, Appendix E contains the categories used in Putnis (1996) and the coding process for this research project.

Chapter 2: Literature review

Introduction

This chapter considers previous research about the determinants of international news coverage, focusing on three points: geographical proximity, cultural affinity and the hierarchy of nations (Galtung & Ruge 1965; Golan 2010; Wang 2010; Wu 2000). The literature will provide information on how these determinants are considered in newsrooms and how these factors affect international news coverage. Next, the chapter will consider gatekeeping theory, which is widely recognised in a range of disciplines (Lewin 1951; Lewin 1947; Roberts 2005), including mass communication, and is widely used to explain news content decision-making, and remain critical in journalism practice where they continue to be applied in the day-to-day decision making in contemporary Australian newsroom (White 1950, p. 384). This chapter then discusses the idea of a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) – a key concept from the MacBride UNESCO report in 1980, where the notion arguably remain a central idea in the understanding of international news coverage. Finally, and based on consideration of past literature, the chapter will introduce the primary research question, which this research project intends to answer.

2.1 Determinants of global news context and presentation

To understand the nature of world news coverage, it is critical to highlight the main issues that news organisations consider in order to determine which news events to include in ‘international news coverage’. The coverage and flow of international news has been widely studied in different countries and across different media platforms, such as newspapers and television (e.g. see Cottle & Rai 2008; Galtung & Ruge 1965; Gerbner & Marvanyi 1977; Golan 2010; Nossek 2004; Putnis 1996; Putnis, Penhallurick & Bourke 2000; Wang 2010; Wu 2000).

Most of these contemporary studies draw on the seminal work of international news coverage conducted by Johan Galtung and Marie Ruge in 1965—still considered one of the most notable studies in journalism research (Caple and Bednarek 2016; Cottle & Rai 2008). Galtung and Ruge (1965) researched four newspapers and assessed how the news from specific events in the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus was covered in four Norwegian newspapers. The researchers offered different determinants that might influence international news in newspapers (Galtung & Ruge 1965). They argued that ‘since we cannot register everything, we have to select, and the question is what will strike our attention’ (Galtung & Ruge 1965, p. 65), suggesting the laws governing the psychology of perception dictated how gatekeepers responded to individual news items and which news gained their attention. The news values listed by Galtung and Ruge in the 1965 study are listed below (p. 65):

- Frequency: If the signal is outside the dial, it will not be recorded.
- Threshold: the idea that there is a threshold the event must pass before it will be noticed and recorded (classified into absolute intensity and intensity increase)
- Unambiguity: the idea that the clearer the signal is, the more likely that it will be worth listening to it.
- Meaningfulness: the idea that the more meaningful the signal is, the more probable it will be worth listening to it (categorised into cultural proximity and relevance).
- Consonance: The more consonant the signal is with the mental image of what one expects to find, the more probable that it will be recorded as worth listening to (including predictability and demand in this determinant).
- Unexpectedness: The more unexpected the signal is, the more probable that it will be recorded as worth listening to (unpredictability and scarcity fall into this determinant).
- Continuity: If a signal has been tuned in to, the more likely it will continue to be tuned in to.
- Composition: The more a signal has been tuned in to, the more probable that a very different kind of signal will be recorded as worth listening to next time.
- Reference to elite nations: The more the event concerns elite nations, the more probable that it will become a news item.

- Reference to elite people: The more the event concerns elite people, the more probable that it will become a news item.
- Reference to persons: The more the event can be seen in personal terms, as due to the action of specific individuals, the more probable that it will become a news item.
- Reference to something negative: The more negative the event in its consequences, the more probable that it will become a news item.

However, they argued that these twelve factors ‘were not independent of each other’ (Galtung & Ruge 1965, p. 71), meaning that these factors were interwoven and not exclusive of each other. When they analysed the news items from the Congo, Cuba and Cyprus in the four Norwegian newspapers against the key determinants, Galtung and Ruge (1965) concluded that the flow of international news was indeed imbalanced. To find the key determinants, the authors reflected on them by using metaphors similar to radio wave descriptions, using the terms ‘emission’ and ‘frequency’ as their basic concepts. ‘The set of world events, then, is like the cacophony of sound one gets by scanning the dial of one’s radio receiver’ they noted, arguing that it was natural for the listeners’ focus to shift accordingly (Galtung & Ruge 1965, p. 65). In addition, they proposed policy implications to ‘try and counteract all twelve factors’ in order to balance the presentation and selection of international news (p. 84). The policy implications relevant to this research project include the following (Galtung & Ruge 1965, p. 84):

1. Journalists should be better trained to capture and report on long-term developments, and concentrate less on ‘events’.
2. More reports should be used from culturally distant zones even if the content has no immediate relevance to the reporter.
3. More emphasis should be placed on the dissonant; that is, on reports that do not fit stereotypes. Journalists should be better trained to increase their insights into their own stereotypes so as to facilitate their awareness of the consonance factor.
4. Journalists should ensure more coverage of non-elite nations.

5. More reference to non-personal causes of events should be made. Special training is probably needed for this.

These implications are significant not only for this research project, as seen later in this chapter, but for journalism studies as whole, as evident from a large body of literature explored below. The research from Galtung and Ruge is still considered groundbreaking, because it follows other studies about international news selection and presentation. Wang (2010, p. 262), explained how Galtung and Ruge explore the nature of world news, indicating that ‘world news coverage is not only influenced by the news events themselves’, but that the coverage is influenced by external factors. Wang (2010, p. 262) explained:

... whether a foreign event will be covered is reliant on its internal news values, such as deviance, unexpectedness, and meaningfulness, as well as its external factors, such as cultural similarity, social distance, and geographical proximity.

Kim and Barnett (1996) also supported this claim, saying that foreign news selection and presentation is not only triggered by the factors identified by Galtung and Ruge (1965, p. 326), but this process involves more factors, thereby making the decision more complex. In addition, Wang (2010) researched international news coverage in Australia, where he includes a range of other social and political factors that might affect online news coverage of news items from a particular country, such as geographical distance, a high gross domestic product (GDP) and colonial relations (p. 264). While acknowledging Galtung and Ruge’s work as ‘one of the first and most influential studies concerning newsworthiness and its definition’ Golan (2010, p. 126) argued that, even with a significant amount of research in the area, researchers have failed to precisely identify how international news items are selected (Golan 2010, p. 127).

Gerbner and Marvanyi (1977) researched the international news coverage of nine countries in an era when the world was politically divided into capitalist, socialist/communist, and Third World countries, and assessed how these political structures might shape global news coverage. They stated, ‘[m]any different versions of the day’s “world news” can be equally true ... when judged by different standards of relevance’ (Gerbner & Marvanyi 1977, p. 52). In this work, the researchers found

Western Europe was the most covered, whereas the Third World was the least-covered world *type* that was represented. Even though the investigation was published in 1977, it gives a perspective on how global news items are reported confirming Galtung and Ruge's (1965) findings around the determinants that play a pivotal role in world news selection.

In addition, Nossek (2004) researched the correlation between national identity and technology in international news coverage. In this work, Nossek acknowledged Galtung and Ruge's study, stating that international news items are triggered by a mix of determinants which he divides into 'internal' and 'external'. Moreover, he considered the concept of the *gatekeeper* as an influence in selecting this type of news. Nossek studied how international news flow and coverage happened within three countries that were experiencing political violence, and claimed that international news is pitched and presented if it contains 'a close but distinct relationship between professional attitudes and domestic-cultural attitudes' (Nossek 2004, p. 348). Nossek (2004) referred to domestic attitudes as those ways journalists perceive the news itself in a professional manner, whereas cultural attitudes referred to those factors that might affect the way news is pitched, such as the historical and cultural traditions of a region (p. 348). Previous research found that both attitudes can affect international news itself, stating that 'journalists are willing to concede professional norms to national interests' (Nossek 2004, p. 348). The claim that technology shapes foreign affairs flow and coverage is not borne out if journalists and news editors keep controlling the content that flows through the medium (Nossek 2004, p. 364). In essence, the news decisions taken by the journalists and editors override any impact that changing technology might have on international news content.

Despite the previous literature that offers varying discussions about how international news coverage occurs across the world, most focuses on the key factors identified by Galtung and Ruge—cultural affinity, the hierarchy of nations (more specifically, the relationship with elite nations), and geographical proximity—because previous research in this area has investigated geographical proximity as a common denominator. Proximity is a critical determinant for the selection of international news (e.g. Golan 2010; Putnis et al. 2013; Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. 1985; Wang 2010;

Wu 2000). In addition, ‘Geographical proximity is also often cited as a factor that structures international news coverage’ (Putnis et al. 2013, p. 11). Putnis (1996), in his study of international news coverage by Australia’s Channel Seven in Sydney and Brisbane, noted that these three factors affect the presentation of such news items.

2.1.1 Geographical proximity as a determinant of international news coverage

‘Geographical proximity’ refers to the geographic closeness between countries, and it posits that the shorter the distance, the more chance the news event will be published (Wu 2000, p. 117). For example, according to the notion of geographic proximity in international news coverage, Australia would be more likely to cover news from Indonesia than from, say, Latin America, which is further removed. The literature suggests this determinant is consistent within the coverage of global news (e.g. see Golan 2010; Putnis et al. 2000, 2013; Roberts & Bantimaroudis 1997; Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. 1985). This determinant has been studied across different countries and platforms and has purchase in most nations.

Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. (1985) investigated how foreign news is treated in 29 countries across the world, and cross-examined the factors that affect the flow of global news between these countries, including Australia. The report was commissioned by UNESCO, and revealed some interesting factors about how world news is treated. The report was compiled by various groups. Interestingly, one of the factors Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. (1985) found was that the geographical proximity between two nations is critical to publishing international news. ‘Geographic proximity is the overwhelming factor in foreign news. Regional news dominates news from all other parts of the world’ (Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. 1985, p. 80). Putnis et al. (2013) acknowledged the geographical proximity determinant as prominent in their analysis of Italian international news in Australia, and noted that previous researchers identified this factor as a critical determinant for studying foreign news, referencing Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. (1985) as an important study on geographical proximity and foreign news.

Golan (2010, p.127) suggested it is logical to monitor news events from nearby countries because their social and economic events might affect a neighbour’s

decision-making process in economic or political issues. Consider the example of Australia and Indonesia: the execution of Australian citizens and convicted drug traffickers Myuran Sukumaran and Daniel Andrew Chan (Australian Broadcasting Corporation 2015) in Indonesia was largely covered in Australia because the prisoners were Australian, and also because Indonesia is Australia's neighbour, and the decisions made in Indonesia affected the diplomatic relationship between these two countries. In addition, Kim and Barnett (1996) explained that geographical proximity is a core explanation for the content of international news coverage and for foreign news flow. Geographical distance between countries is treated 'as an indicator of newsworthiness in international events coverage' (Kim & Barnett 1996, p. 327). Wu (2000) agreed with Kim and Barnett, and considers geographical proximity an important part of global news coverage. Wu (2000) analysed the foreign affairs coverage of 38 countries, considering the news items from the host countries and those countries that published them, and assessing the determinants of world news coverage. Wu (2000) found the key factors influencing international news coverage are geographical proximity, cultural affinity, and the logistics of news-gathering (p. 116). In contrast, Wang (2010) also considered geographical proximity as part of his study in online media in Australia. His study examined international news flow, and found that geographical proximity is not a significant determinant for the coverage of global online news in Australia, saying that 'geographic proximity did not lead Australians to look at their neighbouring nations in this study' (Wang 2010, p. 273). However, Wang (2010) concluded that the number of Internet users of a particular country and its gross domestic product (GDP) are more influential than geographical proximity. In addition, when talking about online news, Wang (2010) also mentioned that factors such as cultural ties are not particularly important: 'The colonial tie was not a profound determinant in the flow of international news' (Wang 2010, p. 273). Caple and Bednarek (2016) used geographical proximity as part of their research revisiting the determinants of news. In addition, the researchers investigated the discursive approach of news determinants and balanced them out with factors (such as news writing objectives, selection factors, and news values) 'because they interact with each other in quite specific ways' (p. 440). Proximity is considered as part of the news values because it makes news *newsworthy*, making it a prominent determinant to select news (Caple and Bednarek 2016, p. 438). Bednarek (2016) exemplifies the proximity as follows (p. 30):

... a news story that mentions New Zealand will construct Proximity in a newspaper published in Australia with an Australian target audience, but not in a newspaper published in Germany with a German target audience.

So it seems that geographical proximity *might* be a trigger to producing international news items from neighbouring countries, despite studies such as Wang's finding that other factors are more important. On the one hand, some of the literature has suggested proximity is a determinant. On the other hand, the coverage of world news is more complex, and it involves more concepts than the distance between two countries. The next determinant to be explored is the cultural affinity, proposed by Galtung and Ruge (1965).

2.1.2 Cultural affinity as a determinant of international news coverage

Cultural affinity or 'cultural proximity' is another determinant for triggering global news, according to Johan Galtung and Marie Ruge (1965). The authors explained that the greater the *cultural* similarity between two countries, the more likely they are to cover each other in news bulletins (Galtung & Ruge 1965, p. 67). Wang (2010) and Golan (2010) explored this determinant, and explained that 'cultural affinity has been found to be a strong determinant of international news coverage in several key studies' (Golan 2010, p. 127). Cultural affinity may also be considered as an agenda-setting trigger for news editors and news bulletins (Roberts & Bantimaroudis 1997, p. 63). Putnis clarified that "'cultural proximity", while often related to geographical proximity, is certainly not identical with it' (Putnis et al. 2013, p. 12). Taking again the example between Australia and Indonesia, these two countries do not share a similar culture, because they have different languages, economic factors and history. Their geographic closeness means they are 'newsworthy' to each other, but their cultural differences suggest Australian audiences may not relate to Indonesian events as easily as they might relate to, for example, events in the UK or the US. However, Australia has real cultural affinities with New Zealand—Australia and New Zealand are both part of the Commonwealth, the countries share the same language, they have similar economies and societies and regular travel and migration occurs between them.

Researchers have considered cultural affinity as a determinant for international news coverage (see Golan 2010; Wang 2010; Wu 2000). As mentioned before, Wu (2000) considered different factors which also suggest that cultural affinity is essential in the coverage of global news. The factors are:

- Population
- Degree of press freedom
- Geographic size
- Economic power
- Geographic distance
- Shared language
- Volume of trade
- Past colonial ties
- Presence of an international news agency

Shared language, degree of press freedom, and past colonial ties are some of the factors that suggest cultural affinity. However, the variables Wu (2000) proposed are not the same as those proposed by Galtung and Ruge (1965). Both sets of research, however, identify factors that relate to cultural affinity as a key determinant of international news coverage. It is possible to suggest, therefore, that the issue of cultural connectedness is a factor in the selection of foreign news coverage, regardless of the topics. In addition, journalists need to be aware of cultural sensitivities and clashes when reporting overseas news. Masterson (2009) related his experience of working as a foreign correspondent in South East Asia. He interviewed foreign correspondents working in the region to discuss issues around cross-cultural understanding. Trevor Watson, one of the interviewees, said that ‘journalism itself is a product of a people’s culture’ (Masterson 2009 p. 22), which suggests cultural affinity may be a more important determinant for international news coverage.

Cottle and Rai (2008) also noted the importance of cultural affinity (or cultural proximity) in their research of global news in news bulletins, the ‘24/7’ news providers. They acknowledged Galtung and Ruge’s determinants of world news

selection. Their research involved four global news providers: two international (CNN and BBC); and two nationally-based (Fox News in the US, and Sky News in Australia). The authors noted that the interconnection in the world is ‘important and invites a deeper appreciation of how news can display cultural differences’ (Cottle & Rai 2008, p. 164). Furthermore, ‘[p]revious research has demonstrated that international gatekeepers used various criteria, including proximity and conflict, to determine the newsworthiness of certain stories’ (Roberts & Bantimaroudis 1997, p. 62). Cottle and Rai (2008) researched the communicative frames the ‘24/7’ news providers use when publishing world news. One such frame is the cultural recognition frame, where the global news acknowledges and ‘endorse[s] views of cultural differences around the world’ (Cottle & Rai 2008, p. 171). This specific frame might be taken as part of Galtung and Ruge’s cultural affinity, although there is no clear evidence in the research about this connection. However, these frames are considered in the ‘24/7’ global services within the four news providers they researched. Cottle and Rai (2008) concluded, ‘there is a communicative politics embedded in the range and deployment of communicative frames that structure and give shape to global news across our sample of global and international news channels’ (p. 177).

Nossek (2004) extended Wu’s arguments by applying the concept of cultural affinity in the coverage of international political violence. Nossek (2004) claimed that international news receives coverage when national interests are affected by global events involving political violence. Take again the example of Australia and Indonesia: the Bali bombings in 2002, and some of the attacks currently occurring in Indonesia, were and are more likely to be covered in Australia due to the number of Australian casualties resulting from these events (*news.com.au* 2016). The Bali bombings news, for instance, claimed more coverage because the event affected the diplomatic relationship between Australia and Indonesia, and it included coverage of Indonesian domestic politics in the Australian media, also. While Australia is not culturally connected with Indonesia, this news event appeared in the Australian news because national interests were involved, just as Nossek (2004) pointed out.

The sense of a cultural affinity in news coverage has also been applied in Australian news research. Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000) found that cultural

affinity is essential for disseminating global news. Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000) studied major daily metropolitan newspapers *The Australian* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* and the ABC 7pm television news bulletin as part of a larger study involving 45 countries (p. 1). Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000) found that cultural ties among certain regions made them far more likely to receive news coverage. This determinant was coupled with the home country effect, the cultural power of nations and the broader effect of specific events (p. 7). The researchers tallied how many international news items were covered in the three studied outlets, and categorised them in the region where the news events originated. Interestingly, Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000) noted that news events from the UK were more prevalent in the Australian media, suggesting cultural affinity is an important determinant of international news content. However, that the converse is not the case suggests complexity in the relationship: '[t]he United Kingdom is much more prominent in the Australian media than Australia is in the United Kingdom's' (Putnis, Penhallurick & Bourk 2000, p. 9). They also noted that Australia and the UK share a history of communication because of their shared history, and this is reflected in the way both countries share their news items (Putnis, Penhallurick & Bourk 2000, p. 15). So, despite the cultural affinity between the two nations, Australia gives far more coverage to the UK than the UK gives to Australia, which suggests the hierarchy of nations (the 'cultural power' of nations) also plays an important role in news selection.

In later work, Putnis et al. (2013) considered the representation of Italy in the Australian media from 2005 to 2012. Again, they took cultural proximity as a determinant of international news and also further tested Galtung and Ruge's key determinants. Putnis et al. (2013) analysed Australian news bulletins and newspapers where Italian news items were published. While Australia and Italy are distant, geographically speaking, the authors stated that there is a cultural connection between these two countries because 'the Italian community is the largest non-Anglo-Saxon ethnic group resident in Australia' (Putnis et al. 2013, p. 2). In addition, Putnis et al. (2013, p. 2) stated:

The significant presence and impact of the Italian community on Australian lifestyle and interests might be expected to influence the extent to which Italian issues are covered by Australian media.

Therefore, it might be extrapolated that a migrant population could be considered as part of Galtung and Ruge's cultural affinity, and that it may also affect the world news that is covered. To obtain an insight into the effect of Italian news in Australia, Putnis et al. (2013) analysed stories published between 2005 and 2012 from three newspapers (*The Australian*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, and *The Age*). They also analysed stories from television news bulletins and current affairs programs broadcast in Melbourne from 2008 to 2012 (*Seven News*, *Nine News*, *Ten News*, *ABC News*, *Lateline*, *Today Tonight*, *A Current Affair*), and some national broadcast programs, such as the *7:30 Report*, *Four Corners*, and *SBS World News* (p. 4). Through an extensive content analysis of the selected media, Putnis et al. (2013) found that Italy had a high profile in the Australian media during the period analysed, saying that Italian Australians are interested in the European country, because they have 'political weight' there (p. 83):

This level of involvement in the affairs of another democratic country is unusual for the Australian press and might reasonably be linked to the presence in Australia of a substantial Italian community which carried voting rights in Italian elections.

The conclusions from Putnis et al. (2013) are consistent with Golan (2010, p. 142), who concluded that '... nations that are relevant to the home nation ... were likely to receive coverage' when analysing the determinants of global news in the US. Since Italian Australians have an effect on Italian politics, the amount and effect of Italian news in Australia is important.

So far, we have explored the geographical proximity and the cultural affinity (or 'cultural proximity' as some researchers name it) in the presentation of world news. However, these two determinants alone do not sufficiently explain how global news coverage works. Therefore, the following section will describe another Galtung and Ruge determinant, 'the hierarchy of nations'.

2.1.3 Hierarchy of nations as a determinant of international news coverage

Another important determinant for the coverage of foreign affairs is the hierarchy of nations. Golan (2010) described the concept as when ‘nations of economic, political, and military strength are more likely to receive coverage than those nations that are not as powerful’ (p. 128). Galtung and Ruge (1965) proposed this determinant and defined it as when ‘the actions of the elite are, at least usually and in short-term perspective, more consequential than the activities of others’ (p. 68). For example, Australia could carry more overseas news from the US and the UK than news events coming from Latin America or Africa because the first two countries are part of the developed world and are more powerful. This ‘hierarchy of nations’ determinant may often override both geographic and cultural proximity. In the previous example of Australia and Indonesia, little news from Indonesia would be covered in Australia, because it is not part of those nations that economically lead the world.

Previous research has shown how the hierarchy of nations has shaped world news and how it has affected coverage from certain regions. For instance, Wu (2000) considered the hierarchy of nations (economic power, for instance, as part of this concept) among other factors in his research of international news coverage. The factors Wu (2000) used in his research include: (1) country traits (such as geographic size and economic power); (2) interaction and relatedness between foreign and home countries (e.g. geographic distance, and volume trade); and (3) logistics of news-gathering (news agencies) (Wu 2000, p. 116). Some of the aspects Wu (2000) considered as part of examining the elite nations were economic power, volume trade, and the possible freedom of their press. In his systemic study of international news coverage, it was found that ‘the US is dominant in almost every country’s foreign newshole, and powerful countries such as France and Russia are also prominent’ (Wu 2000, p. 121). In addition, Latin America and Africa received very little coverage, or even no coverage at all for countries such as Cameroon, Honduras and Guatemala (Wu 2000, p. 121). Based on his regression model, Wu (2000) concluded that ‘trade should be the most influential determinant when the whole world is considered’ (p. 124) and that ‘international news in almost every nation centers on the powerful’ (Wu 2000, p. 126). In addition, Pietiläinen (2006) agreed that Wu’s research studies the hierarchy of nations, and includes more variables that might affect international news

coverage, such as political relations (p. 217). Moreover, Pietiläinen (2006) stated that the flow of world news is not homogeneous, and it is different in each region. Therefore, her research included an analysis of 33 countries and around 400 news stories, and also correlated the amount of international news and foreign trade, concluding that 'it seems obvious that foreign news and foreign trade are strongly connected' (Pietiläinen 2006, p. 219). Furthermore, an interesting result emerged from Pietiläinen's study, (2006) that 'both trade and news interest depend on geographic proximity and cultural, political and other ties' (Pietiläinen 2006, p. 222). Williams (2011) made similar conclusions to Pietiläinen (2006) after examining the correlation between international news and trade in different countries, and after exploring the history of overseas news items, stating that 'the link between international news and international trade is as strong today as ever' (p. 46). Putnis et al. (2013) studied Galtung and Ruge's hierarchy of nations determinant, and stated that 'most of the research into international news flow has focussed on the prominence of nations on the world news stage at a particular point in time' (p. 12). Caple and Bednarek (2016) considered 'eliteness' in their discursive news values research, and identified that the hierarchy of nations is named differently in previous researches, but all fall into 'eliteness' because 'all are similarly defined as concerning important, powerful entities and people' (p. 440). Bednarek (2016) also considers 'eliteness' as a part of her research on discursive approach of news values. Harcup and O'Neill (2017) also include the hierarchy of nations as part of their revisited news values concepts in their research.

The literature suggests, then, that the hierarchy of nations is an essential determinant for the coverage of world news, and also it can be observed that the literature supports this finding in different regions across the world. However, there are few suggestions about how international news published in the Australian media is affected by the determinant of hierarchy of nations. Putnis and Lee (2016) extensively researched how overseas news changed from 1905 to 1950 as a result of geopolitical issues. They stated that Australia has been involved 'in two worldwide studies of international news flow' (Putnis & Lee 2016, p. 9) and that historically, 'Australia's international communication system developed within the framework of the British Empire' (p. 11). In addition to studying the historical research on overseas news, Putnis and Lee (2016) carried out a quantitative analysis on the coverage of world

news during the first half of the twentieth century, and reflected on how the regions covered were affected by the political environment at that time. By 1950, Australia referenced the UK and the US the most in its international news coverage, with 27.2 per cent and 22.2 per cent respectively (p. 30). In more recent journalism studies by Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000), these two countries, with different percentages, are shown as leading the coverage (and flow) of foreign affairs as well, with 16.4 per cent of stories dedicated to the US and 8.2 per cent dedicated to the UK (p. 6). In addition, Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000) have weighted the elite nations (or hierarchy of nations) as a dominant factor for world news in Australia (p. 7). Region-wise, Western Europe and North America were those regions with more coverage of foreign news in Australia (Putnis, Penhallurick & Bourk 2000, p. 10). Wang (2010), on the other hand, explored how the global news flow occurs in the Australian online media and how it affects the way the audience receives the news. Wang (2010) found that Australia 'did not pay much attention to the culturally, historically, and economically related Commonwealth nations' (p. 273). However, Wang (2010) concluded that 'the involvement of Britain [in the study regression model] made tourism and mutual trade the significant determinants of international news coverage' (p. 274). It is important to highlight that Wang (2010) focused only on the online Australian media, whereas Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000) researched traditional media (e.g. newspapers and television news bulletins), and this could explain the different results from the studies. These results make the research of international news coverage even more complex.

After considering what the academic research suggests about the determinants of international news and its relevance for journalism, it is critical to understand that news items go through a further process before they are published. This process involves a journalist pitching possible news items to editors, and the news editor deciding what to publish or reject. This is called the 'gatekeeping process'. The process may also occur *prior* to the journalist being assigned the story—potential stories pass through the editor's gatekeeping process, and then are assigned to particular journalists to cover: '[d]ue to limitations of time and space, news media gatekeepers must identify a few events as more newsworthy than others' (Golan 2010, p. 125), and news editors are considered the *gatekeepers* in the media. In addition, the determinants explained in this section could potentially affect the way global news is

presented, and how the gatekeeper selects the news. The following section will describe the gatekeeping theory, its origins and the literature of this theory in journalism.

2.2 Gatekeeping as a process of news selection

When we consider how news events are published or broadcast by any media outlet, the journalist who writes or presents the news is often the focus of attention. However, journalists are only one link in the chain, and more complex processes are involved in news production, as Shoemaker and Vos (2009) outlined in detail. Gatekeeping theory investigates these complex processes in depth. From a general perspective in media, Shoemaker and Vos (2009, p. 1) stated that:

Gatekeeping is the process of culling and crafting countless bits of information into the limited number of messages that reach people each day, and it is the center of the media's role in modern public life.

The term 'gatekeeper' is used frequently to describe the media industry, and its purpose is more complex than selecting, editing and perhaps adjusting the angle of news. White (1950) described in his seminal study that journalists and editors are gatekeepers themselves during this process (p. 383). Journalists and editors decide which story might appeal to their audience and they make decisions about which sources to interview, which angles to emphasise and which research to include in their reports (Nossek 2004, p. 346). In this particular case, the editors are also gatekeepers because they decide to accept or discard a story. A specific point of reality is proposed and created by gatekeepers, which in turn impacts upon the view of an audience (Shoemaker & Vos 2009, p. 3). Hence, the function of gatekeepers is critical in the decision-making process of selecting news events to be passed on to the audience.

The theory 'has traditionally given journalists and their news media the primary responsibility for making the decisions that send information about world events to the audience each day' (Shoemaker & Vos 2009, p. 121). The term 'gatekeeper', however, is not exclusive to the media, and it applies to many study areas. Indeed, the term originated in the field of social psychology, when Kurt Lewin (1943) conducted

pioneering research about food distribution in households and analysed the decision-making processes that occur before food is served to the family (Deluliis 2015; Lewin 1943; Roberts 2005; Shoemaker & Vos 2009; White 1950). In his research, Lewin (1943) determined that housewives (or the people who are responsible for bringing food into the household) are the gatekeepers of the family, because they take the responsibility for deciding which food is brought into the household and served for the family's consumption. The nightly meal occurs only after a series of gatekeeping decisions are made—where to shop, what to purchase, what time is available for cooking, and so on. The way gatekeepers process information, according to Lewin (1951), falls into two classifications: cognitive structures and motivational structures (p. 177). These psychology types are not studied in depth for this project, but Lewin's research offers a perspective on the thinking process that occurs for gatekeepers.

Lewin's work has since been applied in many areas of study. One of these areas includes news media research, when David Manning White (1950) first published research about the role of the gatekeeper in news-making decisions. White identified 'Mr Gates' (not his real name), a gatekeeper at a newspaper, who collaborated with him for the study. Mr Gates agreed to keep wire copies of those news events that he rejected, and explain the rationale behind the rejection of those items as potential news (Deluliis 2015, p. 8; White 1950, p. 384). After the field study, Mr Gates answered some questions regarding his job during the week. White (1950) concluded gatekeepers base their work on subjective matters, such as experience and attitudes towards the news event and the knowledge of their audience's expectations, making this process highly subjective (p. 396). Therefore, gatekeepers are subjectively motivated in the selection of news in general (Putnis 1996), and White's study identified there is no real training for this important filtering role.

White's research on gatekeeping behaviour led the way in understanding the early stages of news production, and is 'one of the first studies of its kind in gatekeeping' (Roberts 2005, p. 6). The Mr Gates study opened gatekeeping theory up to the media field, improving and enriching the theory's relevance. Roberts suggested that '[t]he most fundamental improvement to early gatekeeping theories of mass communication introduces the notion of multiple gatekeepers who control various functions along the news process' (Roberts 2005, p. 8).

Forty years later, after the findings on White's research, Bleske (1991) replicated and adapted White's methodology to verify whether gatekeeping behaviour had changed over time. One of the major adaptations of this study was to include gatekeepers with different characteristics that might affect the decision-making process of selecting the news items, such as education, interests, journalism experience, and gender, among others (Bleske 1991, p. 72). These changes, according to Bleske (1991), surprisingly did not change the results and many similarities were found between the research conducted by White (1950) and Bleske (1991). In addition, 'researchers ... have recognized that professional, organizational, technological, and cultural influences frame and shape the news' (Bleske, 1991, p. 78) and, by implication, these factors have more influence than the individual characteristics of the gatekeeper.

2.2.1 Cultural background of gatekeepers

Roberts identified that White's (1950) work does not consider the importance of the gatekeeper's cultural background, the reality of news deadlines or the need for a general media outlet to cover a variety of events (2005, p. 14). Roberts and Bantimaroudis (1997), for example, have used White's study as a springboard for a study of Greek media, demonstrating the influence cultural ties have on gatekeeping behaviour. International gatekeepers form an important component of the Greek international news coverage process, with many international wire services on offer—the BBC, Associated Press, and the Athenian Press Agency, among others (Roberts & Bantimaroudis 1997, p.70). However, the importance of obtaining and offering the news to an audience changes when 'people with different backgrounds displayed divergence from established news norms' (Roberts & Bantimaroudis 1997, p. 66). Along with these issues, the Internet and technology are changing gatekeepers' responsibilities and bringing more opportunities for research in this area (Roberts 2005, p. 15).

Previously this chapter presented research that argued cultural proximity as a determinant for international news coverage. However, the gatekeeper's cultural background in assessing and applying that determinant of cultural proximity to

individual news stories is little explored. For instance, Schwalbe, Silcock and Candello (2015) examined how the gatekeeping process is affected by news visuals, with the emerging trends of bloggers, citizen journalists and technology. Schwalbe, Silcock and Candello (2015) noted that gatekeepers select their stories influenced by visual impact, how easily the story can be explained, and cultural factors, such as education, political ideology, expertise in the job, attitudes and values (p. 467). They analysed Shoemaker and Vos's levels of gatekeeping (2009), and explained that 'White's research [is] too simplistic' (Schwalbe, Silcock & Candello 2015, p. 466) in the first level of gatekeeping (the personal or individual level), bringing complexity to the theory. Some of the factors Schwalbe, Silcock and Candello (2015) identified on this level are experience in the job, class positions and political ideology (p. 467). However, the cultural background of journalists and gatekeepers is not considered in this particular study. Kim (2010) explained the levels of influence in the context of Iraqi journalists. She (2010) explored how the gatekeeping process affects Iraqi journalists' selection of a news event, considering that Iraq was (at the time of Kim's writing) one of the most dangerous countries to work in as a journalist (p. 484). The author further added some factors for gatekeeping, including gender, ethnicity, or journalistic practices (Kim 2010, p. 487). Kim (2010) considered some cultural aspects for journalists and news editors. However, her research focused on how working in Iraq affects this gatekeeping process, without considering the cultural considerations the gatekeeping process includes for reporters and editors.

It is important to note, however, that while factors such as the various 'proximities' described by Galtung and Ruge (1965), and both the cultural background and decision-making considerations of gatekeepers, impact on international news selection, a filtering process occurs before international news editors select the news. This is carried out by organisations known as 'news agency wholesalers', which are actively involved in a filtering and gatekeeping process before the news is filtered through to newsrooms. This facilitates an additional 'step' in the news selection process that limits even further the news that can potentially reach Australian audiences. While this news wholesaler gatekeeping is beyond the scope of this study, which is essentially designed to gauge the gatekeeping process at a news editor and news director level in the international news selection in Australian

newsrooms, the role of news wholesalers cannot be ignored outright, and require some attention.

2.3 The international news agency wholesalers as part of the gatekeeping process

News agency wholesalers are multinational businesses that offer media coverage about any news events for sale to different media organisations. These news agency wholesalers can be national (i.e. obtaining news from and for a specific country) or international (i.e. obtaining news from one country for another). In this research project, and due to my focus on world news coverage, this study will focus on international news agencies and wholesalers.

Musa (1990) explained that international news agencies historically provided primarily financial information about the world economy (p. 326). At a later stage, the news agencies included different topics of interest, such as entertainment and hard news (Musa 1990, p. 326). However, with the rapid growth of technology and worsening economic conditions, the news agencies needed to reform the way they delivered news to their clients. Reuters is an example of a company that changed, and it has contributed to and shaped the international news delivery worldwide (Musa 1990, p. 326) through the variety of services it now offers to clients (primarily news organisations) who purchase its packaged news products.

With this rapid evolution of international news agencies, and with content moving away from an exclusive focus on financial news, scholars started to explore the nature of these enterprises. For example, Paterson (1998) studied the nature of the international news wholesalers and their clients (i.e. the international news agencies and broadcasters), and explained the situation (p. 82):

The agencies are agenda-setters and more, for they make the first decisions on how and if international stories – particularly those from the news flow fringes of the non-industrialized world – will be covered for television.

The gatekeeping process would be easy to study if it included journalists and news editors working exclusively in commercial news media. However, when talking about the gatekeeping process in news events, we must take account of the early

filtering role that the news agencies and wholesalers apply before the news reaches Australian international news editors. Therefore, the broadcasters (or newsrooms) who receive packages from international news agencies change their agendas and shape them according to the content available, which in turn impacts upon the news decisions within the newsrooms. It is important to highlight that the use of websites, multimedia sites, such as YouTube and LiveLeak, and social media might also affect the gatekeeping process, having quicker access to information than from the news wholesalers at a cheaper price.

Paterson (1998, p. 81, fig. 6.1) described the difference between international news wholesalers (first tier) and news agencies in international television media (second tier), and explained how both tiers are compatible, but also independent. The wholesaler sells the 'raw' footage to the news agencies, and, subsequently, the news agencies create a proper television news story using their own resources. Finally, the product is broadcast into their news bulletins (such as in the case of APTV) or sold to clients (i.e. national or regional broadcasters) according to their needs. As a consequence, the broadcasters depend on what the agencies offer them, which initially sets the 'scope' for the news agenda and impacts upon the choices that the newsroom gatekeepers can ultimately consider for broadcast/publication.

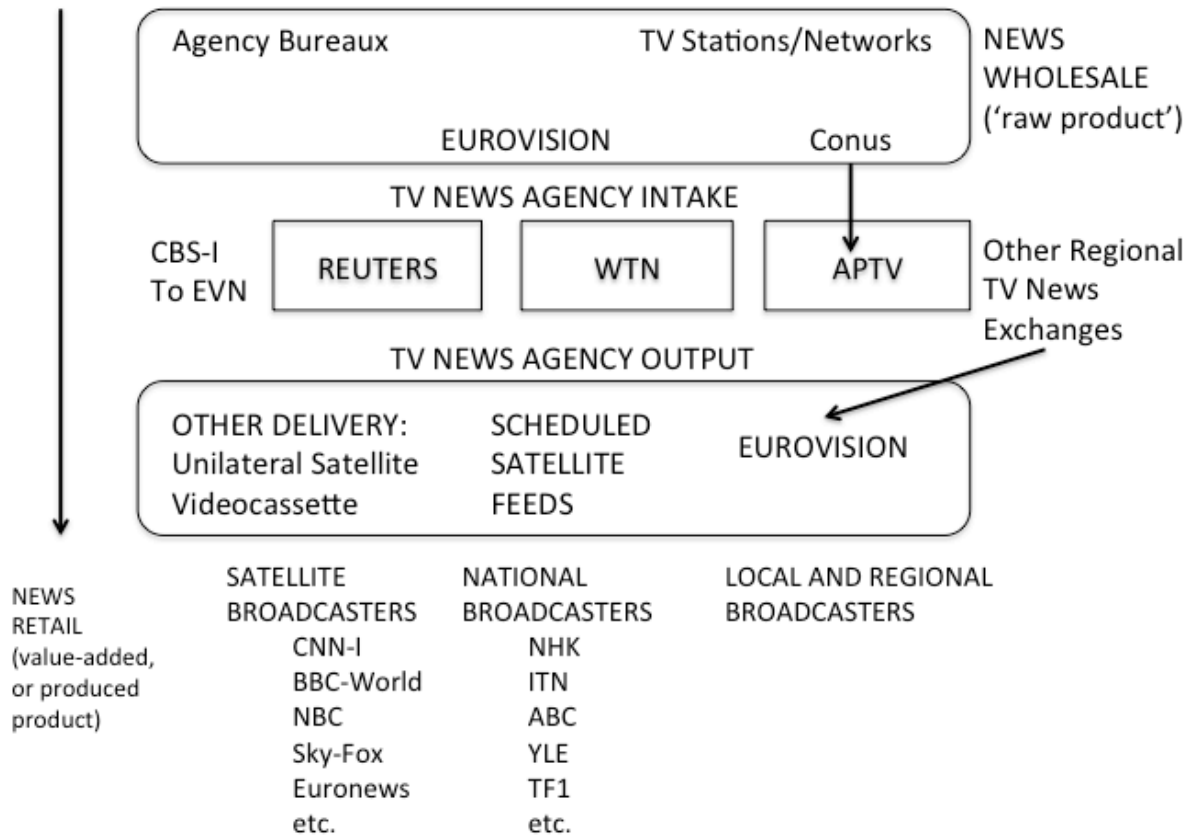


Figure 1. Model of international television news flow (Paterson 1998, p. 81, fig. 6.1)

Boyd-Barrett (2000, p. 5) concurred with Paterson (1999, p. 19), and claimed ‘both international and national news agencies contribute to the simultaneous processes of globalization and localization’.

Paterson investigated the impact international news agencies have on the coverage of world events. He examined how the international news agencies (i.e. Reuters, Associated Press, etc.) were a critical step in the gatekeeping process for showing international news about the Mururoa nuclear testing in 1995, and Tahiti’s independence (1999). He observed the processes of choosing the coverage of these two events, from planning to publishing on television, and how the local gatekeeping process is affected by images coming from the international news wholesalers in the news agency WTN. He concluded (Paterson 1999, p. 27):

... production decisions about the following textual factors within local newscasts - all of which may influence audience perceptions of a story - frequently closely match decisions made by the news agencies providing the bulk of pictures. This was seen to happen in four ways: heavy use of agency

pictures leads to consonance in the textual claims made by agencies and broadcasts; heavy dependence on news agency editing, rather than local editing decisions also reinforce the news frame imposed by agencies; the importance given to stories by agencies seems to relate closely to the importance attached to stories by broadcasters; and agency dependence appears to increase as a broadcaster's size and wealth decrease.

He also concluded that '[b]roadcasters are becoming increasingly dependent upon a few news providers to supply the international images they use to shape our global reality' (Paterson 1999, p. 31). Camaj (2010) similarly studied key international events to assess the role of news agencies and other news wholesalers. She studied the international news coverage of the conflict in Kosovo, examining the media influences on the perspective of the audience and the work the international news agencies published during the Kosovo war. Musa (1990) researched the way news agencies shape smaller media organisations with news stories, especially in the Third World, where it is cheaper to buy an already-produced news story to broadcast rather than send a journalist to create one (p. 328). This shape, according to Paterson (1998), affects the perspective the audience obtains from the mass media, because the news stories are generically produced and do not consider cultural factors. Furthermore, the multinational news agencies 'have considerable influence on other media through the choice of stories they distribute to clients' (Paterson 1999, p. 17). Again, Paterson (2011) investigated the reasons why the international news agencies decide to provide different news stories, and concluded that most international news agencies tend to 'narrow' the stories made available to their clients so as to simplify the news editors' (gatekeepers') selection processes (p. 22). Moreover, the international news agencies 'often say they do not want to "educate" their clients' about the reality in different regions (p. 23). Paterson (1998, p. 82) also claimed:

People who do not live in or routinely travel to other countries generally have little or no opportunity to test or challenge their conception of the (mass media-provided) 'reality' of those countries. Mass media are almost wholly responsible for shaping that reality, and among mass media, international television news agencies are especially influential (for they alone provide contemporary visual representations of most of the world to the entire world).

The phenomenon of a 24-hour channel offering news coverage has been studied as well, and in the contemporary news context this is where international news agencies have seen considerable growth and a 'gap' in the market—a market that very

suddenly demanded a limitless newshole to be continuously filled. Cottle and Rai (2008) explained the phenomenon of global 24-hour live broadcast channels, in which CNN and BBC were included. The study concluded it is time for international news agencies and 24-hour channel services, which sometimes use international news agencies' information, 'to engage much more closely and empirically with exactly how disparate conflicts and cultural differences around the world are publicly enacted ... in and through the communicative structures of global news channels' (Cottle & Rai 2008, p. 177).

Since the international news agencies influence audience perspective on the world due to their early gatekeeping role in the news selection process, Sean MacBride confronted these issues, and many others about international news coverage, in his report on the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO). The study, commissioned by UNESCO, has framed much policy and discussion in the years since it was written and provides an essential framework for considering the selection processes and cultural knowledge of international news gatekeepers. This thesis will now turn to the contribution of the MacBride report to this field of study.

2.4 The New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) and the MacBride report

The notion of a New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO), named in the report commonly known as 'the MacBride report' (UNESCO, 1980), was created by the United Nations under the direction of Irish Nobel laureate Sean MacBride. The report, *Many Voices One World* was produced by a UNESCO committee, the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems, which MacBride chaired. The idea of a New World Information and Communication Order was born in 1976, when UNESCO and the Non-Aligned Movement created the concept for a better communication plan regarding the news flow between the major blocs at the time (i.e. the Third World, the developed countries, and the socialist bloc), and for a fairer relationship between them as well (Roach 1990, p. 283).

The recommendations set down by this report were completed at a time when conflict between socialist and democratic countries was at its height and the gap between developed and developing countries was more visible due to communication problems (Nordenstreng 1999). However, many of the issues raised by the UNESCO Commission are still current, and new conflicts around the world continue to affect the free flow of information. Singh and Gross (1981, p. 108) noted the following:

The Report relates freedom of the press to freedom of expression generally, to the many interpretations of the newly stated rights to 'communicate' and 'receive information'.

Despite the desire for a fair communication scheme across the globe, the concept of information sovereignty moved into the spotlight as a result of the MacBride recommendations, and Many Voices One World was rejected, especially by the developed countries such as the US and the UK; because of this rejection, along with the geopolitical situation between the East and the West, both countries left UNESCO (Nordenstreng 2012, p. 34). Nordenstreng (1999) wrote about the history of NWICO and all the difficulties the MacBride Commission confronted throughout their tenure and following the release of their report. The author summarised the political situation in the developed nations during this period, and identified the three major blocs involved: the developed countries (such as the US), the socialist bloc, and the 'global South', known as the Third World or developing countries, which were all to be involved in the process of closing the information gap (i.e. in helping to establish the New World Information and Communication Order). For example, Nordenstreng (1999, p. 237) explained the political history NWICO brought to the UN:

In a historical perspective, NWICO also means the revival of political projects that had been introduced at the second sessions of the UN General Assembly in 1947 and at the UN Conference on Freedom of Information held in Geneva in 1948, but which were then paralyzed by the Cold War.

NWICO was introduced in order to create a fair communications scheme between these blocs, offering better opportunities to developing countries to improve in their communications and to heighten the visibility of the socialist bloc and Third World countries' issues and challenges. The MacBride report supported this scheme by offering recommendations to complete it. As a result of these efforts, the

developed countries (in particular, the US and the UK) felt threatened by these communications processes, and they decided to stand against NWICO (Nordenstreng 2012, p. 81). Nordenstreng (1999) claimed the MacBride report lost its momentum because of the reluctance of the developed countries, especially the US, to accept its recommendations regarding a new world communication order. ‘The US reaction to the demands for an NWICO was hostile’ (Roach 1990, p. 284). Quirós (2005) agreed the US opposed this idea because they considered the NWICO ‘incompatible with the basic freedoms of a democratic society’ (p. 72). Thanks to the US rejection, NWICO started to lose its presence and importance as a concept (Nordenstreng 2012, p. 84). Furthermore:

The NWICO debate criticized the perceived domination of Western news agencies over international news production and suggested courses of action to rebalance the international flow of news. (Laville & Palmer 2012, p. 418)

As a counter-balance to this rejection of MacBride’s recommendations by the developed nations, the communication recommendations were accepted and embraced by the South bloc and the East (Quirós 2005).

Even though an NWICO was called for, and although the MacBride report recommendations were developed and created more than three decades ago, the report still reflects the challenges in global news information flow—somewhat currently addressed by information available about other parts of the world, thanks to the Internet. However, as Calabrese (2004) suggested, the MacBride report ‘represents a legacy that we should have, because it was the first comprehensive, modern attempt to define an international code of communication rights in terms of human rights’ (p. 51). Despite the positive ideas the report brought to closing the gap between the global North and South at the time—and between capitalist and communist parts of the world—it was also in parts somewhat ambiguous in its analysis of the media. According to Singh and Gross (1981), ‘... the Report makes many references to contradictions and dilemmas, which opens it to easy criticism from those who yearn for unambiguous prescriptions’ (p. 108). One of the dilemmas was the violation of sovereignty (Singh & Gross 1981, p. 109). This violation refers to the ways the report recommends reducing the imbalance in the flow of news and, according to the First

World nations such as the US and the UK, the issue could damage freedom of expression.

Despite all these hopeful developments there are warning signs that show how difficult it will be to transform, generalize, and put into practice the free flow of information. Under its present guise, some governments, transnationals, media, and organized pressure groups have on occasion tried to undermine internal stability in other countries, violating their sovereignty and disturbing national development. Still, there are also instances where national sovereignty has been invoked to justify restrictions on news collection and dissemination which amount to basic infringements on the free exercise of human rights. (UNESCO 1980, p. 143)

Twenty-five years after NWICO was published, the Audiovisual Council of Catalonia (Consell de l'Audiovisual de Catalunya) analysed the concepts and the challenges of NWICO and how it affected the communication gap, in a dossier of academic publications. In this work, many researchers and academics highlighted interesting facts about the MacBride report. For instance, Calabrese (2005) stated that technology has influenced communication patterns worldwide, because it 'has made possible a new global market system and a new context for the spread of political, economic, and cultural ideas' (p. 24). Kuo and Xiaoge (2005) stated that news from more Asian countries is heard now, but not on the same scale as news from the American news wholesalers (p. 40). While the world after NWICO has stepped forward to close the gap, many challenges still exist.

While the developing countries opposed NWICO, according to Nordenstreng (2012), the recommendations set down by MacBride and his commission brought new ideas into the public sphere about ways to close the information exchange disparity between Third World (or developing) countries and developed countries. These were made in an effort to create a more desirable flow of information (Hancock & Hamelink 1999). NWICO considers journalism to be an important way to bring these new ideas to the public sphere.

2.4.1 NWICO and journalism

Special attention is given to journalistic practices under the Professional Integrity and Standards section of the MacBride report (Hancock & Hamelink 1999, p. 286), and

this section has particular importance for the current thesis. MacBride's Many Voices One World report (1980) suggests overall ethical standards on reporting international news, especially from Third World countries, and other recommendations such as preparing foreign reporters to better represent international issues by undertaking cultural training (Hancock & Hamelink 1999). For the purposes of this research, two recommendations of the MacBride report will be studied in depth (Hancock & Hamelink 1999, p. 289). The first relates to journalists covering news in foreign countries; the second is more central to this work and relates to gatekeepers working in the news media of developed nations. MacBride writes:

46. To this end, reporters being assigned to foreign posts *should have the benefit of language training and acquaintance with the history, institutions, politics, economics and cultural environment of the country or region in which they will be serving.* [my emphasis]

47. The press and broadcasters in the industrialized world should allot more space and time to reporting events in and background material about foreign countries in general and news from the developing world in particular. *Also, the media in developed countries – especially the “gatekeepers”, editors and producers of print and broadcasting media who select the news items to be published or broadcast – should become more familiar with the cultures and conditions in developing countries ...* [my emphasis]

Williams (2011) stated the MacBride report brought to light ‘a lot about journalistic standards and the news values that underpinned the reporting of international news’ (p. 36). Nevertheless, the main point discussed was the improvement of journalism on reportage of foreign issues, which fuelled further controversy (Williams 2011, p. 37). Many Voices One World focuses on giving national agencies a priority over international agencies, and Boyd-Barrett (2000) agreed on this focus, stating that international news agencies should receive more attention in scholarly studies, since the international news agencies ‘... may have contributed to a way of picturing the world as one in which international news agencies are more important, powerful, [and] interesting than national agencies’ (p. 6). Williams also found that the MacBride report ‘drew attention to the problems of performing objective journalism in a highly politicised society’ (Williams 2011, p. 44). Roberts (2005) and Williams (2011) noted that the accelerated development of technology has changed the way international news is accessed by audiences and has impacted upon journalistic processes to some extent—but they suggest these changes

have not affected the way gatekeepers and journalists may obtain and select a story to cover:

While new technology has expanded the diversity of international news, the nature of that news is determined by a journalistic culture and reporting practices criticised by the MacBride report nearly 30 years ago (Williams 2011, p. 162).

Mansell and Nordenstreng (2006, p. 18) reinforced the point that MacBride ‘addressed the need for a code of conduct for journalists and measures to protect freedom of speech and diversity of media content’, and the literature suggests the need is still current. However, the recommendations of the MacBride report have never been applied or introduced primarily due to significant opposition from the US (which withdrew from discussions around NWICO). The issues it identified as central to quality international news reporting raise the following research questions to be investigated in this thesis.

2.5 Purpose of the research project

After considering the key considerations involved in this research project and how these issues have been previously researched—that is, (a) the determinants of international news coverage, including geographical proximity, cultural affinity, and the hierarchy of nations; (b) the gatekeeping process and factors that might affect it in the newsrooms; and (c) the NWICO and previous attempts to close the communication gap—I have developed core research questions that will drive both this exegetical investigation and the creative project. The questions will approach which determinants are commonly used in Australian news organisations and how the gatekeeping process affects what the audience receives in terms of global news in Australia. In addition, it will demonstrate the current situation in international news coverage, considering Queensland as our main case by applying a content analysis, which will be discussed in-depth on Chapter 3. At the same time, the research project will offer an answer in a practice-led creative component, which will be publicly accessible to the audience interested in the topic and it will reinforce the concepts above-mentioned.

First:

- What considerations do Australian news editors (i.e. gatekeepers) give when selecting international news to be covered by their media outlet?

In addition, three secondary questions are explored to complement the primary research question, and these questions will explore further the considerations of news editors when selecting international news in the Australian context:

- What is the role of international news editors' and journalists' own cultural background and training in the news selection process?
- What commercial/internal considerations are given in selecting international news to cover?
- What is the role of the international news agencies used by gatekeepers in the selection of global news for Australian audiences?

The following chapters will address these research questions, and draw together the original research of this exegesis with the professional practice contained in the radio documentaries, which forms the creative component of this research project.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology engaged during this project, and its rationale. Given this is a combined exegesis and creative project, methodologies related to both elements of the thesis are considered – a quantitative methodology drawn from journalism studies content analysis; a qualitative methodology for the selection and analysis of gatekeeper interviews designed to contextualise the quantitative findings; and a journalism production methodology that shares information gathering through qualitative interview based methods to produce journalism content that sits alongside the journalism studies research, whereby demonstrating methodological synergies between journalism studies and journalism practice.

While some researchers such as Lamb (2004) claim that journalism does not contain rigorous academic research and so cannot be considered per se, many others consider that journalism and academic research are interwoven in journalistic activities and procedures (Iorio 2004; Iorio 2004a; Lindgren & Phillips 2011; Meyer 1991). Therefore, it is important to consider some journalistic practices as examples of sound qualitative methods in collecting data. These journalistic practices will create knowledge and will analyse the news selection and production as analogues to such activities of knowledge questioning in qualitative academic research. This chapter, at its core, considers this interaction between journalistic practice and established research methodologies such as qualitative interviewing, and seeks to bring together these two ‘methods’ of knowledge-creation and analysis (see, for example, Lindgren 2011). This chapter will define both the quantitative and qualitative approaches utilised in this research and explain the reasons for selecting them. In this context the study argues that while quantitative methodologies measure and quantify, the qualitative research provides context for those measures and provide meaning.

This chapter will initially outline the broader assumptions of knowledge and understanding. Then, it will introduce the importance of qualitative methodologies in the media and communication area, examining the different paths of data collection that research has previously used. Next, a variety of sources will be used to highlight

the importance of academic research in journalism and how both are closely related, giving a rationale of similarities. Then, some of the most common methods of data collection such as interviews, participant observation, and surveys will be presented along with the advantages and disadvantages of using them in this research. Next, the chapter will present the chosen methodologies for this research project, indicating the rationale behind these and their limitations.

3.1 Philosophical assumptions of research

Before defining the selected methodology for this research project, it is vital to determine how the research is conducted, and how the research is set up in the paradigm where it belongs. Such a conversation must then start, not with methodologies but with much broader philosophical suppositions they sit within.

Methodological researchers such as Denzin and Lincoln (2011) and Corbin and Strauss (1990) have discussed the importance of the philosophical assumptions of qualitative research, and research approaches for qualitative methods in different areas, such as psychology, social sciences, and education. James W. Creswell (2013) has also outlined the importance of the qualitative research design in different fields of study, and he introduced philosophical assumptions in research, the frameworks for applying this type of research, and the qualitative approaches for research with each assumption and framework in *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. In doing so, Creswell (2013) offered a simple definition of qualitative research where he argues ‘[q]ualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world’ (Creswell 2013, p. 43). Creswell (2013) also noted that ‘qualitative research consists of a set of interpretative, material practices that make the world visible’ (p. 43).

Vasilachis de Gialdino (2009) stated, ‘[q]ualitative research comprises different orientations and approaches, various intellectual and disciplinary traditions grounded, often, in different philosophical assumptions’ (p. 5). In order to develop a proper research project, it is critical to thoroughly understand how the research should be conducted and what kind of assumptions the researcher should use to develop it. While Creswell (2013) categorised these assumptions depending on the approach of the research, Yilmaz (2013) built on Creswell’s definitions and argued that a

qualitative study needs more information and structure due to its popularity among researchers. Yilmaz (2013, p. 316) and Creswell (2013, p. 21) noted these philosophical assumptions:

- *Ontological*: Many points of view are considered in the real world.
- *Epistemological*: Evidence and quotes are taken from participants to justify their actions in the real world. Lee (2012, p. 407) described this assumption as one where the researcher is exploring the correlation between the expert, the researcher, and the reality.
- *Axiological*: The researcher interprets the results along with the evidence provided by participants.
- *Methodological*: The researcher starts from a particular view and finishes with a general view of the research to contextualise the study itself.

Creswell argued that ‘with the epistemological assumption, conducting a qualitative study means that researchers try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied’ (2013, p. 20). Vasilachis de Gialdino (2009) explored these epistemological assumptions in greater detail in a qualitative research, and proposed a further path of qualitative research in her approach to studying how young people in El Salvador are linked with criminal acts. The researcher gathered two sets of news, and compared them interpretatively. While a detailed analysis of this study is beyond the scope of this research project, it is important to stress how a wide range of epistemological assumptions is managed in research. For this research study, since the information and the knowledge needed are the experiences and the expertise of news editors in selecting international news, the epistemological philosophical assumption has been implemented in this research.

Apart from the above-mentioned philosophical assumptions within the qualitative studies, different approaches (or frameworks) are applied within each assumption (Creswell 2013, p. 22). Lee (2012) studied the social constructivism in qualitative research, and analysed this interpretive framework. Creswell (2013) defined the social constructivism as one where ‘individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work’ (p. 24).

Regarding this research project, the researcher is a Spanish-speaker journalist with around six years of experience in radio, who produces an English-produced community radio program and collaborates in another English-language radio program, *The Wire*. The researcher also has had experience studying international news coverage in Australia. Therefore, the expertise in radio and foreign news coverage helps put the researcher in a position to interpret how cultural training affects the gatekeeping process in the coverage of global news.

This research approach constructs participants' experiences for the development of the reality (hence the name 'social constructivism') (Creswell 2013, p. 25). Lee (2012) stated, '[i]t shows that SSC [strong social constructionism] holds on to the belief that there are multiple constructions of reality and knowledge with relative criteria for evaluating interpretations' (p. 411). Since this research, once again, is aimed at building knowledge from the experience of the nature of international news publishing in Australia, and the correct path to obtaining this knowledge is by speaking with the news editors, the social constructivism approach is the most appropriate for this research.

The research project has been defined through its philosophical assumption and the interpretive framework (i.e. it is guided by an epistemological assumption and it is socially constructed thanks to the news editors' and media experts' insights about their jobs and the cultural training the news editors may or may not have received to perform their duties). This chapter presents an approach that will involve both concepts in a qualitative research: the case study.

3.2 Qualitative research in Journalism

Having established the scope and the validity of qualitative research in social science and humanities research, the conversation must now turn to its role in journalism as it applies to this study. The media and communication discipline covers a broad remit of scholarship. Journalism has emerged as a key field of study within this broader discipline, although Lamble argued 'there is no recognised academic methodology for journalism' (Lamble 2004, p. 86). Lindgren (2011) agreed, stating that journalism

faces a challenge in being accepted as academic research (p. 12). However, ‘... early research on news had often been qualitative, exploring the place of this strategic genre in political and other social life’ (Tuchman 2002, p. 79).

Gaye Tuchman noted that ‘... the method one should choose when approaching any topic, including news, depends upon the question one wants to answer’ (Tuchman 1991, p. 79). Having recognised this, the media and communication researcher may apply different methods to bring accuracy to the data, because ‘the qualitative case-study researcher will often use different research methods simultaneously’ (Haas 2004). For instance, Haas (2004) clearly noted that, in the particular situation of a case study qualitative analysis, a mixed methodology might be the appropriate path for his investigation on researching in the newsroom and reporting (p. 59). This seeming convergence in journalism studies and practice is taken even further by Iorio (2004), who argued the importance of teaching journalism in universities with more tools rather than just reporting the facts. In fact, Iorio (2004) claimed that ‘the traditional journalism skills taught in American universities, for much of the past century, were mostly procedural’ (p. 5). The author observed, ‘journalists do not learn a great deal about using additional methods to find and analyze information’ (Iorio 2004, p. 5). She suggested qualitative methodologies might be beneficial for journalists to explain a specific topic in a simple manner to the audience (Iorio 2004). However, these qualitative methodologies are not taught in the journalism education context, leaving journalists without powerful tools to perform their job effectively. Journalists rarely use methodologies to interpret information about news items, although the reporting of newspaper polls might suggest some exposure to quantitative methodological analysis and interpretation. News techniques such as ‘vox pops’ might be considered qualitative methodologies as well, even though ‘in the press ... parallels between qualitative social researchers and journalists are virtually nonexistent’ (Iorio 2004, p. 7). However, Iorio went further and suggested the similarities between journalism and qualitative research (2004, p.7):

It is obvious that, from the basic approach of knowing reality to the way journalists practice their craft, qualitative research shares much in common with journalism.

Meyer (1991), drawing upon the ideas of physicist Lawrence Cranberg, argued that journalists and scientists ‘march to the same orders and serve the common need of mankind for shared knowledge and understanding’ (Meyer 1991, p. 5). Lindgren (2011) concurred, claiming ‘for journalism academics in Australia, the relationship between journalism and more traditional academic research has been of increasing concern in recent years’ (Lindgren 2011, p. 89), which gives more opportunities for investigating the relationship between both areas. This relationship, called precision journalism, is not a new concept. The term, coined by Everett Dennis and used by Philip Meyer, has identified a middle point where journalists utilise effective methods to accurately report in such a scientific manner, such as gathering and analysing data, that it becomes accurate (Meyer 1989; Meyer 1991). Meyer (1989) noted that precision journalism is taken ‘as a way to expand the tool kit of the reporter to make topics that were previously inaccessible, or only crudely accessible, subject to journalistic scrutiny’ (p. 195). Therefore, precision journalism can be considered as an intermediate point between traditional journalism and academic research.

Three areas of qualitative study are salient to this project, which straddles research projects that look at how news organisations gatekeep international news, and a creative project that presents some of the findings through a journalistic format for mass consumption. In this regard, the following section will look at the role of the case study, where the notion of a case study in its widest sense is applied to the study of foreign news coverage by the Australian domestic news media; it is also applied to the methodologies of analysis news content, and to the methodologies of studying journalism practitioners as gatekeepers.

3.2.1 Rationale for choosing a case study in this research project

In the field of journalism studies, the case study remains a vital and popular research strategy among many researchers (e.g., see Bock & Araiza 2015; Downman 2013; Geertsema 2009; Halbert & McDowell 2013; Jumani 2009; Khasib & Ersoy 2016; Peterson 1981), and as such offers an appropriate methodological framework for studying gatekeeping of foreign news in the Australian news media.

Creswell (2013, p. 97) defined a case study as ‘a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time’. Case studies are popular in the social sciences and in a wide array of areas (Creswell 2013, p. 97). In addition, Seawright and Gerring (2008) added to the definition that a study case is (p. 296):

... the intensive (qualitative or quantitative) analysis of a single unit or a small number of units (the cases), where the researcher's goal is to understand a larger class of similar units (a population of cases).

Creswell (2013) and Seawright and Gerring (2008) explored how to define a case study and the types of case studies available in research. This research project has adopted Creswell’s characteristics (2013, p. 104-105) to understand the procedures for choosing a case study. For the purpose of this research a case study is viewed as an in-depth understanding of a specific task, event, or in a specific time and place—and in that context, the in-depth understanding of how individual gatekeepers in the news production process filter and select international news. Key features of a case study articulated in Creswell’s (2013) definitional framework, adapted and articulated to fit the scope of this study, are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Justification of this research project as a case study, according to the features proposed by Creswell (2013, p. 105).

| Features of case study | Research project’s justification |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Identification | Knowledge of cultural training with news editors in Australia and its effects in international news coverage. |
| Intention | Research on the coverage of foreign affairs in the Australian media is understudied. Few research studies (such as Putnis 1996; Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk 2000; Jordan Pérez 2011) have been carried out. Is the international news coverage in Australia the same as in these studies? |
| In-depth understanding | Literature review of this document contains the in-depth understanding of the international news coverage in the |

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| | Australian context. |
| Discipline background | Journalism; gatekeeping theory. |
| Data collection | Semi-structured interviews; creative component; content analysis (these strategies are explained later in this chapter). |
| Data analysis | Analysis of the interviews and comparison of answers; rationale of producing a creative component; explanation of the content analysis. |

As previously mentioned, research has been carried out in journalism studies proposing a case study. However, based on the research conducted as part of this project, international news coverage in Australia as a research topic has not received the same level of interest as other areas of journalism studies.

For example, Downman (2013) applied a case study to investigate how citizen journalism helped to report natural disasters in Myanmar. Downman (2013) noted that ‘this research demonstrates that citizen journalists, with little to no media training, make a valuable contribution in providing access to newsworthy events such as disasters’ (p. 155). For this research, Downman (2013) obtained interviews from citizen journalists and used other methodological processes, such as observation and conversations. Lindgren (2011) researched how a practice-based research can contribute to academia, and how journalism practices can be adequate for academic research. In her research, she produced a radio documentary about asbestos, and how journalistic practices, such as radio production, can be used to produce academic knowledge. Lindgren (2011) obtained interviews with radio documentary makers to assess the radio documentary as part of her research, and used people affected by asbestos to produce the radio documentary itself. Geertsema (2009) analysed how the Inter Press Service (IPS) applied its gender mainstreaming project and how the service applied its policies of bringing more women into newsrooms. ‘The case was investigated through an institutional analysis, in-depth interviews, and a quantitative and qualitative content analysis’ (Geertsema 2009, p. 68).

All of the above-mentioned studies consider a case study. Therefore, to fully explore international news coverage in Australia, a specifically designed practitioner-based media broadcast case study was determined as the most appropriate method of qualitative design to fully investigate this topic.

After considering this epistemological, social constructivist qualitative study, where the case study is the most appropriate design, it is critical to see what strategies, or methodologies, are the most common or popular in researching topics within international news, and the relevance of these qualitative methodologies in journalism.

3.2.2 Qualitative analysis of international news

For researchers, 'qualitative studies have gone a long way toward specifying the procedures of such a middle range of research' (Jensen 2002, p. 236). Therefore, the research method for the social studies and humanities is important, and media and communication research is no exception. This chapter also considers the importance of qualitative research methods in investigating international news coverage and its news decision-making processes.

There has been a long history of using qualitative research to analyse international news content, despite its roots in the quantitative methodology in Galtung and Ruge's (1965) seminal work. For example, Galtung and Ruge (1965) observed newspaper articles in different newspapers about international events as a way of analysing the determinants of foreign news coverage in journalism. In this study, the authors 'selected four Norwegian newspapers, three international crises, and for each crisis a number of variables to use in the content analysis of what the newspapers wrote about the crises' (Galtung & Ruge 1965, p.72). This particular study has become a benchmark study of international news coverage in journalism scholarship, and its findings still hold true for much current industry practice (Hjarvard 2002, p. 93; Westerståhl & Johansson 1994, p. 72). However, Hjarvard (2002) explained that Galtung and Ruge's methodology 'contains a series of problems that make it untenable as a starting point for empirical analysis' (p. 94). These problems, according to Hjarvard (2002, p. 94), include how news production is

conceived, and the lack of a conclusive structure of the production, including factors such as the outlet, editorial content, and target audience, among others. In addition, it is critical to define a set of determinants to make the process plausible without considering the cultural factors, which does not result in a smooth and defined process of international news selection (Hjarvard 2002, p. 95)—an analysis that can only be undertaken through a qualitative framework.

Putnis (1996), on the other hand, investigated international news coverage in Australia using Channel 7 as the main source for his study, and obtained data from a selection of the international news items broadcast on the nightly news bulletin. Afterwards, the author analysed the data, classified the international news items into categories, and placed those items into the categories to determine the overseas news coverage. Putnis (1996) combined ‘content analysis of inputs and outputs with a description, based on first-hand observation, of the decision-making process involved’ (p. 93). While Putnis (1996) used a content analysis to describe how the global news was covered by Channel 7 in *Seven News* Sydney and Brisbane, he used qualitative methods to observe which foreign news items were selected. With this research, Putnis (1996) concluded that the international news coverage in Australia was minimal on *Seven News* Sydney and Brisbane. Paterson (2011) described his project’s methodology as an ethnographic review of news agencies in London, where he immersed himself in the news agencies to obtain data through interviews and participant observation. The author stated that he examined ‘the television news agency news production process, drawing largely from this author’s ethnographic research with these organizations’ (Paterson 2011, p. 19).

With the exception of Galtung and Ruge (1965), all of the above-mentioned authors used qualitative methodologies, which are methods implemented in a specific research study to collect data from an event or a particular topic, and which ‘seek to explain the world rather than measure it’ (Iorio 2004, p. 6). Moreover, it ‘implies that it is something set apart, defined by certain methods or approaches – that is, by particular “qualities”’ (Friedland & Campbell 2004, p. 21). These methods, as well, can be combined because ‘good research usually benefits from the use of a combination of methods’ (Hansen et al. 1998, p. 1). Gaye Tuchman, a leading scholar in the study of journalistic routines and professionalism (Tuchman 1991), claimed

qualitative research in the media and mass communication is valuable and needs to be considered more comprehensively. Tuchman noted the importance of qualitative research (p. 79):

Marching down rows of still crammed shelves, my books on news insistently remind me that from the earliest to the most recent American and European studies, the most valuable research has been qualitative.

Regardless of the area to be studied and researched, the methodology of the project is one of the core considerations because it defines the strategies and proper guidelines used to obtain data. Otherwise, 'if due attention is not given to methods, then we run the risk of finding ourselves in a free-for-all situation where anything goes' (Hansen et al. 1998, p. 11). The following section will give an understanding of a popular method in journalism: the content analysis.

3.2.2.1 Content analysis

Unlike the academic methodologies explained later in this chapter, the content analysis is a quantitative approach, although this technique can sometimes be qualitative (Krippendorff 1980; Marsh & White 2006). Krippendorff (1980) defined content analysis as 'a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from texts (or other meaningful matter) to the contexts of their use' (1980, p. 18). In adopting Krippendorff's interpretation of a content analysis, Marsh and White (2006) explored the role of content analysis for librarians and its methods of research. The authors explained that, while their research was for library and information sciences, the context of the analysis could expand to several areas (Marsh & White 2006, p. 23). The content analysis also could help to answer the research questions in any specific research if done properly (Marsh and White 2006, p. 27).

Marsh and White argued content analysis as a methodology is increasingly applied in mass communications (Marsh & White 2006, p. 22); and in the case of journalism research, Leal, Antunes and Vaz (2012) cited content analysis as a method of data collection between a specific event and journalism (2012, p. 396):

Muchos enfoques actualmente adoptados serían compatibles con el análisis de contenido, funcionando de manera combinada para abarcar aspectos depreciados o fuera del alcance del AC (el no dicho, contexto etc.), así como formas de comunicación no verbales.

[Many approaches actually adapted would be compatible with the content analysis, acting in a combined way to cover deprecated aspects or aspects beyond the content analysis scope (i.e. what it is not said, the context, etc.), as well as non-verbal communication forms [my translation].]

In this context the content analysis helps the researcher formulate a deep understanding of the specific area of research and isolate patterns in the media content that may not be obvious through other methods of research.

Content analysis in journalism research has been widely used over an extensive period as a data collection method. For instance, in the seminal work about international reporting, Galtung and Ruge (1965) used content analysis to discover how foreign news is represented in newspapers from different countries, in order to isolate determinants of international news. Furthermore, Hester and Dougall (2007) used the content analysis to represent online news content, and Putnis (1996) used this method to show how many international news items were published by *Seven News* Sydney and Brisbane when he categorised each foreign affairs item according to the content of each news item. In addition, Khasib and Ersoy (2016) analysed the Syrian war coverage of different events from Al-Jazeera with a content analysis, and analysed how citizen journalism helps to cover the events in this Middle Eastern country. Connolly-Ahern, Ahern and Bortree (2009) studied the efficiency of sampling a constructed week with a content analysis from newswires (better known as syndicated news wires, such as Associated Press wire services), and they collected and analysed data from these services. Therefore, the content analysis method has a rich methodological pedigree in journalism research, where it has been critical in understanding the nature of the reportage.

3.2.3 Research methodologies in studying journalism practitioners

While mapping the entire terrain and overlap of journalism studies and journalism practice is beyond the scope of this work, a number of popular or commonly used methodologies such as participant observation, interviewing and content analysis

routinely appear in both journalism research and content, and as such need to be discussed.

3.2.3.1 Participant observation

The participant observation methodology involves the researcher (journalist) in a constant interaction where they observe the nature of the field being studied or, in this particular case, journalistic processes. Hansen et al. noted '[p]articipant observation can be one of the most exciting, challenging and, potentially, rewarding of all mass communication research methods' (Hansen et al. 1998, p. 35). Despite its advantages, Hansen et al. also noted the challenges of this method (1998, p. 36):

Participant observation can also be highly *challenging* [my emphasis]. It demands much from the researcher, including a sustained and intensive period in the field and an ability to reflect upon and adapt one's ideas and behaviour throughout the process.

Tuchman (1991) concurred with Hansen et al. (1998) when she described the process of observing a news organisation, when a series of events in the 1970s triggered the need for studying international events (p. 83). Among other activities, Tuchman (1991) observed a television newsroom and a newspaper newsroom and became involved with the staff inside and outside of the meetings, editorial meetings, and editing processes, and she joined journalists to cover different events (p. 84). She noted that '[l]engthy periods of daily observation are tiring' (Tuchman 1991, p. 85). Furthermore, Tuchman (1991), along with other researchers, found similarities in the news processes of different news organisations, but this data all took the researchers a considerable amount of time to collect (p. 86). Paterson (2011) extensively wrote about the international news agencies by partially applying the participant observation method, along with the ethnographic analyses, to collect data on how large news organisations covered international news.

Despite the challenge of undertaking participant observations in a field where the environment moves quickly because of deadlines that cause stress, 'the method can prove so rewarding' (Hansen et al. 1998, p. 37). For instance, Hansen et al. (1998)

discussed the strengths and weaknesses of obtaining data through participant observation (p. 43), and these are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2: Strengths and weaknesses of participant observation according to Hansen et al. (1998, p. 62)

| Strengths | Weaknesses |
|--|---|
| Records and makes the invisible visible | Naïve empiricism |
| Counters the ‘problem of inference’ | Wider influences of the marketplace, commerce and culture upon the production area can be visible |
| Improves upon other methods of triangulation | If working outside the production domain and researching the institutional context, the method can be forced to change regarding the institutional context, hierarchy and decision-making |
| Qualifies or corrects speculative theoretical claims | |
| Contingent nature of cultural production reminder | |
| Provides evidence for the dynamic and embedded nature of cultural production | |

While participant observation methods constructed through ethnographic research models would have been of significant value in examining the nature of international news selection in Australian newsrooms, such an approach was abandoned due to a number of practical limitations within the scope and budget of the study. These include the prohibitive costs of such a study at a national level; the time restrictions and availability of international news editors and difficulties associated

with obtaining approval from a significant number of news organisations for such long-term study; and the practical limitations of the researcher spending the extensive periods of time needed to gain such in-depth insight at multiple locations.

3.2.3.2 Interviewing as data collection

There can be little or no argument that interviewing different experts on a particular topic to give a perspective is one of, if not the most important method of obtaining information in journalism (Bowd 2004). Journalism practice textbooks are filled with interview techniques and strategies, such as preparing questions before the interview takes place, and researching the topic beforehand.

In academic research, '[i]nterviews consist of accounts given to the researcher about the issues in which he or she is interested' (Peräkylä & Ruusuvuori 2011, p. 529); the authors further note that most qualitative research is based on some form of interviewing style. Wengraf (2001) presented a similar interpretation of the scope and reach of interviews, claiming they 'are data only about a particular research conversation that occurred at a particular time and place' (p. 1). Lindgren (2011) argued, '[i]nterviewing is the bread-and-butter method of collecting data for many social science researchers' (p. 28). Therefore, the interviewing technique is critical for academic research when developing a qualitative analysis. Moreover, '[t]he focused interview makes a specific contribution to social science research and journalism' (Iorio 2004a, p. 110). Therefore, the interview is a valuable source of information for both journalism and academic research (Iorio 2004a, p. 123).

A number of areas of research such as conversation analysis (CA) delve into the space between professional practice in journalism and journalism studies in order to explore interview techniques and designs, and the nature of knowledge acquisition in journalism practice. Conversation analysis, coined by researchers Harvey Sacks and Emanuel Schegloff, is 'concerned with the social scientific understanding and analysis of interaction' (Maynard 2013). Conversation analysis is an important concept when interviewing because '[t]he focus of CA is not on language itself, but how it is used in interaction, in the activities performed when people talk in concrete situations. CA is an empirical, observation-based approach' (Erkström 2007, p. 965).

Moreover, Clayman and Heritage (2002) investigated that this method can influence the interactions between interviewer and interviewee, providing more information about a certain topic (p. 18). Erkström (2007) discusses how conversation analysis is powerful and useful in journalism studies, and focuses on three main instances: (1) the power of news journalism (p. 967); (2) legitimacy to the news (p. 969); (3) understanding the role of media and public discourse (p. 970). While it is important to acknowledge this method is powerful, especially with political interviews, conversation analysis is out of the scope of this research project.

While conversation analysis looks into journalism practice from the academic end of the spectrum, Redman (2010) and Lindgren (2011) applied interviewing techniques as part of the qualitative research to obtain data, which was then used to produce creative content within rigorous academic standards. The two studies provide a high-quality benchmark for future research with creative outputs, and will be discussed in detail in section 3.4.

The following sections will describe two different types of interviews used as a qualitative methodology in both journalism and social science research.

In-depth and semi-structured interviews

According to DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006), different types of interviews are available to obtain data, for different purposes. Although this research is focused on medical research, the authors extrapolate the interviews for application in any area that conducts qualitative research. In the area of journalism ‘interviewing is a key method of gathering qualitative information, but what happens when the two intersect has received little academic attention’ (Bowd 2004, p. 116).

The interviewing method in qualitative research is different depending on the research outcome and the nature of the research. DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree (2006) considered and analysed three types of interviewing: (1) unstructured interviews, (2) semi-structured interviews, and (3) in-depth interviews. For the purposes of this research, I am not considering the unstructured interviewing type, because it is

considered as participant observation (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2004, p. 315). However, in-depth and semi-structured interviewing techniques will be explored.

In-depth interviewing method

Tom Wengraf, in *Qualitative Research Interviewing: Biographic Narrative and Semi-Structured Methods* (2001), offers an in-depth perspective about interviewing strategies as a qualitative method. He described four features of this type of interview (Wengraf 2001, p. 3):

- The interview is research-based, trying to improve knowledge
- The interview has a conversational focus
- It needs to be planned, but with a certain degree of freedom
- It treats matter *in-depth*.

Wengraf (2001, p.6) detailed:

To go into something in depth means to get a deep understanding of how little you knew about it, and how provisional one's 'formulations of truth' have to be - even by, or about, depth-interviewing.

The author also claimed that in-depth interviews discover information not seen, heard, or found through participant observation and that it needs to come from below the information surface to be noted (Wengraf 2001, p. 6). This means the researcher must interact more with the interviewee so they can provide data not gathered naturally, such as feelings, or reflections about a particular topic. Wengraf (2001) proposed different models of obtaining information depending on the type of interview and the aim of those particular interviews, all of them passing through context analyses and separating the content according to the information provided by the interviewee.

In-depth interviews are used, as its name says, to obtain a deep knowledge about a certain topic. For instance, Boudana (2010) conducted in-depth interviews with French journalists who had been war correspondents to collect data about the news

values that guide the French media. Lindgren and McHugh (2013) used in-depth interviews to gather data about how radio producers are tending to produce documentaries in Australia and the US. Although this research has a small number of interviewees, the research provides a deep understanding of the topic with its in-depth interviews because it ‘does not weaken the results of a scoping study highlighting emerging trends in radio documentary forms’ (Lindgren & McHugh 2013, p. 103).

While in-depth interviews are used to describe the environment in journalism, another type of interview is implemented to obtain data. The semi-structured interviewing method is employed more frequently with journalistic practices, and the following section will describe what it is and the importance of this method in journalism academic research.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interview method is a common, and sometimes the only, data collection method for many researchers. This type of data collection allows a more flexible structure; it contains open questions so that the interviewee’s answers can be as long (or as short) as they want, and it allows more questions if needed (Bowd 2004, p. 117; DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree 2006, p. 315). In journalism, as an academic field for research, interviews are a strong source of data, and the semi-structured interview method fits well because the researcher acts as a journalist and vice-versa since ‘a large part of the working day is spent on the interview process’ (Bowd 2004, p. 116). Iorio (2004b) wrote an extensive chapter dedicated to the interviewing technique as a journalistic practice and its similarity to a qualitative academic method.

Previous academic researchers have used semi-structured interviews for data collection. For instance, Mogensen (2008) collected data from journalists working with different American television news bulletins to analyse the terrorism coverage after 9/11 in 2001, and these interviews were ‘reflected in the journalistic practices’ (Mogensen 2008, p. 31). In addition, Murrell (2009) researched journalist autonomy on producing television international news by interviewing twenty journalists working as foreign correspondents, using ‘semi-structured interviews to collect qualitative data’ (p. 6). Moreover, Archetti (2013) interviewed foreign journalists in London to

analyse what practices affect their reporting skills; this involved a wide array of journalists across the globe (p. 423). Lindgren (2011) used this interviewing method as part of her PhD thesis ‘as a method of collecting people’s ideas, opinions and emotions’ (p. 29), and, with these interviews, she developed a creative component, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Bruce Redman (2011), in his exegesis document, developed his guerrilla-style documentary with the guidance of experts on the topic, and decided to interview them, and used the semi-structured interview to obtain the best option for his creative component.

3.3 Creative component as an academic method of research

It has already been established that both journalists and journalism studies researchers employ similar data collection methods in both journalism production and research. As stated earlier, journalism interviewing practices and qualitative research techniques can be interwoven and journalism can produce data with qualitative methods. Such close interaction between journalism research and practice suggests that research could be conducted simultaneously through a journalism production cycle, and the findings presented in a ‘creative component’.

Nonetheless, a journalistic production complementing academic research is a new method of presenting accurate data that supports research (Lindgren & Phillips 2011, p. 74). Scrivener (2000), for instance, studied supervising practice-led research and included guidelines for adding creative components into academic research. This idea has been reinforced by Arnold (2005), when she stated that an exegesis ‘... encourages this interface between conceptual knowledge models and creative writing to achieve the dynamism of “*creative engagements between the two*”’ (p. 43). Furthermore, Arnold (2005) stated that an exegesis with a creative component ‘opens up the possibility of thinking differently about research projects at the PhD level’ (Arnold 2005, p. 43). Phillips (2014) discussed the idea that journalism is a practice-led area, because journalism studies in universities ‘have sought to capture the value of academic output through research assessment exercises’ (p. 371). Therefore, it is critical to keep producing research with a creative component, thereby creating a thorough methodology for journalistic studies and, by extension, journalism itself, as suggested by Lamble (2004).

While the notion of a ‘creative component’ backed by exegetical analysis is somewhat new, a number of seminal works in the area, such as Bruce Redman’s video documentary *Family First – A Federal Crusade* (2011), and Mia Lindgren’s radio documentary *Deadly Dust* (2011), have emerged in the past decade. Both documentaries have been broadcast on air on mainstream media outlets (through the public broadcaster, the ABC) and both provide an academic rationale in their exegesis for the research techniques employed.

3.3.1 Bruce Redman and *Family First – A Federal Crusade*

In 2011, Redman submitted an academic analysis about documentaries as a form of academic research with his insightful guerrilla documentary *Family First – A Federal Crusade*, developed and broadcast in 2005. Redman (2011) analysed his practice in the form of a long critical essay combined with reflection on his experience of producing his documentary guerrilla-style. Redman (2011) offered a summarised definition of ‘documentary’ (p. 16):

Documentary is a screen presentation that is a non-fiction, creative treatment of actuality. It is a factual story with recorded aspects of observation that attempts to engage, entertain, and edify an audience. It informs us about our world, and invites us into social action or interaction.

In addition, Redman (2011) reviewed the history of the video documentary as part of his research, offering an overview of the creative output he produced and his reason why guerrilla-style documentaries are becoming more standard video productions. Following the creative project, Redman conducted interviews with documentary makers because ‘the ‘guerrilla doc’ method is becoming the standard method of practice for observational documentary makers’ (Redman 2011, p. 45). These interviews were carried out to demonstrate the rationale behind the guerrilla-style methodology as a practice (p. 45).

While the author did not describe to the documentary practitioners the type of interviews he used (e.g. in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews, etc.), it can be assumed that, in order to obtain data, the interviews collected vital data as a form

of qualitative research, returning to the notion of Iorio (2004) that journalism and qualitative research are connected to a degree. In addition, Redman (2011) explained the challenges (such as economic factors) and strengths (previous industry work experience) of producing such a documentary with the Family First party. The filmmaker stated that his work is ‘an ethnographic film’ (p. 75). The tactic of his documentary approaches once again a qualitative method of collecting data, in the vein of work Paterson (2011) reports on.

Another example of journalistic qualitative research was completed by Mia Lindgren, with her long-form radio documentary on the impact of asbestos on Australian workers, which was aired on Radio National.

3.3.2 Mia Lindgren and *Deadly Dust*

Mia Lindgren presented research in 2011, ‘*Journalism as research: Developing radio documentary theory from practice*’, in which she discussed and analysed the idea that academic research and journalistic practices are related and share similar methods of collecting information. In Lindgren’s research, the media outlet discussed is radio. Her research offered a radio documentary, called *Deadly Dust*, which exposes the asbestos problem in Western Australia, along with an exegesis supporting journalistic practices in academia.

Lindgren (2011) stated, ‘the production of radio is often seen as a practical skill based on experience rather than a process informed by academic methods and rigour’ (p. 12). Since radio production is explored only as a skill, it can be extrapolated that journalism is seen as a practical field as well, and not recognised for its practical connections to some forms of academic research. Iorio (2004b, p. xiii) stated:

In academic circles, the contributions of journalism to qualitative research methodologies in the social sciences were widely known. On the other hand, the journalists knew little about this relationship, and neither group appeared to understand the results of applying and adapting qualitative (interpretative) methods to current newsroom practices.

To prove Lindgren's thesis, she developed *Deadly Dust*, outlining a set of qualitative methodologies for the radio documentary, which included (Lindgren 2011, p. 95):

- Semi-structured interviews: These were used 'because of the flexibility offered' (Lindgren 2011, p. 29). The interviews were conducted with radio documentary experts and with interviewees who agreed to participate in Lindgren's product. The latter, though, were interviewed for the radio documentary, whereas the first interviewees fleshed out the importance of radio production in journalism and academia.
- Autoethnography: Lindgren (2011) reflected on this qualitative methodology as a vital part of the research, resulting in a better outcome for her creative output. 'Autoethnography provided the methodology to achieve such an outcome' (Lindgren 2011, p. 98).
- Literature review: The review contained academic references from different authors on journalism as a research area, and radio documentary production.

This set of methods offered a final product, which was discussed in the exegesis that accompanied the long-form radio documentary. Lindgren, working with senior researcher Gail Phillips, posited that 'the thesis provides an analytical model for understanding the richness of journalistic practice' (Lindgren & Phillips 2011, p. 78), while 'the methodology is transparent and replicable, as is required of academic research' (Lindgren & Phillips 2011, p. 78).

After assessing the journalistic methods and what the literature suggests about practice-led research (where journalism can easily be categorised), it is important to highlight the chosen methodologies for this research.

3.4 The creative component: methodologies of production

Based on the rationale of Lindgren and Redman's work, this research project integrated a radio documentary that explained the nature of the news editor's job in covering international news and how their cultural training affects this coverage. In

addition, media experts offered their viewpoint about the current state of the global news coverage in Australia.

Radio documentary as an academic component

For the purposes of this research project, radio was selected to develop a creative component because it offers a variety of opportunities to showcase the documentary, especially in the community radio sector.

Community media ‘has proved to be a major communications outlet for minority voices in Australia’ (Foxwell, Forde & Meadows 2003, p. 88). Community media, especially community radio, has a potential content distribution to a wide national audience. According to the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, ‘[o]ver 5 million people tune in to 450+ not-for-profit, community-owned and operated radio services operating across the country each week’ (Community Broadcasting Association of Australia 2017). Furthermore, radio reaches more Australians than any other media, with 95 per cent of Australians listening to radio (Foxwell, Forde & Meadows 2003, p. 87). In addition, the emergence of community radio ‘has become an important cultural resource’ (Foxwell, Forde & Meadows 2003, p. 87). It also reaches more remote areas across Australia (Foxwell, Forde & Meadows 2003, p. 90). Thanks to the multicultural society in which Australians live, ethnic and multicultural community radio has broadcast more content produced in more than 100 languages, allowing a larger international community audience to hear about different issues affecting their community (Foxwell, Forde & Meadows 2003, p. 88).

Also, the researcher has produced community radio for seven years, and the training he has received (journalistically and technically speaking) has given him the opportunity to produce the radio documentary for community radio, especially in the radio program *The Wire*, where the agenda is to look at issues from a distinct perspective (*The Wire* 2016). It also provided the creativity to produce a longer-format program on current affairs, such as the coverage of international news, giving an interesting and educational background to the project, which fits with the research project.

First, it is important to highlight what radio offers as a mass medium (not only for its listeners, but for academic purposes). Radio has many qualities superior to other media. McLeish (1994) for instance, stated that radio has many advantages in its production, such as its simplicity, its wide scope for reaching its listeners, and its educational function. In addition, the radio medium as we know it has minimal costs. ‘Because the medium is cheap to use and can attract a substantial audience the cost per hour – or more significantly the cost per listener hour – is low’ (McLeish 1994, p. 4). Furthermore, radio gives the listener the opportunity to multitask. ‘The medium is less demanding in that it permits us to do other things at the same time’ (McLeish 1994, p. 5). Having said this, radio has an educational aim to listeners worldwide, because it ‘reaches out to meet the formal and informal learning needs of people who want to grow’ (McLeish 1994, p.5) Jumani (2009) agreed, and claimed radio has disseminated knowledge in remote communities across Pakistan, for instance (p. 176). Furthermore, Chignell (2009) reflected on the importance of studying radio and why there should be more research in the medium (p. 3).

Lindgren (2014) investigated the trend and the potential of radio studies in Australia and how technology contributed the research in this area, especially with radio documentaries (p. 103). However, the author claimed it is an underestimated research area worldwide (Lindgren 2014, p. 102):

Radio studies is a relatively new area of academic inquiry, and radio documentary studies even more so. Much of what has been written in the field is by radio producers themselves reflecting on their practice and by scholars focusing on significant producers and their radio productions.

Lindgren (2014) also noted the lack of research into radio studies, of which radio documentaries are a part. Chignell (2009) agreed, and added that radio studies has been ignored for a long time, stating ‘the consideration of radio studies itself, the published literature is non-existent’ (p. 1). Furthermore, Lindgren (2014a) reinforced the lack of formal and academic research in radio journalism and radio studies when she proposed an academic framework for her radio documentary *Deadly Dust* (p. 172) (see Lindgren 2011).

Going more specifically into radio documentaries, McHugh (2014), for instance, explained, '[t]he invisibility and ephemerality of the radio documentary and feature form has arguably contributed to the notable lack of scholarship on the form' (p. 23). Recently, Siobhan McHugh (2014) founded an academic journal, *RadioDoc Review*, to academically frame the radio studies, including reviewing the latest produced radio documentaries and academic papers about the topic. Lindgren (2014a, p. 172) noted it too, saying the academic frame will help to structure the radio documentaries and general radio studies into academic research. Makagon and Neumann (2009) acknowledged this structure in radio documentaries as part of a 'creative work' (p. 2). Also, '... audio documentary entails lessons in the construction of realities' (Makagon & Neumann 2009, p. xi). In addition, research has suggested radio documentaries are undergoing a revival with producers, listeners and academia (Biewen 2010; Chignell 2009; Lindgren 2014; Lindgren 2014a; Lindgren & McHugh 2013; Makagon & Neumann 2009; McHugh 2014). Therefore, in order to continue developing the research in radio studies, the researcher's aim was to produce a radio documentary as part of this research project.

Training and experience in media is critical for this research project. Lindgren (2011) for instance, expressed her results in her documentary *Deadly Dust* and reflected on the journalistic processes she undertook in the making of her radio documentary. In her thesis, she noted her experience not only in listening to radio, but also in producing it (Lindgren 2011, p. 130). In this project, the author's experience in producing radio stories for community radio has partially influenced the making of the creative component. Since 2011 the author has worked on a voluntary basis at *The Wire*, a national current affairs radio program on community radio. On January 2015, the author started working on a community radio program called *Fair Comment*, produced by Radio 4EB 98.1 FM and 4ZZZ. Because of this training and experience, the final radio documentary was considered a professional piece of work, and was presented to the audience. The process used to pitch the documentary to the executive producer of *The Wire* in Brisbane, Steven Riggall; and the process of producing the radio documentary will be discussed later in this chapter.

The radio documentary focuses on international news coverage in Australia, with the results presented earlier in this chapter, and telling facts from the literature

review presented in Chapter 2. In this project, however, the literature review is insufficient for developing a radio documentary itself about the cultural training news editors receive, and how they select the international news in their news bulletins. As a consequence, the researcher opted to find interviewees who might offer insight into international news coverage in Australia.

Publishing the documentary on community radio

As in any story idea, the medium and the program are critical to developing any documentary. This means that, to successfully publish any story, it needs to be written (or produced) according to the guidelines and requirements of the program. ‘Does Australia have good international news?’ was originally planned to be published in a public media outlet (such as SBS or ABC). Having said this, the researcher faced the cultural challenge of producing the work as one who is not a native English speaker (i.e. with an accent). Nonetheless, options were still available in community media.

Community media has a strong influence on shaping Australia. For instance, Forde, Foxwell and Meadows (2009) stated, ‘[c]ommunity radio and television are playing an important cultural role in helping to draw together disparate elements of Australian society’ (p. 15). It also constitutes and showcases the cultural diversity of a multicultural society, in the case of the multiethnic radio stations (Forde, Foxwell & Meadows 2009, p. 58). When talking about community media in general, the audience and programming in Australia has grown considerably in the last twenty years (Forde, Foxwell, & Meadows 2009, p. 54). Community media makes the audience better informed about the issues affecting their communities, and is aimed at listeners looking for an alternative source of news, current affairs, or just a different point of view.

As previously stated in this chapter, the researcher had worked in community radio for five years and had the opportunity to produce and broadcast the radio documentary. It was proposed the researcher would make a radio documentary about international news coverage in Australia, and *The Wire* producer accepted. *The Wire* is a ‘daily current affairs program, broadcast exclusively on community and indigenous radio stations around Australia’ (*The Wire* 2016). However, this

documentary could not be created in one piece due to the structure of the radio program. *The Wire* publishes between four and six radio features daily (from Monday to Friday) about different events in Australia, and whenever possible, international affairs. In Brisbane, *The Wire* is produced every Friday. Since *The Wire* looks for several stories to cover, and not only one, the producer and researcher agreed to create six features about international affairs coverage in Australia, with interviews conducted with news editors and the media experts to expand the topics about (1) the job of a news editor in international affairs, and (2) the cultural training they received (or would have liked to receive) from their media organisations. For this purpose, the following section will describe the rationale behind selecting the interviewees and how it was achieved.

Qualitative semi-structured interviews for the radio documentary

To develop content for the radio documentary, two types of interviewees were selected. On the one hand, it is vital to know about the input from those who work in the industry as gatekeepers (e.g. news editors) because they are a core part element of foreign affairs coverage in Australia. On the other hand, experts in international news (e.g. academics) would take a different approach to the topic.

The interviews selected for this radio documentary were qualitative semi-structured, used for journalistic and research processes, like Iorio (2004), Iorio (2004a), and Tuchman (1991) stated (and discussed above in the Methodology section of this exegesis). Moreover, 'audio documentaries can feature portions of interviews that help move a story in a direction by allowing for a person to share a particular experience or expertise' (Makagon & Neumann 2009, p. 43). Therefore, the researcher contacted news editors across the metropolitan areas in Australia who are working (or were working) with international stories in the Australian media, and media experts across Australia, to offer a better understanding of this type of news in academia.

After selecting the sources, it was important the researcher ask them the questions suitable for obtaining data and information about their work. Researchers such as Iorio (2004a) argued that interviews carried out in a journalistic manner could

be taken as a qualitative method, as discussed earlier in this chapter. In this vein the researcher developed a set of potential questions to ask the news editors and media experts that were related to their daily tasks, to the international news items they selected to publish (and foreign items they rejected) and their rationale for selection, and to their concept of cultural training. The questions for the media experts also focused on the studies of international news, the importance of foreign affairs in the Australian media, and cultural training.

The contact details of the news editors were found through *Margaret Gee's Australian Media Guide*, available at the Griffith University library. To obtain the contact details of the media experts, the researcher used standard web browsing, and specifically expertguide.com.au, a website where journalists can contact academics in a wide array of topics.

The news editors and media experts on international affairs in the Australian context are based in specific places, as the researcher wanted to cover as many metropolitan media outlets as possible. 'Much of the material will be gathered in the form of location interviews' (McLeash 1994, p. 243). However, since some of the interviewees were located interstate, those interviews could be arranged over the phone in a radio studio. For experts and editors located in Brisbane, some interviews were conducted on location.

Tables 3 and 4 show the news editors and media experts who accepted participation in this research project. The participants were contacted through email.

Table 3: Profile of news editors who participated in the radio documentary

| Name | Organisation | Position | Media type |
|------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| Bridget Backhaus | <i>The Wire</i> | Former Producer | Community |
| Elizabeth Egan | 9 News, ABC Brisbane | Former Senior Producer | Commercial |
| Jess Hill | ABC Sydney | Casual Producer | Public |
| Alan Kirk | <i>The West Australian</i> | Foreign News Editor | Commercial |
| Carol Holmes | SBS Online | Online News Editor | Public |

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| Simon Holt | <i>Brisbane Times</i> | Editor-in-Chief | Commercial |
| Graham Cairns | 4BC Brisbane, ABC | Former News Director | Commercial |
| Alan Evans | <i>The Guardian Australia</i> | Deputy Editor | Commercial |
| Mark Braybrook | 4BC Brisbane | News Director | Commercial |
| Lia Timson | <i>Sydney Morning Herald</i> | Foreign News Editor | Commercial |
| Linda LoPresti | ABC Melbourne | Foreign Editor | Public |

Table 4: Profile of the media experts who participated in the radio documentary

| Name | Organisation |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Lee Duffield | QUT |
| Monica Attard | Freelance; Former ABC correspondent |
| Peter Putnis | University of Canberra |
| Colleen Murrell | Monash University |

The biggest challenges for obtaining the news editors' interviews were their lack of response while communicating with them through email, and finding their contact details in *Margaret Gee's Australian Media Guide*, because most were private. It took a considerable time to obtain a suitable number of news editors for the radio documentary.

Table 5 shows the media organisations that were contacted but did not respond to requests for participation in the creative component. For privacy reasons, the news editors' names are not given.

Table 5: News organisations that were contacted for interviews and did not reply, and the number of editors contacted from those organisations

| Media organisation | Number of editors |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| The Australian | 2 |
| 9 News Sydney | 2 |
| 7 News Sydney | 1 |

| | |
|----------------------|----|
| The Age Melbourne | 2 |
| Reuters | 1 |
| SBS TV | 1 |
| The Courier-Mail | 2 |
| AAP | 2 |
| Prime 7 Canberra | 2 |
| 9 News Adelaide | 2 |
| ABC Darwin | 1 |
| Perth Now | 1 |
| 7 News Queensland | 1 |
| 9 News Queensland | 1 |
| The Advertiser SA | 1 |
| Daily Mail Australia | 1 |
| 7 News Adelaide | 1 |
| The New Daily | 2 |
| Ten Canberra | 1 |
| TOTAL | 27 |

Limitations of the creative component

The following section contains the limitations of the creative component for this research project.

- (a) The selected news editors need to be working from metropolitan cities across Australia (i.e. from capital cities, such as Brisbane, Sydney or Melbourne, or medium-sized cities such as the Gold Coast). Regional cities or regional areas were not considered for this research. The research also considered former news editors from public, commercial, and community news bulletins and current affairs programs because they contribute further insight about the gatekeepers' responsibilities in the newsroom. In addition, former news editors may have a different perspective because they may have worked on different news bulletins.

- (b) All media outlets were considered for part of this research, such as television, radio, newspapers, and online news portals.
- (c) The news editors were asked the same questions, although at times they were asked additional questions depending on their answer in the stipulated questionnaire. The questionnaires are on Appendix D of this document.
- (d) Some of the interviews were used in the creative component, and a professional transcriber helped to write the recorded interviews.
- (e) Due to the time constraints of *The Wire* (27 minutes long), the documentary could not be done and presented on-air in one piece. Therefore, the documentary was produced into six 5-minute long radio features to be broadcast. I will discuss this difference later on this chapter.

Planning and research for the documentary

To develop the six features of the radio documentary, planning was essential for the production day. McLeash (1994) dedicated a section of his documentary chapter on planning and research to a scheme for planning a radio documentary.

For the purpose of this radio documentary, composed of six radio features to suit the radio program, each radio feature's planning was completed every morning before writing each script, the same as a journalistic process. While pursuing those interviews, the researcher started planning the content of each radio feature, separating the documentary into different topics.

Those topics also involved research. The journal articles, together with other research for this exegesis, helped the researcher write further about the journalism studies in each introduction. In addition, the recorded interviews were the most important component of the radio features.

Editing process

Each feature for the radio documentary was edited and scripted according to the guidelines for *The Wire*. Some of the guidelines are as follows:

- The script needs to be conversational to reach as many listeners as possible.
- If it contains background noise, such as music or environment sounds, those sounds need to be understandable and of high quality. It is better to use background noise from Creative Commons, or ten seconds from copyright music.
- Each radio documentary's feature length will be decided on by the producer, depending on the number of stories to be published on the program.
- The features must contain at least one interviewee to be considered for a Q&A story, or a feature story if two or more interviews are conducted.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the radio documentary was divided into six radio features. Chignell (2009) noted a difference between a radio documentary and a radio feature (p. 22). The first refers to a single, long piece, which 'is more likely to exploit the possibilities of sound' (Chignell 2009, p. 22). The latter is more focused on journalism practices. In 1950, Gilliam (cited in Chignell 2009, p. 22) referred to a radio feature as a mix of documentary and factual information with a specific method and accurate edition process. Within *The Wire*, the radio feature is an extended news story exploring different angles. As a consequence, the radio documentary was prepared as short feature radio stories with a current affairs technique to suit the program's requirements.

To prepare the radio documentary, the researcher needed to have technical skills for radio, including proficiency with the software. The researcher edited and scripted the features for the documentary with Newsboss software: 'NewsBoss is designed to meet the challenge by maximising efficiency and enabling news and program teams to do more with existing resources and less stress' (Newsboss 2016). The software is able to write script and add the potential sections of the interviews to help flow, and it contains some capabilities for producing radio stories (Newsboss 2016). The researcher had used this software during training in 2011, and continued to use it during their five years of experience as a volunteer for *The Wire*. Furthermore, *The Wire* uses this software to produce the program, making it easier to develop the creative component.

Final outcome of the documentary

The radio documentary was broadcast on *The Wire*, on different dates. Table 6 shows the outcome of the final documentary, including publishing date, length and publication day. In addition, the radio features are available online on *The Wire*'s website, with a brief description about the radio feature and the interviewees involved in each feature.

Table 6: Outcome of the radio documentary published at the national radio program The Wire

| Title of radio feature | Length | Publication day |
|--|---------------|------------------------|
| Does Australia have good international news? Part 1 | 5:43 | Friday 1 April '16 |
| Does Australia have good international news? Part 2 | 3:52 | Friday 8 April '16 |
| Does Australia have good international news? Part 3 | 5:51 | Friday 15 April '16 |
| Does Australia have good international news? Part 4 | 5:14 | Friday 29 April '16 |
| Does Australia have good international news? Part 5 | 5:14 | Friday 6 May '16 |
| Does Australia have good international news? Part 6 | 5:14 | Friday 27 May '16 |
| TOTAL | 31:08 | |

3.5 Content analysis

In addition to the creative component, a content analysis of international news coverage in Australia was added to the research project. This analysis is based on Peter Putnis's (1996) research of overseas news in Australia from Channel 7's newsrooms in Sydney and Brisbane. Jordan Pérez (2011) partly followed Putnis's (1996) methodology, and added insightful information about the origin of the news items by regions in two news bulletins and two current affairs television programs broadcast in South East Queensland during one linear week. The researcher has opted to follow the same concept, but with slight changes. This content analysis includes the following:

- (a) It will study three Australian news outlets to compare how they publish international affairs. The outlets will be radio, television and an online portal. News bulletins from *Seven News Queensland*, *ABC 612 AM Radio*, and Fairfax's *Brisbane Times* will be considered.
- (b) It will study the coverage of international affairs in the above-mentioned news outlets, comparing the amount of international and non-international news published.
- (c) It will analyse where those foreign affairs come from (analysing the content of each item) and see which regions are most and least covered in Australia.
- (d) It will categorise those foreign affairs according to Putnis's (1996) research. In addition, the 'Terror-related conflict' category was added to reflect the actual situation of the news coverage. This addition and the rationale of using these categories will be covered in the Discussion chapter of this exegesis.

Limitations of the content analysis

The following section contains information about the limitations of this content analysis. All of them were considered to attain an academic analysis. The results of this will be outlined in the Discussion chapter of this exegesis. Some limitations of the content analysis were found:

- (a) The analysis was conducted during a constructed week. A 'constructed week' is a sampling technique useful in journalism and mass communication

(Connolly-Ahern, Ahern & Bortree 2009). Furthermore, it represents a better sampling technique for this area because literature has found ‘... that the cyclical nature of news coverage in traditional media is best represented through stratified samples of constructed weeks’ (Connolly-Ahern, Ahern & Bortree 2009, p. 863). Also, the authors researched the effectiveness of this technique in electronic distributors of news in the US and concluded that it offered a more robust result to their content analysis, specifically related to the coverage of news. Moreover, Hester and Dougall (2007) studied the effectiveness of this technique in online news, and stated, ‘[c]onstructed week sampling is still the most efficient type of sample’ (p. 820). The idea behind this sampling technique is to obtain the news on a specific day of the week, and continue to the next week with the day after (i.e. the data collection starts, for instance, in a Monday of any specific week, and then it continues on Tuesday the next week, and so on until Sunday). In the present project, it will provide a wider representation of the actual coverage of foreign affairs in Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

- (b) *ABC Brisbane 612 AM Radio* news bulletins were 15 minutes long and recorded at 7:45 am.
- (c) *Seven News Queensland* was recorded at 6 pm and the news bulletins were one hour long, with the exception of the Saturday bulletin, which was 30 minutes long.
- (d) The amount of news analysed from *Brisbane Times* was gathered from 7 am to 11 am (4 hours) each day, in order to methodologically make a similar analysis within the other two news bulletins. Because *Brisbane Times* is an online news portal, I needed to limit the time of news publications.
- (e) Jordan Pérez’s (2011) regions were used to analyse which world areas are more (or least) covered by the Australian media. In this analysis, the researcher added ‘Russia/Ex-USSR’ and ‘Middle East’ as new regions. The rationale behind this is covered in the Discussion section of this document.

The next chapter will present some of the findings from these projects, focusing initially on the nominated reasons behind the gatekeeping decisions of the news editors interviewed.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The following chapter is organised according to the major components of this project, that is: (1) a content analysis of international news coverage in three media outlets; (2) results from the qualitative semi-structured interviews which are used to enrich the quantitative results and; (3) an analysis of the development of a radio documentary which partially draws upon the data generated by the project. Section 4.1 will show the results of the content analysis, presenting the international news coverage from the selected news bulletins—*Seven News Queensland* (commercial television), *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* (national public broadcaster's radio program) and *Brisbane Times* (commercial online news portal owned by major media group Fairfax). In addition, I will group the results from these news bulletins into three main themes: (1) coverage by region; (2) coverage of international news; and (3) primary topics for international news (Putnis 1996).

In section 4.2 I will present the results of the radio documentary, and describe how the documentary is structured. In addition, I will discuss the reasons why the sections of the radio documentary were produced with the chosen topics, as well as draw upon the data emerging from the qualitative interviews which, in this project, worked as journalistic source interviews and qualitative semi-structured interviews for the purposes of data-gathering. Data is presented throughout this chapter in graphs and Figures. Full tables of raw data are presented in Appendix A.

4.1 Content analysis results

The following section shows the results of the content analysis for this project, partially replicating Putnis's (1996) methodology in order to give an overview of the international news coverage in the Australian context. The section is divided into three subsections, covering (1) percentage of international news from the selected media outlets; (2) regions covered by the selected outlets; and (3) type of international news covered by the selected news bulletins.

4.1.1 Percentage of international news

After classifying the news items into international and non-international news, the total amount of international and non-international news from each news bulletin was compared. Over the sample period of one constructed week, *Seven News Queensland* published 42 international news items and 181 non-international news items. The *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* news bulletin published 38 international news items and 119 non-international news items during the selected week. Finally, *Brisbane Times*, in a period of 28 hours (that is, four hours for each day for a constructed week), published 31 international news items in their online portal, and 59 non-international news items. In total, from the three news bulletins, 470 news items were published during the selected constructed week, and 111 of these items (23.62 per cent) were international events and 359 items (76.38 per cent) were non-international news items.

Figure 2 shows the total amount of international and non-international news stories published by each news bulletin and their percentages. Figure 2 compares the amount of international and non-international news items per news bulletin.

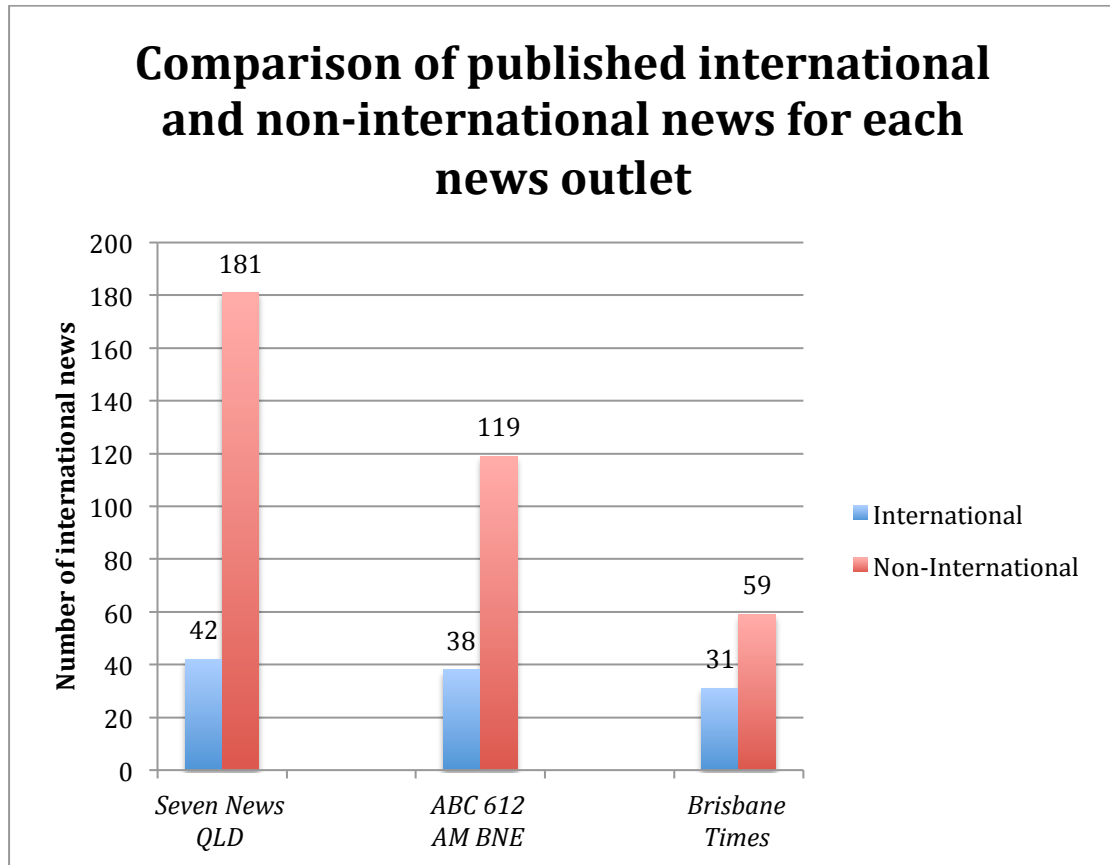


Figure 2. Comparison of published international and non-international news items for each news bulletin

From these results, it is important to highlight the average number of international and non-international news items published by the selected news bulletins. The average coverage of international news from *Seven News Queensland*, for instance, was 6 news items per bulletin throughout the selected week. Next, *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* published, on average, 5.43 international news items per bulletin. Then, *Brisbane Times* published over four hours, an average of 4.43 international news items. The total average number of international news items between the three news bulletins was 5.29, whereas the average number of non-international news items from the same bulletins was 17.10.

Figure 3 shows the average number of international and non-international news items published by *Seven News Queensland*, *ABC Brisbane 612 AM Radio* and *Brisbane Times*.

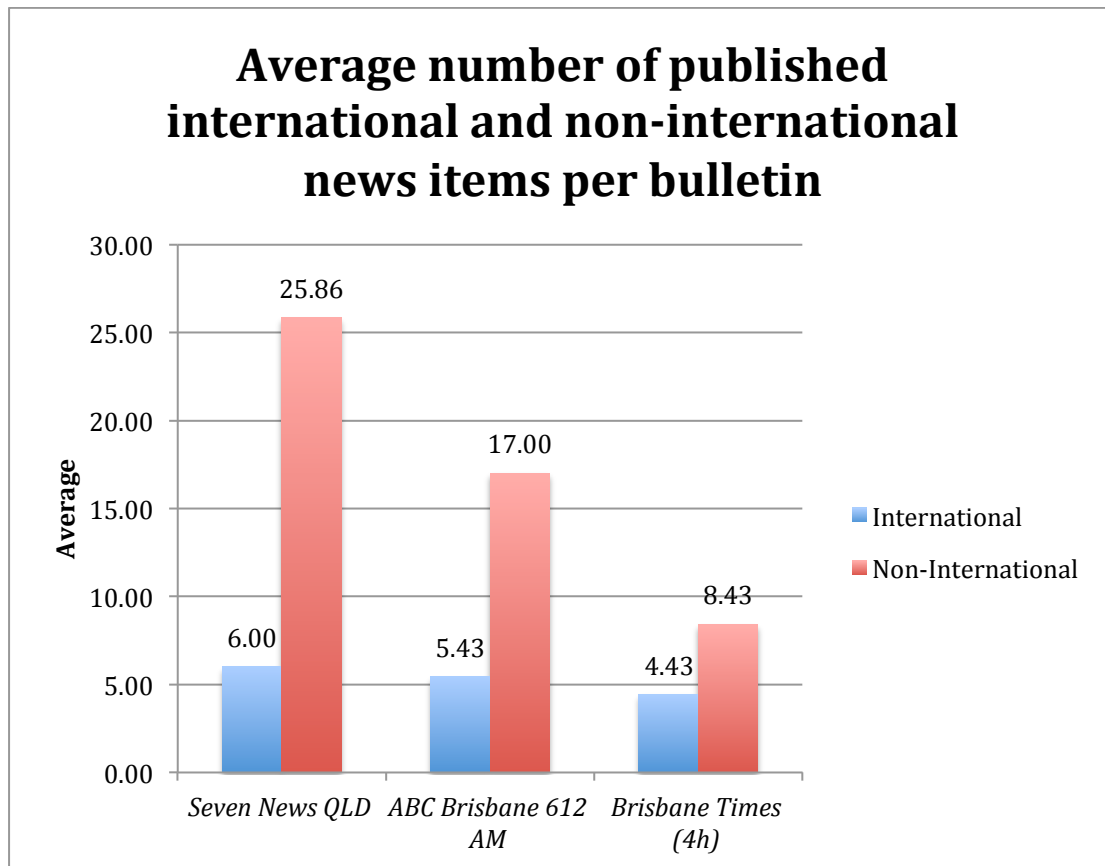


Figure 3. Average number of published international and non-international news items per bulletin/monitored session

Some news editors agreed that their news bulletins did not offer a wide array of international news compared to the non-international items; for instance, Simon Holt from *Brisbane Times* (2015, interview, 8 September) explains:

In terms of international news, we know that our strength is in local news. Our strength, what resonates dearest to people, is our issues, which are closer to home. That means that international news becomes a challenge because people don't feel as closely associated with news which is coming from abroad.

This statement reflects the number of foreign affairs items assessed in this analysis from *Brisbane Times*. This process also reflects the gatekeeping process each news editor performs. *Brisbane Times* is owned by Fairfax Media, and the information from the qualitative interviews would suggest that *Brisbane Times* editors have autonomy in selecting foreign news to highlight. Lia Timson from Fairfax Media Foreign Desk (2016, interview, 1 June) described this autonomy:

... everything that we publish is published on all five mastheads. So that means it's published on the net, right? It just lives there out in space somewhere. Each one of the mastheads' home page editors will then decide what they want to promote on the front page. Now, we make that recommendation, we send the stories as we publish them, and they pick those stories that they think that are the most important or that fits with the mix they want on the top of the home page.

Commercial media use that procedure also. For instance, Mark Braybrook from commercial radio station 4BC in Brisbane (2016, interview, 22 April) commented on the process of selecting news for the radio bulletins, including international news published:

The first point of call would be Brisbane/Queensland. You sort of look for a Brisbane story, Queensland story, and then from Australia-wide as long as the Australia-wide story has an impact on people living in Brisbane ... International stories, depending on the nature of the story or the size of the story, aren't necessarily, would be down—sort of down the bottom of the bulletin. For example, we've got about six stories today from overseas that haven't been run yet because we can't fit them ...

Once again, the 'gut feeling' that Putnis (1996) described is still an aspect of selecting international news, although this 'sense of news' is placed within the framework of prioritising city, state and national news ahead of international content. Media researcher Dr Colleen Murrell, who specialises in research about the work of foreign correspondents suggests (2016, interview, 23 June):

I do believe there is a lack of international news coverage in Australia. I was really shocked when I first arrived in Australia, watching the evening news bulletin, to see how little international news there was. If you think about where there is international news in news bulletins, then you have to really go hunting for it.

In the same way, freelance journalist Monica Attard, who worked with the ABC as a foreign correspondent in Moscow (2016, interview, 6 May), agreed with Colleen Murrell:

Yes, there is a lack of international news coverage in Australia. The record is quite patchy across various media. It is obviously a lot better at the national broadcasters, both the ABC and the SBS, [Special Broadcasting Service] but in

commercial radio, across radio, television, even, indeed, newspapers; it's a very, very patchy record, leaning on the poor side.

Dr Lee Duffield, former ABC foreign correspondent who covered the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and is now a journalism academic at the Queensland University of Technology (2016, interview, 27 May) contradicted the opinion that there is a *lack* of international news:

We don't have a lack of news anymore, the channels aren't rationed anymore. There's lots of channels, there's lots of information, though there is a question of quality. What is being covered? How much is being covered and the placement of that?

I will now focus on the international news items published during the selected constructed week. The findings identify the regions where these published news stories originated, and categorise these items based upon groupings originally developed by Putnis (1996).

4.1.2 Regions covered by the Brisbane media

The key regions and nations for all international news coverage were:

1. *United States (US)*
2. *United Kingdom (UK)*
3. *Russia/ex-USSR*: All news items from Russia or from countries that were part of the USSR, e.g. Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania, and so on.
4. *Middle East*: e.g. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Iraq, and so on.
5. *Asia-Pacific*: All countries from Asia and the Pacific region, e.g. China, Japan, India, New Zealand, Fiji, and so on.
6. *Rest of Europe*: All countries in Europe, with the exception of the UK, e.g. Germany, France, Italy, and so on.
7. *Rest of the World*: All news items generated in Latin America, Africa, and any other countries that did not fit into the other categories, e.g. South Africa, Brazil, Madagascar, Canada, and so on. These countries are primarily from 'the global south' but also includes Canada and some BRICS (emerging world economy) nations.

4.1.2.1 International news origin from the three selected news bulletins

Figure 4 shows the results of classifying the international news items into the regions of origin from *Seven News Queensland*, *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* and *Brisbane Times*. The results show the region that received the most coverage in Australia was the US, with 30 news items (or 27 per cent of the total international news items). Moreover, the second region that received more coverage in the Australian media was Rest of Europe, with 21 news items (19 per cent). The Asia-Pacific, our immediate region, was the third area covered in Australia, with 19 news items (17 per cent). The least-covered region in the Australian media was Russia/ex-USSR, with seven news items, or 6 per cent of all foreign news items published during the constructed week. Figure 4 shows the percentage of news items published from the world regions.

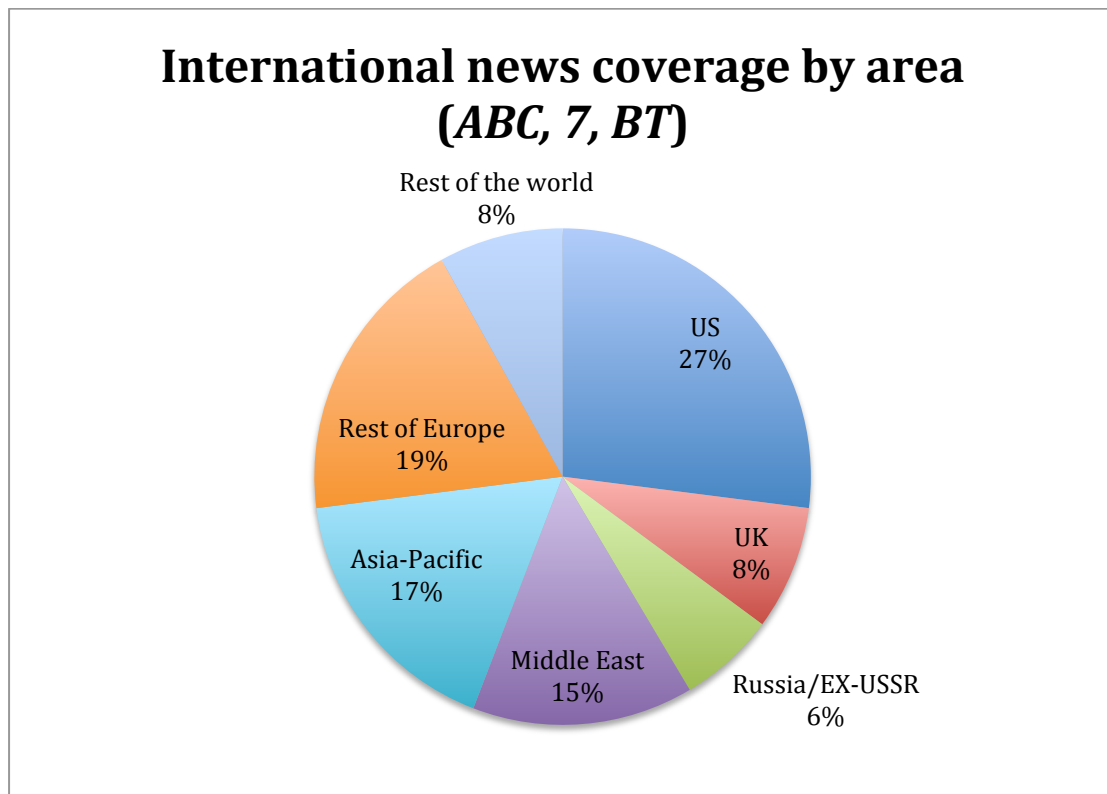


Figure 4. Percentage of international news items per each region from the three news outlets

The news editors, including the foreign editor from ABC Melbourne, Linda Lopresti (2016, interview, 30 June), acknowledged that the most-covered area in their bulletins was the US:

... well, the States figures a lot, especially because they are having an election but also if there's mass shootings in the States, we will cover that. Britain, that comes up a lot too; if they are having a debate on immigration, or there's an election, there's Brexit or whatever there is, there is that. Iraq and Syria also have in the last couple of years featured prominently. Well, the refugee issue in Europe has featured and we have often gone to Italy or to Greece for coverage of that.

Commercial media also acknowledged the US received much more coverage in their bulletins. For instance, *The Guardian* is an online news portal from the UK, with offices worldwide, including Australia. The editor from *The Guardian Australia*, Alan Evans (2015, interview, 25 September) said the US received good coverage, although they tried to publish different news from different regions:

The stories that are going on there, I'm sure are just as interesting, but they are harder to get and we only have so many reporters that we can use. So we send them to the most influential places, so we have reporters right now in Japan, Beijing, Vietnam I think, South Africa, Nigeria, Brazil; lots in the USA and all across Europe. So those are the countries we have chosen to focus on. Sorry: and India.

Graham Cairns, former 4BC News Director and former ABC producer, agreed and identified cultural proximity as one of the main determinants for covering events outside Australia (2015, interview, 7 December):

The countries that are most likely to be covered are those that are, if you like, close to us culturally. We're likely to cover stories from the United States, from Europe and particularly from Britain, but perhaps also from France and Germany.

Peter Putnis from the University of Canberra has examined and researched the historic nature of international news flow and coverage in Australia. He noted Australia's historical cultural connection with First World countries, especially with the UK significantly influenced coverage and audience interest in those regions (2016, interview, 16 May):

Well, it's almost inevitable that the US and the UK, those countries will be dominant. This is for all kinds of historical reasons, also news availability, the traditional relationships, say, between the BBC and the ABC. I just think that

still remains the case. In earlier periods of Australian history, the UK was much more dominant than it is today.

Putnis's view is confirmed by his earlier research – in 1996, Putnis found that most Australian foreign news coverage emanated from the UK (Putnis 1996, p 103). Based on these current results, there is a discernible decrease in the UK's prominence in Australian international news.

I will now breakdown these results in to each outlet, to determine if there is any significant difference in the way *Seven News*, the ABC and the *Brisbane Times* covered particular regions.

4.1.2.2 Percentage of world regions covered by *Seven News Queensland*

The news bulletin from Channel 7 was one hour long, with the exception of Saturday 19 December, when it was 30 minutes long. It is important to note that this does not indicate one full hour of news – with commercials and banter removed, an average of about 42 minutes of news was delivered each night. Figure 5 shows the percentage of the regions covered by *Seven News Queensland*.

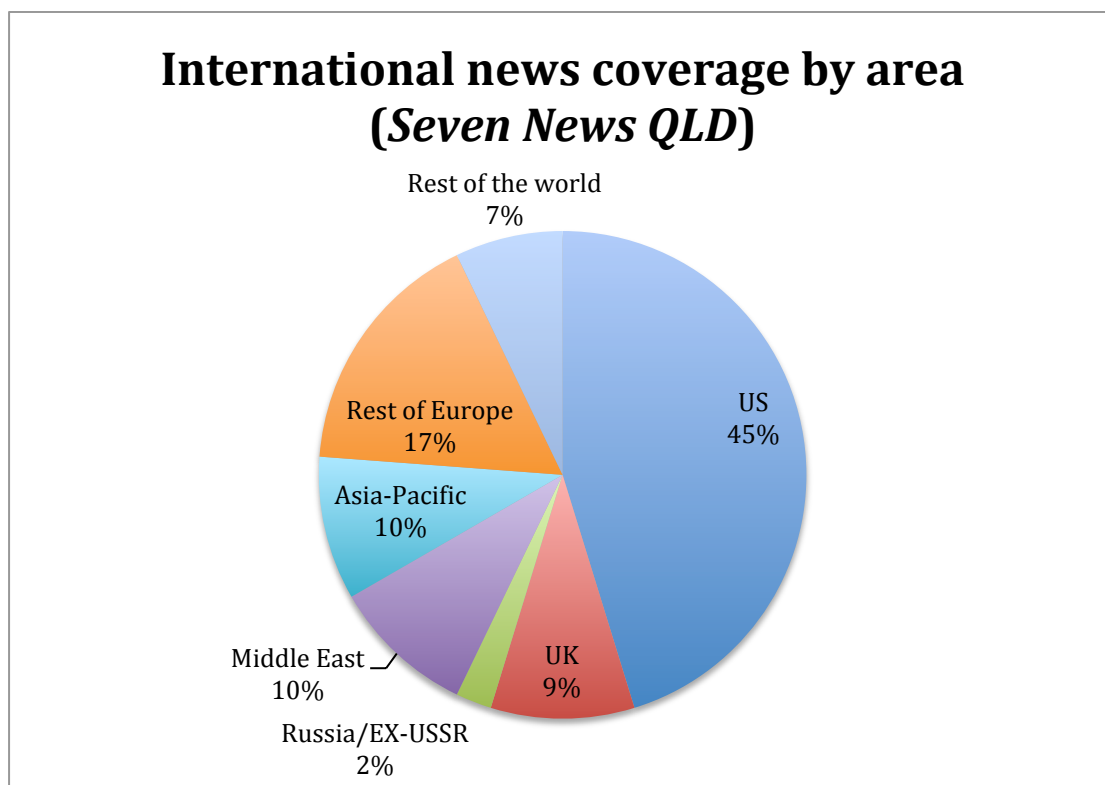


Figure 5. Percentage of regions covered by *Seven News Queensland*

Seven News Queensland published 42 international stories during the constructed week. Forty-five per cent of its international content emanated from the US, so it was the main region covered. This was overwhelmingly the biggest source of international news for the Channel 7. The next most prominent category was Rest of Europe, comprising 17 per cent of the foreign news items from the television news bulletin. Then, the news bulletin published foreign news stories from the Asia-Pacific and Middle East regions, with 10 per cent each. Interestingly, only nine per cent of the foreign news stories came from the UK. In addition, *Seven News Queensland* dedicated 7 per cent of its international content to the Rest of the World region. Finally, Russia (and countries that formerly belonged to the USSR) was the least-covered region in the television news bulletin, with only 2 per cent of the foreign news stories dedicated to it (n=1).

While a Channel 7 source was not interviewed as part of this project (despite efforts), other commercial television media interviews helped explain this trend. Former Channel 9 News producer Elizabeth Egan (2015, interview, 2 April) said when she was a senior producer for *Nine News*, she looked at foreign content for the bulletins and was more likely to select news from Anglo-Saxon countries:

... you are looking at your developed countries. You are looking at the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, New Zealand, and we tend, I think in this country, to cover more disaster-related stories from other countries. But also you know, China is, I think, getting more international coverage now and we are hearing more stories from them because of their influence and their effect ... Russia as well ... So, yeah, those ... certainly the First World developed countries, yes.

These results contrast with the findings for *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* news bulletin.

4.1.2.3 Percentage of world regions covered by *ABC Brisbane 612 AM*

Figure 6 shows the results from *ABC Brisbane 612 AM*'s radio news bulletins. Because the station delivered constant radio bulletins throughout the day, the news

bulletin considered for this research was at 7:45 am, and it was a 15-minute-long bulletin of continuous news.

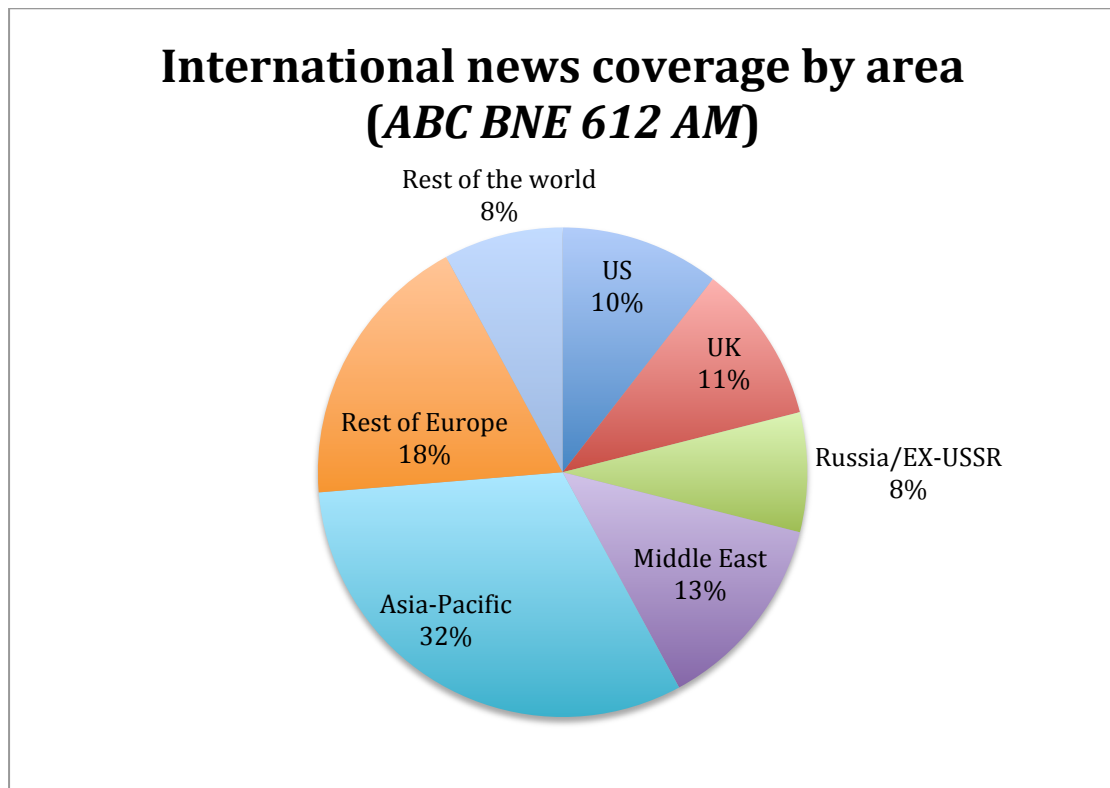


Figure 6. Percentage of international news stories published by ABC Brisbane 612 AM

In contrast to *Seven News Queensland*, the most-covered region from *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* was the Asia-Pacific, with 32 per cent of its international content, followed again by the Rest of Europe region, with 18 per cent of the international news stories from that continent. Next, the *ABC* bulletin dedicated 13 per cent of its international content to the Middle East region. In addition, the UK was the fourth most-covered area, with 11 per cent of its international content dedicated to news. *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* dedicated only 10 per cent to news from the US. Finally, and as with Channel 7, the least-covered areas were the Rest of the World and Russia/ex-USSR regions, with only 8 per cent of their international content dedicated to those regions respectively.

The results vary considerably between commercial media and government-funded media (such as SBS and ABC), particularly in terms of coverage of the US (far more prominent in commercial media) and the Asia-Pacific region (far more

prominent at the public broadcaster). ABC Sydney producer Jess Hill said the ABC looked for content from those countries close to Australia, such as the Asia-Pacific region (2015, interview, 21 May):

We have correspondents in South Asia, in China, in South East Asia, so we do [give] quite a lot of attention to Asia generally, especially because it is geo-politically significant for Australia. And obviously Europe and America, because they are both geo-politically significant and also of great interest to Australians.

An online editor from the SBS, Carol Holmes, said they covered more news from the Asia-Pacific region, as well as from the Middle East (2015, interview, 27 August) However, Holmes indicated other regions figured prominently as well:

[SBS publishes] probably things like the Middle East, Asia, a little bit [of] Europe to a certain extent, Great Britain and America ... probably more so ... than a lot of those countries in Europe individually.

To obtain a fuller picture of the regions were covered by the chosen media outlets, I will present the results from the online portal news site *Brisbane Times*, owned by Fairfax Media.

4.1.2.4 Percentage of world regions covered by *Brisbane Times*

Figure 7 shows the percentage of international news items covered by *Brisbane Times* in a period of four hours (from 7 am to 11 am). I do note the methodological issues in choosing a solid four-hour period from the *Brisbane Times*, compared to the constructed week sampling from both *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* program and Channel 7's nightly news. The *Brisbane Times* sample was designed to provide something of a snapshot of the treatment of international news in a daily online news outlet.

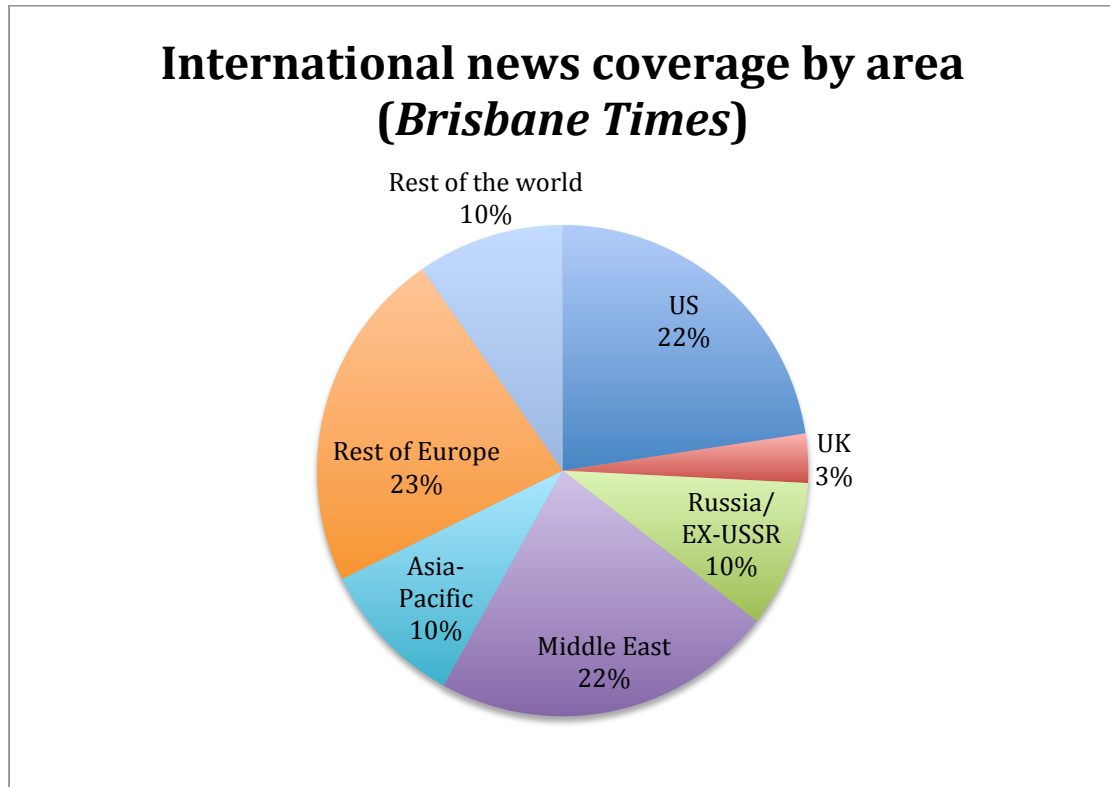


Figure 7. Percentage of international news stories published by *Brisbane Times*

Again, the results from *Brisbane Times* differed from the previous news bulletins. Firstly, the ‘Rest of Europe’ region was the most-covered area with 23 per cent of its international content dedicated to that area. This is not entirely inconsistent with the other outlets in that ‘Rest of Europe’ was the second-most covered region for both *Seven News Queensland* and *ABC Brisbane 612 AM*, with 17 per cent and 18 per cent of news coverage respectively. Next, the US and the Middle East were the second most-covered areas in the *Brisbane Times* news portal, with 22 per cent for both regions. In addition, *Brisbane Times*, interestingly, published the same percentage of foreign news stories from the Asia-Pacific, Russia/ex-USSR, and Rest of the World regions, with 10 per cent each making up its international content. Finally, *Brisbane Times* allocated 3 per cent of its international news stories (n=1) to the UK, which was the area least covered by them.

The results slightly differed from the qualitative information coming from interviews with the *Brisbane Times* editor-in-chief, Simon Holt. This may be due to the limitation of the *Brisbane Times* sample, which I acknowledge. While the results

showed *Brisbane Times* published more foreign affairs news from Europe in a space of 4 hours of analysis each day, Holt stated (2015, interview, 8 September):

I suppose that [the international news] changes with their economic interests so the US, obviously our allies, US, Britain, are going to appear more regularly because we have an affiliation with the Western world. That's a traditional affiliation if you like, but increasingly, we are seeing the importance of the Asian tigers in particular.

In addition, the results show the UK was not widely covered during the analysed four hours by the online news portal. Furthermore, the Asia-Pacific region received some coverage, and Simon Holt agreed this region was becoming more important to cover. However, this region received the same coverage as Russia/ex-USSR and Rest of the World regions. This change in importance may also have a historical reason, as Peter Putnis (2016, interview, 26 May) suggested. He said an increase in coverage of the Asian region was evident, but it was still common practice to publish news from the US or the UK, because they were Australia's allies:

After the Second World War, yes, there did develop a greater news interest in the Asian region. A lot more Australian reporters covered events in Asia, like the Vietnam War, but you would still find if you did an analysis of the content of news, that the US would be number one, I think; the UK would be number two; various kinds of European and Middle Eastern affairs would then follow. You would still have very little news coming from Africa or from South America; not that it can't be obtained, but it's just not so much a priority.

This is certainly borne out by the content analysis data, to varying levels across the different outlets. To understand the data at a deeper level, it is important to analyse the content of the news stories themselves (e.g. if a particular news story talks about domestic politics or environmental issues). Therefore, I will explain what type of international news items are published in the Australian news bulletins which enable further comparison with Putnis's earlier (1996) data on the major *topics* of foreign news in Australia.

4.1.3 Type of international news covered according to Putnis (1996)

In 1996, Peter Putnis researched the coverage and flow of international news stories in Australia. He indicated that 'the subject categories are designed to indicate the

“content emphasis” of the story’ (1996, p. 98). Putnis obtained data from Channel 7 in Sydney and Brisbane, and categorised the international news affairs into the following topics:

1. *Domestic politics*
2. *Crime*
3. *Sport*
4. *Human interest*
5. *Social/environment issues*
6. *International trade/business*
7. *International conflict/diplomacy*
8. *Space/technology*
9. *Arts/entertainment*
10. *Medicine*
11. *Weather*
12. *Celebrities*
13. *Natural disasters*

While he focused on the news content and flow of all international news content from Channel 7, I focused only on the coverage of foreign affairs (i.e. what international news was published and its place of origin). For this content analysis, I used Putnis’s (1996) main topics relevant to this research, and analysed how many published world news items fell into these topics, with some minimal changes to Putnis’s original categories – see Appendix E for the coding of this research process. For instance, Putnis’s ‘International conflict and Diplomacy’ category was considered as two separate categories in my study due to the increase in both of these areas of news. Diplomacy refers to pacific efforts in which countries collaborate towards a common objective, whereas International conflict is the negative counterpart of Diplomacy. Moreover I added a new topic: ‘Terror-related conflict’ to understand the ‘conflict’ category a little more completely. This topic was vital to include in the categories, because today, ‘most terrorists are interested in media coverage; their activities are designed to promote their existence and their goals’ (Yarchi et al. 2013, p. 265). This suggests that terror activities are partly designed to obtain maximum media coverage – and naturally, there are high levels of audience interest and concern

about such activities. Marin (2009) explored the relationship between terrorism and its worldwide coverage, and suggested the media contributes to spreading the message, especially on television. In addition, Putnis (1996), and Jordan Pérez (2011) did not add ‘terror-related conflict’ in their researches, meaning that the category has not been included in international news coverage in Australia as a separate topic, and no research has included the topic in-depth. Therefore, to accurately represent all the international news published in Australia, as well as in the world public sphere, it was vital to include terror-related conflict as a separate topic within Putnis’s (1996) categories. Hence, the topics used for this research were:

1. *Domestic politics*
2. *Crime*
3. *Sport*
4. *Human interest*
5. *Social/environmental issues*
6. *International trade/business*
7. *International conflict*
8. *Diplomacy*
9. *Terror-related conflict*
10. *Space/technology*
11. *Arts/entertainment*
12. *Medicine*
13. *Weather*
14. *Celebrities*
15. *Natural disasters*

First, I will show the overall results of the content of international news from the three news bulletins studied for this research and then will consider the findings in a comparative way between Seven News, the ABC and *Brisbane Times*.

4.1.3.1 International news content from the three news bulletins

Figure 8 represents these results and shows the percentage of the topics covered in the Brisbane-based media. The most-covered topic in foreign affairs was Terror-related

conflict, comprising nearly 30 per cent of all the international news stories. On the other hand, the least-covered topics were Space/technology, Arts/entertainment, and Medicine, with 0.9 per cent of the news dedicated to these topics respectively.

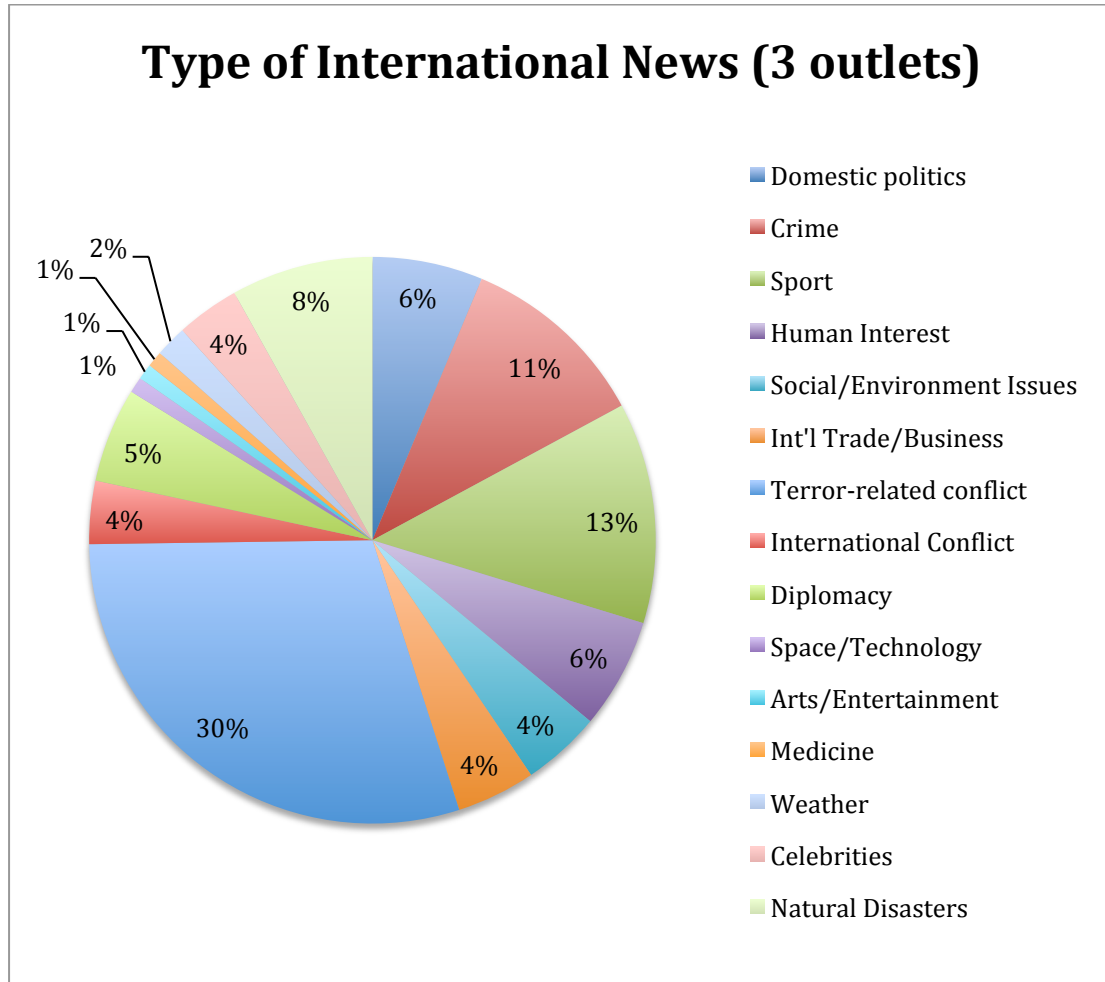


Figure 8. Percentage of international news topics by Putnis (1996) from the three selected news bulletins

As Figure 8 shows, the second most-covered topic in international affairs was Sports, comprising 13 per cent of the news items, followed by Crime, making up 11 per cent of the foreign news stories published by the proposed news bulletins. In addition, 8 per cent of the news items fell into the Natural disasters category, just higher than Domestic politics and Human interest topics, with 6 per cent of the items falling into these categories respectively. Then, the news bulletins dedicated 5 per cent of their international items to Diplomacy. Next, the news stories fell into four categories, making up 4 per cent of all the international news: (1) Celebrities, (2) International conflict, (3) International trade/business, and (4) Social/environment

issues. Finally, Weather was the second least-covered topic, making up 1.8 per cent of the news published. Clearly, terror-related conflict was the key international news content across all three media outlets, reflecting the changing nature of international relations and heightened concerns about global terrorist activity.

The news editors had their process for selecting world news. For instance, Alan Evans from *The Guardian Australia* said he did not select the news by a certain topic, but rather by a 'gut feeling', the same concept coined by Kurt Lewin (1951) and later explained by Putnis (1996). Alan Evans (2015, interview, 25 September) described how *The Guardian Australia* selects their foreign news:

Well, we would publish anything that is interesting enough in its own right or that is socially useful enough. So if something that the making public of it will benefit the world in general, somehow, then we would be very keen to publish that sort of thing, but also if it is an interesting enough story that affects enough people or even if it's just a very frivolous story but is a funny one, or it's just interesting, it's really a gut feeling of, I think, 'this is interesting'. I think other people would think, 'this is interesting; let's cover it'.

Foreign news editor from *The West Australian* newspaper, Alan Kirk, focused on selecting international news that fell into three categories. He explained his method (2014, interview, 31 May):

We try, for example, always to take [let's] say the three or four most important international news stories of the day. For example, it might be Ukraine or the attacks on women in Pakistan and India. We take the big stories, we will do them well, give them big prominence; we also like to bring items that are of general interest, that might be historical, archaeological, science, medical, all the other things that do get people engaged, as a second category. And the third category is the quirky, the off-beat, the things that give some light [shed] to people's worlds ...

Considering *The Guardian Australia* and *The West Australian* are commercial media, it is interesting to learn the public broadcasting sector's opinion about the topics they choose on world news. For instance, producer for ABC Sydney, Jess Hill, said she considered a lot more stories coming from the Middle East. She indicated (2015, interview, 25 May):

I guess, like in any news story, you look for tension and for how illuminating that story would be for our audience here in Australia, about events that are happening overseas; also, I guess, how much interest are we in for having it? So with issues such as ... running stories, such as the 'Arab Spring', or the so-called 'Arab Spring', that ... we, over those few months, we really made that story our own at ABC radio current affairs, so we were reporting it in great detail and we were, I guess, reporting stories from the Middle East in detail ...

Most of the news editors believed that publishing more international news on a specific topic (like those described in Putnis (1996)) was irrelevant. Instead, they operated mostly through a 'gut feeling' about which news item would resonate the most. The media experts, however, thought differently about which topics the Australian media covered the most; for example, Colleen Murrell (2016, interview, 23 June) said some topics will always be considered:

... some stories will always get covered no matter where they are or how difficult it is for the Australian media to get to them. So large terrorists outrages will always get covered and large natural disasters, to some degree, will always get covered, but if there is a mass killing in Pakistan, it is highly unlikely that the Australian media will make its way there. They will rely on picking up coverage from the international news agencies or from organisations with which it has agreements.

Monica Attard said Australian media covers most international news related to terrorism (2016, interview, 6 May):

You would have to go through each of the media on their own, but I mean, clearly, there is a generalized bent towards news which features terrorism, and that is because it is not only newsworthy, it's current; it's happening right now.

Overall, while no topic was completely ignored, there was a significant focus on preference for Terror-related conflict international stories. However, the perspective slightly changed when the news bulletins were individually analysed.

4.1.3.2 Type of international news published by *Seven News Queensland*

Figure 9 shows the categories proposed by Putnis (1996) and the percentage the *Seven News Queensland* television bulletin dedicated to each across the constructed week sample.

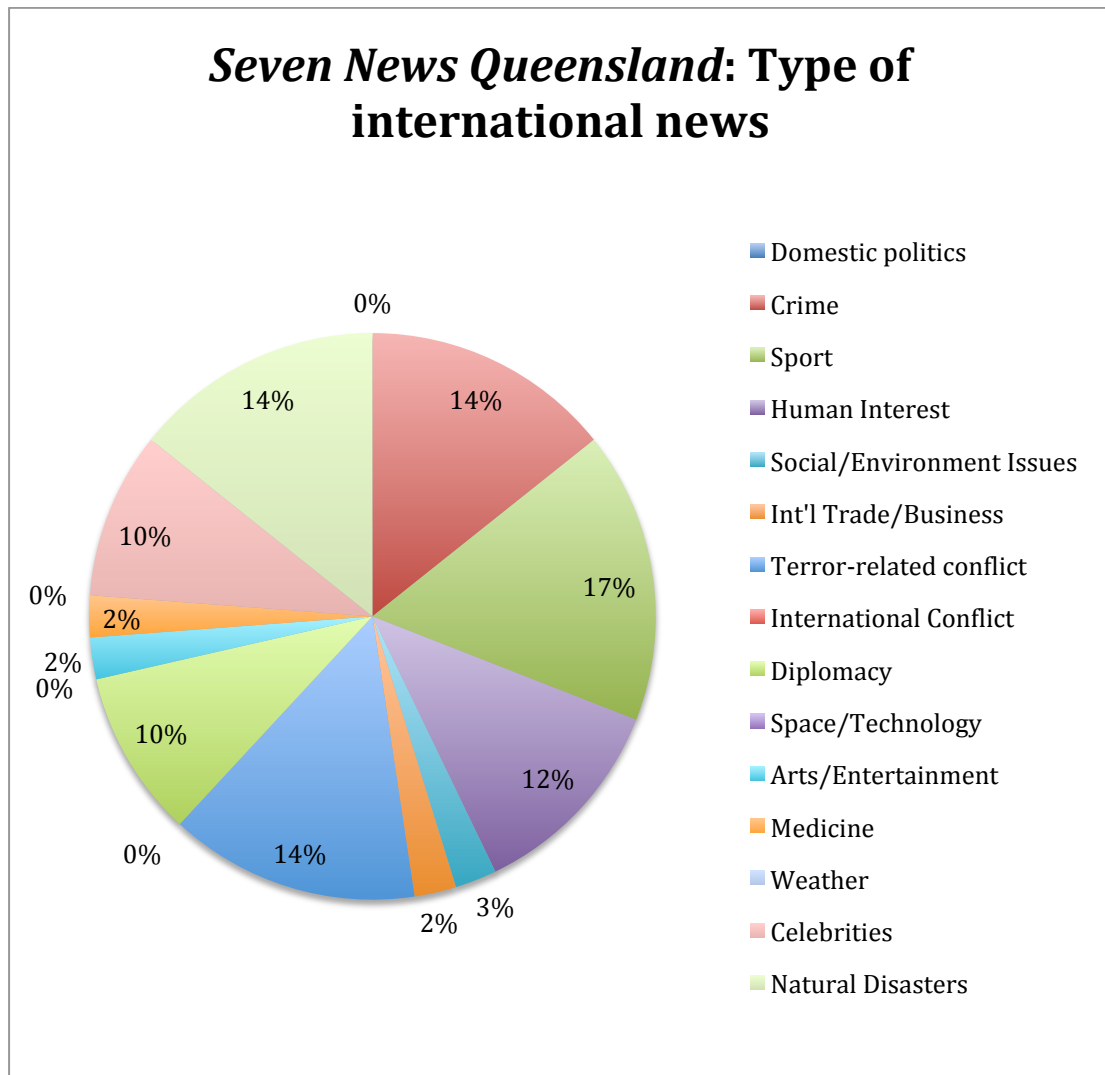


Figure 9. Percentage of international news topics broadcast by Seven News Queensland

Overall, *Seven News Queensland's* international coverage was fairly evenly spread across some major categories – notably sport, crime, natural disasters and terror-related conflict. The singularly most prominent, on only 17 per cent of stories (less than one in five) was sport. Then, three categories were tied with 14 per cent of its content: (1) Crime, (2) Natural disasters, and (3) Terror-related conflict. Next, Human interest news stories occupied 12 per cent of the foreign news bulletin's coverage. Importantly, celebrity news comprised a sizeable 10 per cent of Seven News' international coverage – when put together with sport, this suggests that more than a quarter of Seven's international news coverage was comprised of either sport or celebrity news. Social/environment issues occupied only 3 per cent, followed by the following topics with 2 per cent of the news dedicated to them: (1) International

trade/business, (2) Arts/entertainment, and (3) Medicine. Finally, International conflict, Space/technology, and Weather were not covered during the selected constructed week.

Graham Cairns worked for public broadcasting (i.e. ABC) and commercial media (i.e. 4BC), and he examined the news events that could be broadcast. However, he said that he needed to decide which overseas news to cover (2015, interview, 7 December):

But even when looking at what is important for overseas stories, there is a cultural connection. So, that which happens in cultures similar to ours is more likely to get covered than that which happens in cultures which is different to ours ... [for instance] the atrocities that are happening in Nigeria on a nearly daily basis don't get the same coverage that a bomb blast in Paris would get, despite the fact that there are significantly fewer people affected by the bomb blasts in Paris than there are in the ongoing dispute in Nigeria.

Alan Kirk from *The West Australian* explained that he decided to choose an overseas news item depending on the impact of those events on the public. Having said this, the 'human factor' was a big determinant for him to publish those items (2014, interview, 31 May):

If there was, for example, a major disaster in one of these [countries], then yes of course, we would, because it is a disaster, there is a human element to it ... like the tsunami, we would give [it] a great deal of attention ...

Therefore, we can assume that big events with a human element might get published in his media outlet (e.g. natural disasters, sports, and especially terror-related conflict – and the extent to which these stories are highlighted is exacerbated if these events occur in a country 'similar' to ours). Former foreign correspondent and now media researcher Lee Duffield said commercial media was experiencing difficult financial times, and he believed the audience should understand the precarious financial situation for commercial media attempting to cover international news comprehensively (2016, interview, 27 May):

... what about commercial media? We expect them to do more by some standard other than the market and you see, well, they've got to survive. It's not easy for daily newspapers anymore. They've lost a third of their staff since the turn of the century, 15 years, and it's not easy for commercial television. They've been fighting a rearguard action for some time; they're still surviving but it's not easy. So I wouldn't impose on them that much.

Interestingly, none of the interviewed commercial news editors mentioned Sports as one of their primary sources of international news content, which contradicts the results obtained from *Seven News Queensland*. It may be that the gatekeepers' initial consideration of 'international news' actually included 'foreign affairs' stories and natural disasters, international conflict and so on—but in fact coverage of international sporting events did comprise a significant body of international news coverage, particularly for commercial media. Here, the gatekeepers' recognised the importance of covering news that appealed to them and to their audience. The following section shows the type of international news published by the radio news bulletin *ABC Brisbane 612 AM*, and analyses whether they follow the same principle as commercial media.

4.1.3.3 Type of international news published by *ABC Brisbane 612 AM*

Figure 10 shows what topics ABC Brisbane 612 AM prioritised during its news bulletin.

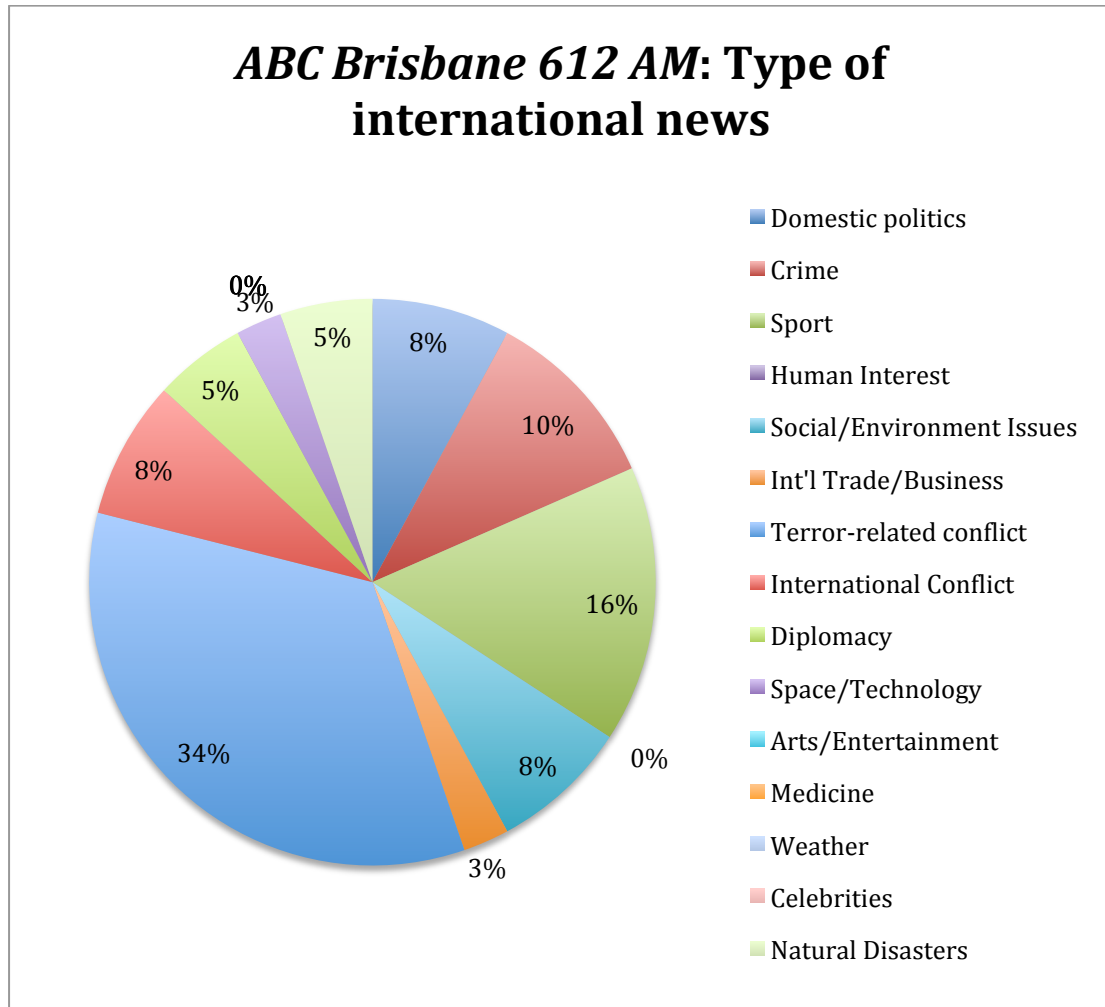


Figure 10. Percentage of international news topics published by ABC Brisbane 612 AM

In contrast to *Seven News Queensland*, the *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* news bulletin overwhelmingly covered terror-related conflict issues, with 34 per cent of the news falling into this category, followed by Sports, with 16 per cent of the international news stories broadcast in their bulletin. Crime was the third most-covered topic for the ABC, with 10 per cent of its foreign content devoted to it. Moreover, three categories received 8 per cent of the international content: (1) International conflict, (2) Domestic politics, and (3) Social/environment issues. The ABC chose 5 per cent of its foreign stories from Diplomacy and Natural disasters respectively. Again, the topics of Space/technology and International trade/business comprised only a small proportion of the ABC's coverage, and the radio bulletin did not publish any foreign stories from the categories of Human interest, Arts/entertainment, Medicine, or Weather. Notably, ABC international news coverage did not include any Celebrity

news even though this comprised 10 per cent of Seven News' international news in their bulletin.

Since the ABC is part of the public broadcasting media, it was critical to understand how news editors selected their overseas news in this case. For instance, Carol Holmes from SBS Online (2014, interview, 27 August) said she considered a wide variety of overseas news, but dedicated more time to those stories relevant to migrants in Australia:

[I]f I divide that firstly into world news, obviously there are certain stories, world news stories, that are seen ongoing. I mean for example, things like, you know, the situation in Iraq with ISIS, the situation in Ukraine; those are a couple of examples of stories that have been, yeah, big world stories that have been developing, you know; the outbreak of Ebola in Africa. A lot of these stories, you kind of know that they've been sort of ticking along and bubbling along and developing.

In the same way, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation has a perspective on which foreign topics to cover. Linda Lopresti in Melbourne said her instincts went more toward the Pacific region, especially areas where their news might affect Australians. Nonetheless, she decided to choose those untold stories as part of her work in current affairs, rather than as a particular topic (2016, interview, 30 June):

But I guess for me, I am looking at stories that I think have to be told, so there is the news value, and then stories which perhaps are a little bit quirky or even interesting in terms of the regions. We do a lot of Asian stories, so we might do something on Singapore. There's a great interest in China, the South China Sea dispute, because that's in our region; there might be regional consequences.

From the same broadcaster, Jess Hill in Sydney (2014, interview, 21 May) agreed, and said her gatekeeping process depended on the angle of the story, and she tried to obtain a good story to tell. However, she was interested in the Middle East, and her instinct was to cover those untold stories from that region. Nonetheless, neither editor mentioned Terrorism as their main coverage topic, unlike SBS Online.

So far, the results from *Seven News Queensland* and *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* in this content analysis have been presented. The following section will show the topics *Brisbane Times* covered in their international section.

4.1.3.4 Type of international news published by *Brisbane Times*

The following section describes the results found from the type of international news stories *Brisbane Times* published in its online news portal between 7 am and 11 am across the constructed week.

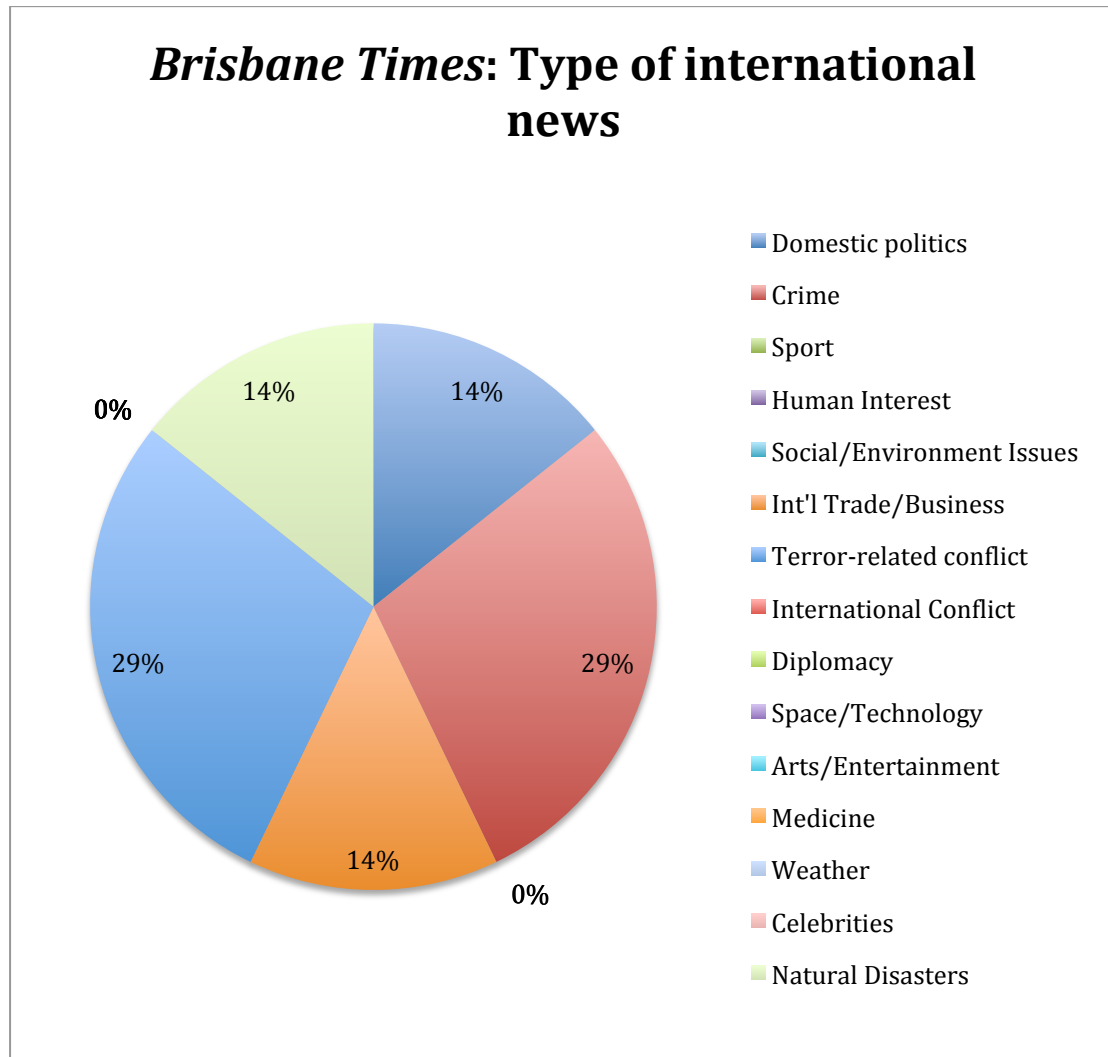


Figure 11. Percentage of international news topics published by *Brisbane Times*

The online news portal owned by Fairfax Media offers interesting results from this research. In first place, Crime and Terror-related conflict topics were the most-covered issues in *Brisbane Times*, with 29 per cent of the international content dedicated to each of them. Then, Domestic politics, International trade/business, and Natural disasters each received 14 per cent coverage. However, it is important to

highlight that the international news published did not fall into any of the following categories proposed by Putnis (1996): (1) Sports, (2) Human interest, (3) Social/environment issues, (4) International conflict, (5) Diplomacy, (6) Space/technology, (7) Arts/entertainment, (8) Medicine, (9) Weather, or (10) Celebrities. These results do not mean *Brisbane Times* does not publish any international stories about the above-mentioned topics; it means that, in a period of four hours each day across the constructed week, there might not be enough international content that falls into any of these categories in the selected period of time. There was a notable difference in the *quantity* of stories published in the *Brisbane Times* in a four-hour period, which I considered to be akin to a bulletin, compared to the number of international stories broadcast in a constructed week of bulletins at both ABC radio and Seven News.

Editor-in-chief Simon Holt from *Brisbane Times* said he and his journalists chose international stories according to what they felt connected them to their readership. However, the nature of the foreign affairs and its accessibility had changed over time, affecting the gatekeeping process (2015, interview, 8 September 2015):

Why are they important? This is, I suppose, is one of the changing things with news per se, is that once upon a time the currency of news was an ability to tell people what is happening. But now that sort of information is accessible in so many different places, the currency of news has changed. So the currency is now in the context—is in our ability to say how or why something has happened or what relevance that has had to our readers.

Foreign editor from Fairfax Media Lia Timson (2016, interview, 1 June) explained how they chose their international stories according to their gatekeeping process, and how they recommended those to the different newsrooms across Australia:

... in terms of the elements that go into deciding our news values, significant events, so, world events that you can't go past. I'm talking Paris attacks, Brussels attacks, that sort of coverage, stories that people can relate to ... We also look for the unusual, the curious or what I call, what I call, 'I learnt something today' stories

It could be claimed that, in this particular case, Fairfax foreign desk and *Brisbane Times* gatekeep their news twice. Nonetheless, Lia Timson and the Foreign Desk team at Fairfax need to refine which type of news to publish, and they are responsible for potential recommendations to their metropolitan newsrooms about foreign affairs.

After showing the results of the content analysis in the Brisbane news organisations, it is important to highlight and research how these foreign news stories could be published in the Australian media. The input provided by news editors was valuable in analysing how international news stories reach an audience. After considering the elements of a creative approach as part of the research project discussed in Chapter 3, a radio documentary was developed to further investigate the questions about whether the coverage of international news in Australia deserves to be given more emphasis, and what the news editors and experts believed on the topic.

Section 4.2 will show the outcome of the creative/professional project, and the journalistic processes which sit behind the series of short radio current affairs pieces about international news in Australia.

4.2 Radio documentary outcome and topics

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the creative component was divided into six short current affairs segments broadcast on the community radio program *The Wire*. Table 7 shows the publication date of each section, the topics, and the interviewees from each section.

Table 7. Topics and interviewees selected for the radio documentary sections

| Publication date | Section | Topic | Interviewees |
|------------------|---------|--|---|
| 1 April 2016 | 1 | Australian foreign news: The Editor | Carol Holmes Jess Hill Simon Holt Alan Kirk |
| 8 April 2016 | 2 | The work of an international news editor | Graham Cairns Alan Evans Jess Hill Carol Holmes |
| 15 April 2016 | 3 | The cultural bias: How Australian foreign news coverage reflects cultural ties and connections | Bridget Backhaus Elizabeth Egan Alan Kirk Simon Holt Jess Hill |
| 29 April 2016 | 4 | What training to international news editors and journalists undertake? | Mark Braybrook Alan Evans Elizabeth Egan Carol Holmes Alan Kirk |
| 6 May 2016 | 5 | Multiculturalism and Australian international news editors | Bridget Backhaus Graham Cairns Jess Hill Carol Holmes |
| 27 May 2016 | 6 | International news coverage in Australia: Views from the Academy | Monica Attard Peter Putnis Lee Duffield |

For each episode of the series, I selected a number of interviewees according to their primary expertise and the content of their interview. In addition, some interviews were completed while producing the documentary, or after the six episodes were

broadcast, so I had to leave some interviews out of the documentary—however, they have been used for this exegesis as part of the presentation of my qualitative data.

The creative component did not investigate the precise issues that the quantitative component undertook – it was important to create the radio series with broader appeal than a discussion of the ‘types’ of international news coverage across the different outlets. The rationale behind this was to offer a new perspective to a wider audience on community radio, because ‘its purpose is essentially to inform, to present a story or situation with a total regard for honest, balanced reporting’ (McLeish 1994, p. 239). In this specific case, I intended to discuss news editors and their role within foreign affairs in terms of journalistic practice. The exegetical component and the professional project are, however, intrinsically tied together through the interviews that were carried out – the interviews formed the basis of the documentaries as they were my interviews with talent; they were also transcribed and analysed as part of the research findings about international news editors and journalists views about news selection.

The topics published in the radio documentary are described in the following sections.

4.2.1 Australian foreign news: The Editor

The interviewed news editors and media experts agreed that the gatekeeper in the newsrooms allocated a large amount of time to deciding which world news would be published in their bulletins. For instance, Alan Kirk from *The West Australian* (2014, interview, 31 May) said his job involved monitoring external sources of information and then pitching them to his executive team to determine the stories that would go into the Perth newspaper:

I look in the morning to television, radio, and Internet and newspapers to see what news is breaking, and see how other stories are developing. That sets me off at the end of what is to come. I'll go in, I will go through the news wire services, and the syndicated services ... we get to make a list of the important ones for myself, and possibly [those] that would go to other sections of the paper, mostly into general news pages ...

Linda Lopresti from ABC Melbourne agreed, and said her role as a foreign news editor involved a considerable amount of time and research to find which stories to cover on radio. Her research included a wide array of sources (2016, interview, 30 June):

... well, it involves a lot of reading, I can't tell you how much reading I do every single day, and a lot of fast reading. I have to read really fast across a number of websites, Twitter, the wires that we get at work, the AFP [Agence France-Presse], Reuters, all the different wires. I go through all the different ABC programs, so basically I do a big—I read in, in the morning; I might spend an hour and a half doing a really fast read in ...

Graham Cairns from 4BC and ABC was required to monitor and examine different sources of information, like Ms Lopresti, Mr Kirk, and all of the interviewed news editors for this project. He explained that social media and online platforms were crucial for bringing up international news and for gatekeeping them accordingly (2015, interview, 7 December):

Part of the role of an international news editor was to constantly be monitoring the international news services, both commercial and public, using them to find stories from overseas—and also constantly scouring—and this became an increasingly large part of the job, to scour the online news services and other online news sources—Twitter, Facebook.

Freelance journalist and former correspondent for Russia from the ABC Monica Attard explained the main job of a world news editor within the media, and said it was not an easy job to perform, especially when news resources were limited (2016, interview, 6 May):

I think a foreign news editor's job is to ensure that his/her audience receives adequate coverage of major international events. I mean, international news can fall into several categories: I think the two most important categories are immediate news events, and the second would be stories which give an audience at home a flavour and a feel for an important nation abroad ... It's a very, very difficult job now, but the essential role is to inform and is to keep a nation, your home nation very, very well apprised of events overseas ...

Therefore, the news editors emphasised that they needed research and time management skills in order to provide their audience with interesting news items from overseas, as well as to set up an international agenda that would be interesting for the

Australian audience. In addition, the audience might not know (or might not care) about the duties required of this position in the news bulletins, and hence, the first part of the radio documentary informed the audience about the duties of foreign news editors.

After learning what a foreign news editor does in the newsroom, it was important to highlight their experiences and the challenges they face when performing their duties. The following section will describe these.

4.2.2 The work of an international news editor

The audience might not know what experiences and challenges news editors face in fulfilling their responsibilities. It is important to highlight that the experiences of the foreign news editor, and the challenges they face during their gatekeeping process, are a normal part of the job. This issue is important for the audience to consider, because it gives an understanding of the constraints editors face when deciding the coverage of international news.

For instance, in community radio, the international news stories might be challenging to present due to a lack of resources and experts on those topics. However, international news has its interest and its audience, according to former producer of *The Wire*, Bridget Backhaus (2014, interview, 4 April). She had been interested in foreign affairs since her overseas travels:

... before I started as a journalist, I travelled quite extensively and I have always, sort of, had a bit of an interest in international news. So I guess, I've kind of always had a passion for it. Back when I was volunteering at *The Wire*, I was always the one on the international stories, particularly Burma. I did a whole raft of stories about Burma for some reason. Something that surprised me is, that there are so many people in Australia passionate about international issues.

Former news director from 4BC and ABC, Graham Cairns, disagreed that the audience is interested in overseas news. Moreover, he struggled with gatekeeping the news items, as his team rejected his pitch ideas with world news because it lacked sufficient impact for the Australian audience (2015, interview, 7 December):

... international news, as I say, is not something that the audience is particularly interested in. ... the fact remains that the standard Australian radio listener is not particularly interested in international news, unless it has an impact on them. And I found when I first started covering international news that I always had to butt heads with other editors when I was trying to get stories in, because they would say, 'No, it's just not going to impact on our audience'.

Former producer of *9 News* and ABC, Elizabeth Egan, said she started selecting international news items within her job as news editor. She acknowledged, for instance, that there was not enough international news running when she was working for both media, and she had to decide which news to publish. So, she became a foreign editor (2014, interview, 2 April):

Generally here in Australia, if you are working in a commercial news bulletin, it is actually part of that bulletin and it is not—because we don't run enough international news—is not like one person is actually dedicated to it in a full-time basis; it becomes part of your general news, producing jobs, but it is a big responsibility because there are lots of innocents; many difficult choices to make.

Another challenge news editors face with publishing foreign affairs, according to the media experts, is distance. Australia is geographically distant from the rest of the world, which increases the costs of obtaining world news. While news organisations obtain items from news wholesalers, Lee Duffield said the distance made it a challenge to cover these news events, even with globalisation and citizen journalism playing an important part in coverage (2016, interview, 27 May):

We suffer the tyranny of distance, as historians say, and it handicaps us. Firstly, we need international news because we are far away, but we're plugged. Therefore even today, there is citizen-to-citizen contact [that] is strained by distance.

After learning about some of the challenges and the experiences the news editors faced during their job, it was critical to understand their concept of cultural training, and if they had received any from their media organisations. Moreover, the topic of cultural training is a core topic for this research. The following section will discuss what the news editors and media experts thought about the cultural training within the media organisations.

4.2.3 What training to international news editors and journalists undertake?

Cultural training, as well as its importance, and the attempts by UNESCO to introduce it with the MacBride report, was explained in the literature review chapter of this exegesis. Nonetheless, it was critical to find whether the news editors believed cultural training was needed in order to select or reject world news for their programs. Acknowledging that cultural training is critical for how Australian foreign news is published is a topic that has not been explored. As a consequence, the author believes it was important to showcase this topic in the radio documentary.

To address this important topic, the author asked the news editors and the experts about cultural training, and if they thought it was needed in order to select international news. They expressed mixed reactions. For instance, Alan Kirk from *The West Australian* said he had not received cultural training from his workplace, and he understood that, for a local newspaper, cultural training was ‘not that necessary’ (2014, interview, 31 May):

I thought about it a lot, and did a little bit of research since then [our initial contact]. Journalists are very conscious of cultural aspects; for example, domestically we are very aware of aboriginal sensitivities ... It is almost impossible for us, as a newspaper, to culturally upset anybody in other parts of the world. We sometimes get representatives from other ethnic communities that talk to me ... For us, we are culturally sensitive, and in my area it doesn't bring an issue.

Alan Kirk interpreted cultural training as meaning the way foreign news events are culturally appropriate for the community. However, some news editors had a different understanding about what cultural training is. For example, Jess Hill from ABC Sydney (2015, interview, 21 May) said it was important for news editors to understand minority groups living in Australia in order to report issues from their home countries, and it would not hurt to receive that training. In addition, she said it was difficult to get an overall world-cultural training:

I mean it can't hurt, you know. I think especially, actually for the culture, the multicultural scene here in Australia, for example the Muslim culture, or the Muslim community here in Australia. [And] any other sort of minority communities that we are reporting on. I think it is more important to understand

those communities, than to try to get a cultural training going for, like, the entire world reporting.

Foreign news editor from Fairfax Media, Lia Timson, said they did not receive cultural training from their media organisation, but tried to maintain a network of foreign journalists to see how they could apply a cultural aspect to the news, considering the language, economy and culture from each country or region (2016, interview, 1 June):

No, there is no such thing as cultural training. What we do, however, is we host a lot of journalists and delegations from other countries and we actively say 'yes' to those things because that gives us an opportunity to talk to journalists and people from other countries whilst [they are] here to expand our knowledge of their places and forms of government, their systems of government, I should say, their culture etc.

For other news editors, cultural training is not needed to perform their responsibilities in the newsroom. For instance, News Director from 4BC Brisbane, Mark Braybrook, said he did not need that training in his job. He said the training in his newsroom was more about how to pitch and produce the news, including world news (2016, interview, 22 April):

I don't necessarily see that there is any need for that. An international story is an international story and, most, you can't teach common sense. If someone comes here, it's a learning process. It's my job, I've got five new staff here since I started and a lot of them have had very little experience, so it's my job to teach them about things; about what happens here, what happens there, and what they do here and what they do there.

Former producer for *9 News* and the ABC, Elizabeth Egan, (2015, interview, 2 April), agreed with Mark Braybrook, and added that cultural training 'would not hurt' in the gatekeeping process for foreign affairs events. However, she felt comfortable with the way she learnt to gatekeep international news in commercial media:

...[the cultural training] has never been put to me before, so I don't really know. I mean, to me, I guess I come from that school whereby you develop that on the job ... you know ... and I think sometimes that's the best way to make those decisions, is on the job. I don't think it would hurt, I think any kind of education that you can give people is invaluable ... So ... you know, I think I am

comfortable with the way that I've learned and made those decisions ... and that's through time and choices.

Some news editors did not know what cultural training was, so I explained what it meant.

The media experts also had opposing views on the topic. Some agreed there was a need to offer cultural training to news editors, because it would create a better understanding of what was happening overseas, and they would pitch better stories to broadcast in Australia. For instance, Peter Putnis (2016, interview, 16 May) said cultural training was important for performing journalism, and news stories had gone wrong in cases where the cultural training was non-existent:

I think cultural training is extremely important for foreign correspondents and for foreign editors and I think that again, in the past, there have been cases where interviews have gone badly because inappropriate questions are asked and so forth. I think that working in any foreign environment requires cultural sensitivity, particularly in dealing with a form of discourse, like interviewing for example. There are cultural issues with respect to asking questions of different people and styles of questioning as well as, of course, having appropriate background knowledge so the questions themselves are framed appropriately.

Colleen Murrell said cultural training would be very difficult to implement in newsrooms across Australia. She believed that bringing cultural sensitivity into the newsrooms was achieved via experiences brought by journalists and news editors (2016, interview, 23 June):

I don't really see how you can enforce something like that. Everybody comes to the job of news editor from their own background. Looking back for example, when I worked at the BBC or Associated Press, the people who worked as news editors were, largely, people who had done a lot of travelling; they had worked abroad, they spoke other languages. I mean I spoke, I had a degree in French, I had done Spanish at school, some Italian at university, and I learnt Arabic as well for a while. So those are all things that you do as your own kind of training.

After learning what the news editors and media experts thought about the cultural training in newsrooms, it is essential to highlight what they thought about multiculturalism in Australia. The following section will describe what the editors and media experts said.

4.2.4 Multiculturalism and Australian international news editors

Now that the interviewees have explored the issue of cultural training in newsrooms, it is useful to explore what they believed about multiculturalism and how it affected their job; whether they understood the multicultural society in Australia, and if they acknowledged that multiculturalism might shape the way international news items were published in the news bulletins. The editors and media experts agreed that multiculturalism is important and could shape the way the international news items were published.

For instance, Alan Evans from *The Guardian Australia* believed that multiculturalism was relevant to his job, and that was reflected in the news *The Guardian* decided to cover (2015, interview, 25 September):

I think it's incredibly relevant, very important for us to know that. For example, we try to cover a lot of indigenous stories, even though they are only about 3 per cent of the population, which is something that is overlooked by a lot of other media companies. So we focus on that and also, generally, the immigrant experience; we cover immigration ... is one of our big topics.

Editor-in-chief from the *Brisbane Times*, Simon Holt (2015, interview, 8 September) agreed that multiculturalism was important in order to publish news, and said the international news items helped to teach the wider community about what was happening overseas:

As a news organisation, it's really important for us to be a: inclusive, but b: where we can be educational and teach people what other communities are feeling and thinking. So much of what we do in modern journalism is around sentiment; it's about understanding the sentiment of the community and reflecting that sentiment in what we write and what we present.

For online editor of SBS Online, Carol Holmes, it is important to know about and understand the multicultural minorities in Australia, because the main audience of her organisation is the multicultural community. She also says SBS has online tools to determine which multicultural groups live in Australia, with detailed data about how Australia is formed (2014, interview, 27 August):

I am very aware of the makeup of Australia's population and, I think, is something like, either 1 in 4 Australians was born overseas or has parents that were born overseas, and I am aware of what some of the emerging cultures are ... I know a lot about that, about the different backgrounds that make up the Australian population and that, I mean, again really, you know, like SBS is actually, totally at the centre of that.

The media experts also acknowledged and recognised that the multicultural society in Australia would shape world news in the near future because of various factors. Lee Duffield said foreign affairs would become important, and the diversity would shape, at some point, the coverage of overseas news items in Australia (2016, interview, 27 May):

There's a lot more movement as well, and so there we have got technology influencing things; we've got distance influencing things; we've got the make-up of our population influencing things; we've got globalisation. I think inevitably we're going to get more international news and the cultural diversity here has got something to do with that, certainly.

After discussing the final outcome of the radio documentary and analysing the content of international news coverage in Australia, it is critical to discuss these outcomes and how these projects showcase what the research in foreign affairs and practice-based research show in contrast. These results will be discussed in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

The following chapter will discuss both the qualitative and quantitative results from this research project and reflect on the radio documentary-making process. First, the results of the content analysis will be discussed and compared to what the actual research on the determinants of international news indicates. Next, after analysing the geographical proximity, cultural affinity, and hierarchy of nations, I will discuss the main topics covered in the Australian newsrooms using the results of this content analysis and previous studies (such as Putnis (1996); Putnis, Penhallurick & Bourk (2000)), and explore the rationale behind the ‘most-covered’ topics, such as Sports and Terror-related conflict. Then, I will discuss a significant issue when I examine news coming from the United Kingdom. Next, I will discuss whether news editors believe cultural training in the gatekeeping process is vital for carrying out their duties, and whether it is applied throughout the newsrooms. Finally, I will reflect on the radio documentary-making process, examining why semi-structured interviews from qualitative academic research are useful in journalistic processes.

5.1 Key findings about determinants of international news coverage

This research project has focused on three main determinants of the overseas news coverage: geographical proximity, cultural affinity and hierarchy of nations, as proposed by Galtung and Ruge (1965). As explained in Chapter 2 of this exegesis, research has examined the importance (and the challenges) of each determinant when covering international news. First, the geographical proximity determinant will be explored, followed by the cultural affinity determinant and, finally, the hierarchy of nations will be discussed in the sections following, together with the results of the content analysis and the results of the semi-structured interviews with news editors for this research project.

5.1.1 Geographical proximity as a determinant of international news coverage

One of the determinants to explore in this research project is geographical proximity. Each news organisation decides on their overseas news and publishes it according to their 'gut feeling', just as Putnis (1996) previously found. Previous research had showed that '[t]he geography of international news has not changed much since the early 1970s' (Williams 2011, p. 147). While the results of the content analysis are similar, the findings suggest that geographical proximity is not as prevalent as a determinant of international news coverage for commercial news organisations in Australia as in past years. First, I will expand upon and consider in more depth the results from *Seven News Queensland*, followed by *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* and, finally, analysis of the *Brisbane Times* news portal. Then, I will discuss the results from the three news organisations to argue that geographical proximity is declining in importance as a determinant in Australian newsrooms.

According to the results from the content analysis, *Seven News Queensland* broadcasts more news items from the US than from any other country they cover, with a staggering 45 per cent of its global news dedicated to the US, followed by the Rest of Europe region with 17 per cent. This emphasis on the US could be explained by an increase in breaking news from the US during the data-gathering period, such as the San Bernardino shootings in California, which gave extended coverage to the US, even well after the event. Moreover, the presidential election race between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton naturally resulted in increased coverage. In addition to these two major news items, global terror news such as the conflict with ISIS, and policies implemented by the US government on the topic (I will discuss the relationship between terror-related conflict events and geographical proximity later in this section), also featured. Other factors might also explain why the US featured in the largest proportion of *Seven News Queensland* coverage. One reason was that, as former news editor from *9 News* and the ABC Elizabeth Egan (2015, interview, 2 April) pointed out, news is more likely to be published when multimedia images are displayed, especially on television news bulletins such as *Seven News Queensland*; this statement agrees with Putnis's study in 1996 (p. 101). Also, former foreign correspondent for the ABC Monica Attard (2016, interview, 6 May) confirmed that a large portion of published news items are related to the resources the news bulletin

has access to, such as wholesalers' images, information, and correspondents. Considering that *Seven News Queensland* is a commercial entity, these resources (such as video or photos) may be more accessible through news wholesalers and, therefore, more events are published at a cheaper cost. Throughout the period, *Seven News Queensland* published regular content from the US (Putnis 1996, p. 99), and their approach to news from the US has been fairly consistent across the time.

In contrast to *Seven News Queensland*, *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* is more likely to cover the Asia-Pacific region than the US, and this comprised 32 per cent of its international content, making the determinant of geographical proximity relevant to this research. Interestingly, the Rest of Europe category is the second most-covered region, with 18 per cent of its global news content. These results are reported in context—the *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* news bulletin is 15 minutes long whereas the Channel 7 bulletin runs longer, at around 42 minutes of news on average. The difference in ABC coverage is also due to the nature of the radio news bulletin, because it only functions with audio. Also, the ABC, as a government-funded media organisation, is less pressured to deliver popular content that will appeal to a very broad audience—instead, they have some commitment to broader goals regarding Australia's role in the Asia-Pacific region, for example. The Australian Broadcasting Corporation Charter, under the *Australian Broadcasting Corporation Act 1983* (Australian Government 1983, p. 5) states that the ABC has a responsibility:

- (b) to transmit to countries outside Australia broadcasting programs of news, current affairs, entertainment and cultural enrichment that will:
 - (i) encourage awareness of Australia and an international understanding of Australian attitudes on world affairs; and
 - (ii) enable Australian citizens living or travelling outside Australia to obtain information about Australian affairs and Australian attitudes on world affairs.

Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000) added that '... the government-funded ABC takes a rather more serious interest in political and world affairs than commercial news organisations' (p. 3), explaining the rationale behind choosing more overseas news from nearby countries, such as the Asia-Pacific region, in this study. Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000) found by examining *The Australian*, *ABC's 7 pm* bulletin, and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, that the most prominent region covered

in the Australian media is the Asia-Pacific region, with 32.7 per cent of overseas content (excluding Australia from the analysis) (p. 10). In addition to the statistics obtained from the authors, Jess Hill from the ABC in Sydney stated that the Asia-Pacific region is important to cover:

We have correspondents in South Asia, in China, in South East Asia, so we do get quite a lot of attention to Asia generally, especially because it is *geopolitically significant for Australia* [my emphasis].

This reinforces Golan's statement (2010) that geographical proximity is a contextual variable that triggers global news, just like the Australian Broadcasting Corporation charter presents (Australian Government 1983) and Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. (1985) argue. However, it seems this determinant only applies to the ABC and is not a general rule for all news bulletins in this research project, as Pietiläinen pointed out in her research (2006, p. 217). In addition, Westerståhl and Johansson (1994) suggested that 'geographical distance does not seem to have much effect at present' (p. 74). Also, Wang (2010) stated that this determinant is becoming less important in shaping the global news coverage due to 'new technologies and advanced transportation' (p. 264). Regarding the topics covered by *ABC Brisbane 612 AM* in its news bulletin, the most-covered single topic is Terror-related conflict, with nearly 30 per cent of its overseas coverage devoted to this topic, followed by Sports with around 16 per cent of the global news coverage.

Wang (2010) also explained that geographical distance in online news is 'indefinite' due to the nature of the news portals. In the case of *Brisbane Times* (the online news selection for this study), the analysis showed that the Rest of Europe was the most-covered region in the space of the daily four-hour analysis across a constructed week, with 23 per cent of its international content dedicated to it, followed by the Middle East and the US, with 22 per cent each of its global content respectively published originating from those regions. The result from *Brisbane Times* is coherent with Wang's conclusion that 'geographical proximity did not lead Australians to look at their neighboring nations' (Wang 2010, p. 273). Moreover, geographical traits are not significantly important when talking about online news, and online news is more guided by 'economic interaction and availability of news sources' (Wu 2000, p. 128). Nonetheless, the results contradict Kim and Barnett's

study (1996), which stated that the choice of international news items is guided by geographical distance among other factors, such as economic development and political freedom (p. 347). In the case of *Brisbane Times*, Europe (excluding the UK) is still a prominent region to cover, as the results have shown.

Overall, with the three media organisations included in this study, the US received more coverage, with an average of 27 per cent of news dedicated to it. Then, the Rest of Europe region was the second most-covered region, with 19 per cent of the international news coverage in Australia. It can be deduced, then, that geographical proximity, overall, is not a useful determinant by which to choose the news items that would be published in Australia, since the US and Europe are not geographically close to Australia, thereby discounting this factor as a determinant proposed by several authors (such as Kim and Barnett (1996), Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. (1985), Wu (2000), Wang (2010), Golan (2010) and Putnis et al. (2013)). It also shows that ‘[g]iven Australia’s geographical isolation, distance between nations turned out to be an insignificant factor in changing the shape of the world presented in the news’ (Wang 2010, p. 274). Moreover, it is important to highlight that ‘geographical proximity to Australia does not guarantee a depth of coverage’ (Putnis 1996, p. 98). This also demonstrates that, throughout the time, newsrooms have shifted their focus from the Asia-Pacific region (as Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000) found from studying similar television news bulletins and newspapers. Although they found prominent coverage of the Asia-Pacific region, the US took precedence over Asia-Pacific (p. 13)) and other regions, diminishing the geographical proximity as a determinant to covering international news in Australia. ‘It should be noted, however, that cultural and geographical proximity to Australia does not *guarantee* a depth of coverage’ [my emphasis] (Putnis 1996, p. 98). In addition, the results concur with Wang (2010), who concluded in his study that ‘geographic proximity did not lead Australians to look at their neighboring nations’ (p. 272).

It is also important to discuss how the global news items in Australia are affected by, and selected because of their cultural ties within Australia. The following section will briefly revisit the results from the content analysis to see whether there is evidence of a cultural affinity within the published overseas news items in the three news organisations from the research project.

5.1.2 Cultural affinity as a determinant of international news coverage

Wu (2000) identified different factors that cultural affinity relies on, and authors have added that cultural affinity is an important determinant in triggering global news (Galtung & Ruge 1965; Golan 2010; Wang 2010; Wu 2000). For instance, Galtung and Ruge (1965) defined it as a factor where two countries share similar factors, such as language, similar economy, volume of trade, or cultural ties. As an example, Mexico and Spain have a greater cultural affinity than Mexico and Japan, since they share language, historical and cultural ties, and potential economic ties. Are Australian newsrooms obtaining more overseas coverage from their culturally close countries? The results show that cultural proximity is certainly a determinant in the Australian newsrooms, based on the semi-structured interviews with the news editors and the content analysis in this research project.

It is important to highlight in the content analysis the means to assessing whether this cultural affinity happens in the Brisbane newsrooms. This affinity will be determined by how many factors are shared between Australia and the countries (or, in this study, regions) where the news originated, and this study will take Wu's factors as a guide (2000). Having said this, these factors will not be assessed in-depth against the global news published in the selected news bulletins because the exercise is beyond the scope of the research project. Also, there is no standard measurement of what cultural affinity is, thereby making it more complex to measure. Several authors define it differently, albeit with some shared cultural factors, but also with different factors. For instance, Kim and Barnett (1996) included intermarriage, travel between countries, and migration in their definition. Golan (2010) included religious diversity in cultural affinity (p. 142). These factors, however, permit an interesting view on how the international news coverage in Australia is shaped without analysing in-depth the cultural affinity factors. To analyse how this determinant affects the Australian newsrooms, I will analyse the news items published within the three selected organisations against the countries (or regions) where they originated.

As was observed in the results, the US received more coverage from the three Australian media organisations, with 27 per cent of all the overseas news coverage dedicated to the country. It is important to highlight that some events in the US

received extensive coverage there, such as the San Bernardino shootings, and therefore, the event was covered more by Australian media. Having said this, the results concur with those from Wu (2000), who found in his systemic research of international news coverage that ‘the U.S. is dominant in almost every country’s foreign news hole’ (p. 121). The cultural similarities between Australia and the US include language, similar historic roots (i.e. both countries share the UK as a colonial tie), and, at this stage, economic ties between the two countries. Also, the political relationship of Australia and the US is critical, and the collaborative work in a global perspective, such as counterterrorism, needs to be considered. Putnis (1996) also found in his overseas news analysis of *Seven News* that the US was the most-covered country, the same result as 20 years ago when his study was completed. Therefore, the news events from the US, if the trend endures, will continue to be published thanks to a cultural affinity. Nonetheless, in the content analysis, there was a significant gap in the level of news published between Australia and the UK, which we would assume is the country we are culturally most closely tied to. Later in this chapter I will discuss the lack of British news in the Australian news bulletins.

The news editors agreed that the US received more coverage in the newsrooms than any other region. For instance, former news director for 4BC and the ABC Graham Cairns agreed (2015, interview, 7 December):

The countries that are most likely to be covered are those that are, if you like, close to us *culturally* [my emphasis]. We’re likely to cover stories from the United States, from Europe and particularly from Britain but perhaps also from France and Germany.

Interestingly, Jess Hill from ABC Sydney mentioned that Europe and the US got more coverage due to their cultural attachments with Australia. She said that coverage within the ABC was more focused on these regions (2014, interview, 21 May):

... obviously Europe and America, because they are both geo-politically significant and also of great interest to Australians.

In addition to covering the Asia-Pacific region, the ABC covers the US and Europe, because it is important for Australians, including expats who live there. Also,

Europe and America maintain a similar freedom of press, cultural and historical ties, similar economies, and similar political ideologies, making them culturally similar or more aware of what happens in the other's regions, and therefore they publish more news from those regions. Lia Timson from Fairfax Foreign Desk also considered the US and Europe as a crucial part of the overseas news coverage for all Fairfax Media, including *Brisbane Times* (2016, interview, 1 June):

Which countries are most likely to be covered by us? Again, countries Australia has a strong relationship with, or very big migrant community, so China, *obviously the US, Europe*, [my emphasis] Indonesia, some South America, some Africa, but mostly South East Asia, China, Europe, the US.

It is also important to note in Lia Timson's interview extract that Fairfax Media aimed to publish more news from Asian countries, such as China and Indonesia, because not only is South East Asia *geographically* close to Australia, but because there was an affinity with those migrant populations living in Australia. Putnis et al. (2013) found a similar affinity with the Italian community in Australia, saying that migration was a trigger for publishing more news from Italy (p. 2). This could suggest that migrant populations were becoming more influential in the international news spectrum and, as a consequence, newsrooms were delivering more international news from countries where migrant populations originated. This might raise the possibility that, in the future, Australia becomes more strongly connected with South East Asia, thereby delivering more news from that region.

News director from 4BC, Mark Braybrook, also stated that the US and Europe were the subjects of greater global coverage in their news bulletins. However, the Middle East region also featured heavily due to terror-related conflict. He said, when asked about the countries his news bulletins cover the most (2016, interview, 22 April):

United States, European countries, Asian countries a lot. I would suggest that America, England, Japan, China and of course, now, Middle East with the trouble with ISIL etc. are a constant. So you are always finding, particularly at the moment, with the US presidential elections because that will impact on our relationship here and it's a world story, that's even bigger than an international story, possibly.

These insights from the news editors concurred with the content analysis presented in this research project, and they agreed with Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000), that North America and Western Europe were given more coverage in Australia. Also, Putnis (1996) found that Channel 7 covered the US the most during the studied week. It is important to highlight, though, that those regions are slightly different from those studied in this research project. While Putnis (1996) did not cover areas or regions, his study revealed similar results to Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000) and Jordan Pérez (2011). Both studies have done similar content analyses on international news in Australia. Jordan Pérez (2011) included Putnis's categories while researching two news bulletins and two current affairs programs in Queensland during a linear week. Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourke (2000) researched deeper into international news, using more news bulletins and newspapers. Both investigations analysed the origin of the world news in bulletins and newspapers in Australia. The three academic researchers found that the cultural affinity was more prevalent when selecting global news related to the country of origin of the news. Kim and Barnett (1996) also found that cultural factors affect the coverage of the overseas news, and factors such as language, and political freedom affect this flow (p. 343). In the case of Australia, news editors might look for content in English because it does not need translation and so is cheaper to publish.

Regarding the topics covered in this research project, the results show that terror-related conflict news events were the most commonly covered, with 29.73 per cent of the global news content. However, most of the news items came from countries outside the Middle East region, such as those heavily involved in counterterrorism (e.g. the US, the UK, and France). While I discuss this issue later in this chapter, this particular situation could be considered as reflecting the cultural affinity Australia has with Western countries, because of cultural, political and military relationships. Gerbner and Marvanyi (1977) found that US newspapers were more likely to cover Western Europe, South East Asia and Israel in their international news stories. Kim and Barnett (1996, p. 343) confirmed these findings twenty years after the original Gerbner and Marvanyi study.

Paterson (1998, 2011) considered that international news coverage is influenced by the global news wholesalers due to economic reasons. He suggested (1998, p. 94),

‘[t]he coverage decisions of the international television news agencies are based upon ... the costs of allocating resources to areas from which it is expensive to provide coverage’ (p. 94). Also, Putnis (1996) found that some international news came from big corporations that syndicated their news content to other outlets, such as the BBC, CNN and Reuters (p. 95). Therefore, the news items coming from news wholesalers from culturally similar countries, or from those organisations that were capable of employing a foreign correspondent, were more likely to be published in Australian news bulletins, especially news items triggering the *negative* determinant that Galtung and Ruge (1965) proposed, such as terror-related conflict. The content analysis of this research project did not include the origin of the news items (i.e. a foreign correspondent or a global news wholesaler).

Now that the geographical proximity and the cultural affinity determinants to select (or reject) international news in the Australian context have been discussed, it is important to analyse whether the elite nations (or hierarchy of nations) proposed by Galtung and Ruge (1965) in their seminal study affected the coverage of international news in Australia.

5.1.3 Hierarchy of nations as a determinant of international news coverage

Galtung and Ruge (1965) considered that news coming from elite nations (‘hierarchy of nations’ in some studies) as an important factor. Furthermore, Wu (2000), Pietiläinen (2006), Golan (2010) and Westerståhl and Johansson (1994) confirmed the hierarchy of nations to be an *important* variable in their studies. Williams also confirmed that ‘[e]xamination of the content of international news coverage indicates that foreign news is more likely to be about *elite people* and *elite nations*’ (2011, p. 149). Further, Putnis argued that ‘[m]ost of the research into international news flow has focussed on the prominence of nations on the world news stage at a particular point in time’ (Putnis et al. 2013, p. 12).

This current project confirms that the hierarchy of nations was a strong determinant in the selection of global news from elite countries, such as the US. The three news bulletins studied have demonstrated that the US was covered the most because it is a major world power, and certainly most of the political and military

news items coming from that country have potential impacts on much of the world. It is important to highlight which countries are part of the hierarchy of nations, or are considered to be important to cover for an Australian audience. I have considered the Group of Seven as those democracies that may affect the decision-making process of world issues, defined as (Laub & McBride 2015):

The Group of Seven (G7) is an informal bloc of industrialized democracies—the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom—that meets annually to discuss issues such as global economic governance, international security, and energy policy.

Since these countries make decisions that not only affect themselves but affect the world, it is important to consider this hierarchy and see the relationship the bloc has with Australia in terms of overseas news coverage. Pietiläinen (2006) found in her research, when analysing the relationship between foreign news and foreign trade in 33 countries, that ‘the result is such that news flow and trade correlate with each other in many countries’ and that this correlation is affected as well by a cultural proximity (p. 227).

In the case of Australia and overseas news coverage, the two biggest regions covered by the three news bulletins were the US and the Rest of Europe (i.e. non-UK countries). Therefore, the relationship between the countries covered and the hierarchy of nations was empirically high, because France, Germany and Italy belong to the Rest of Europe category in this content analysis, and the US and the UK have their own category. The two other G7 nations, Japan (Asia-Pacific) and Canada (Rest of the World) did not figure heavily in coverage compared to the US and Europe. Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000) confirmed the prominence of news coverage from the US in Australia when analysing the coverage of global news in Australia from *The Australian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, and *ABC 7pm* news bulletins (p. 16). Comparing the results between this research project’s content analysis and Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk’s study (2000) showed that the US is still considered a priority country to cover due to its importance in the hierarchy of nations. Wu (2000) agreed that the US is the subject of greater coverage in Australia. In his research, where he analysed the systemic determinants of global news in 38 countries, Wu found (p. 126):

The results clearly demonstrate that international news in almost every nation centers on the powerful. The U.S., among the most frequently covered nations, is placed in the brightest spotlight on the stage of the news world.

He also pointed out that ‘the U.S. is powerful not only in political and economic strength and military muscle, but also formidable in culture’ (Wu 2000, p. 126). Moreover, the extensive coverage of the US in Australia might be triggered as well as a result of the topics shown during the constructed week. Nearly 30 per cent of the overseas news items shown in the news bulletins were from terror-related conflict (e.g. the US counterattacks on ISIS, the Australian support of these counter-terrorism strategies as part of an alliance within the UK and some European countries such as France, and the political meetings designed to find a solution to the terrorism attacks in Syria), ensuring the coverage of the US was even more prominent. This means that ‘... nations that are relevant to the home nation ... were likely to receive coverage’ (Golan 2010, p. 142). The Brisbane newsrooms studied here clearly focused in their international news coverage on economically and politically powerful countries (earlier confirmed by Wang 2010, p. 274). Putnis’s more recent communications enunciated this trend well (2016, interview, 16 May):

... it’s almost inevitable that the US and the UK, those countries will be dominant. This is for all kinds of historical reasons, also news availability, the traditional relationships, say, between the BBC and the ABC. I just think that still remains the case. In earlier periods of Australian history, the UK was much more dominant than it is today. One of the main roles of newspapers was to maintain links with Britain in the context of the British Empire and so forth. In later generations, around 1950, *the US became much more dominant after the Second World War because Australia’s strategic interests changed, and so forth* [my emphasis]. After the Second World War, yes, there did develop a greater news interest in the Asian region. A lot more Australian reporters covered events in Asia, like the Vietnam War, but you would still find if you did an analysis of the content of news, that the US would be number one, I think; the UK would be number two; various kinds of European and Middle Eastern affairs would then follow.

Colleen Murrell also noted that the global news in the Australian context was affected by the hierarchy of nations (using the factors such as global dominance, defence and trading), but it is also mixed with other determinants, some included in

several academic research papers (see Galtung & Ruge (1965); Golan (2010); Wu (2000)). Murrell said (2016, interview, 23 June):

I think that the kind of determinants that affect Australian coverage would be things like historical ties which would mean, largely, the UK: that was where in the past most migrants came from, it's where Australia is completely tied up with UK history, so that will totally affect coverage of the UK. With America, it's a global dominance story; you know Australia is highly tied up with America in terms of defence and also trading and travel and cultural affinity. There will be, in the future, always coverage of China because now it's a major trading partner.

In terms of the European countries, Putnis et al. (2013) researched the Italian news coverage in the Australian media, considering several news bulletins for their study, such as *The Australian*, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age*, and television news bulletins from ABC, among others. The research, undertaken from 2005 to 2012, found (Putnis et al. 2013, p. 81):

The comparison of coverage of Germany, France, Italy and Spain in the Australian press over the period 2005-2012, undertaken as part of this study ... produced results broadly consistent with the view that political influence and economic size were important factors ... This unexpected result can be attributed to the inherent newsworthiness of Italian politics in this period and to editorial decisions made in Australia about the degree of attention Italian politics warranted.

Some of the news items that pushed Italy's profile higher within the Australian media were the *Costa Concordia* cruise ship crash and events following from it, the Turin Winter Olympics, the court trial against Silvio Berlusconi for tax fraud, the resignation of Prime Minister Mario Monti, and a clash between the Italian mafia and the church in southern Italy, among many other news items (Putnis et al. 2013, p. 62).

Therefore, Australia considers Italy an important country about which to publish news events, and this may be influenced by Italy's standing as one of the G7 nations. It may also reflect a cultural affinity with Italy, because a large number of post-war migrants and their families now live as Australian citizens. Still, the findings do suggest here that the hierarchy of nations determinant was reinforced, and overseas

news items coming from these regions were more likely to be published than from other parts of the world.

In addition, high-profile people (or ‘elite people’, as Galtung and Ruge 1965 suggested) who influence our way of thinking, including celebrities, were considered part of this category. However, in the present content analysis, the number of foreign news items that featured celebrities as their main topic was relatively low, with 3.6 per cent of the foreign content dedicated to them within the three news bulletins. As a consequence, more global news items covering political or terror-related conflict, or international trade, were more often published, making the hierarchy of nations an even stronger determinant in Australia. This was a surprising finding, to some extent, because anecdotal perception suggested that celebrity news has increased in recent times, and particularly coverage of international celebrities and their lives. However, the results would suggest that global political issues—such as international terror—are dominating our foreign news content far more regularly than celebrity news.

One of the interesting results of this research project was the small percentage of global news found originating from the UK. Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000) said the UK and Australia have strong cultural connections due to their history, and therefore, British news was shown more in the Australian media (p. 9). After considering and analysing the three main determinants to publish international news in the Australian news bulletins, it is important to understand the case of the UK as considered an elite nation by Australia. The following section will analyse and discuss the case of the news coming from the UK.

5.2 International news coming from the United Kingdom in Australia

Putnis, Penhallurick and Bourk (2000), in their research on finding patterns for international news in Australia, noted that Australia had strong cultural ties (i.e. cultural affinity) with the UK (p. 7). However, in the current content analysis, I found only 8 per cent of the overseas news events came from the UK. This percentage is small, considering that the UK and Australia not only have strong cultural ties but the European country is part of the hierarchy of nations.

To thoroughly understand Australia’s news coverage of the UK, it is useful to consider their shared history. For instance, Putnis and Lee (2016) analysed how coverage of overseas news changed in Australia during the first half of the twentieth century. They analysed one year of news from two print newspapers, *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* in Melbourne from 1905 to 1950, at 15-year intervals (i.e. the first analysis was from 1905 newspapers, the second was from 1920 newspapers, and so on, until the last year, 1950. Putnis & Lee 2016, p. 5). Figure 12 shows the percentages of overseas news, divided in regions, published in Australia.

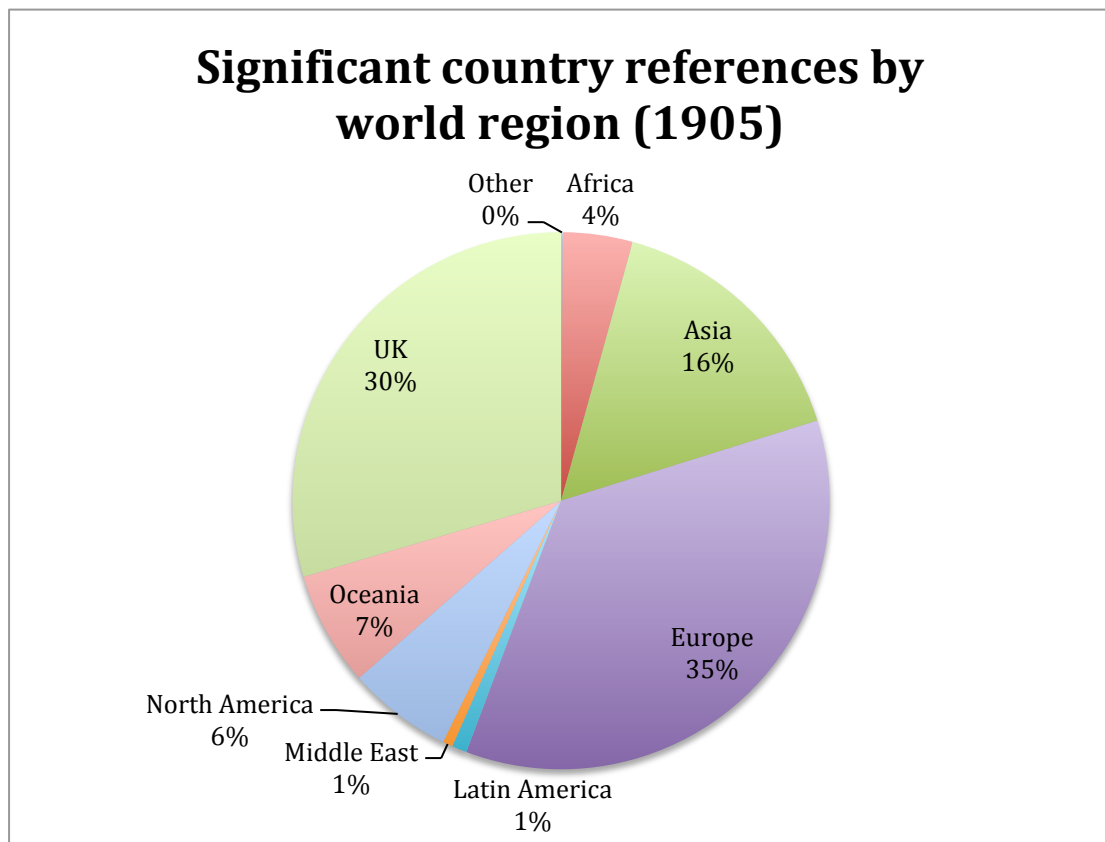


Figure 12. Country references by world regions in 1905 (Putnis & Lee, 2016, p. 22)

These percentages reflect the historic events happening at that particular time. For instance, the war between Russia and Japan over Manchuria increased the amount of news from the Asian area, and the Moroccan conflict between Germany and France increased the European region news (Putnis & Lee 2016, p. 22). In addition, ‘on a system of calculation where stories could be assigned up to three country references, 42.7% of stories referenced the UK’ (Putnis & Lee 2016, p. 21).

Fifteen years later, the same method was applied with the same newspapers, and Putnis and Lee (2016) found out that, once again, the UK and Europe were the most-covered areas in Australia, with 41.7 per cent and 28.8 per cent respectively (p. 25). Moreover, North America's coverage was almost doubled in Australia compared to the earlier period, comprising 12.1 per cent of the global news in 1920. 'In 1920 no single international conflict dominated the news to the extent the Russo-Japanese War had done in 1904-5' (Putnis & Lee 2016, p. 23). Figure 13 shows the percentages of global news in 1920, reflecting a sizeable increase in coverage of news from the UK in 1920.

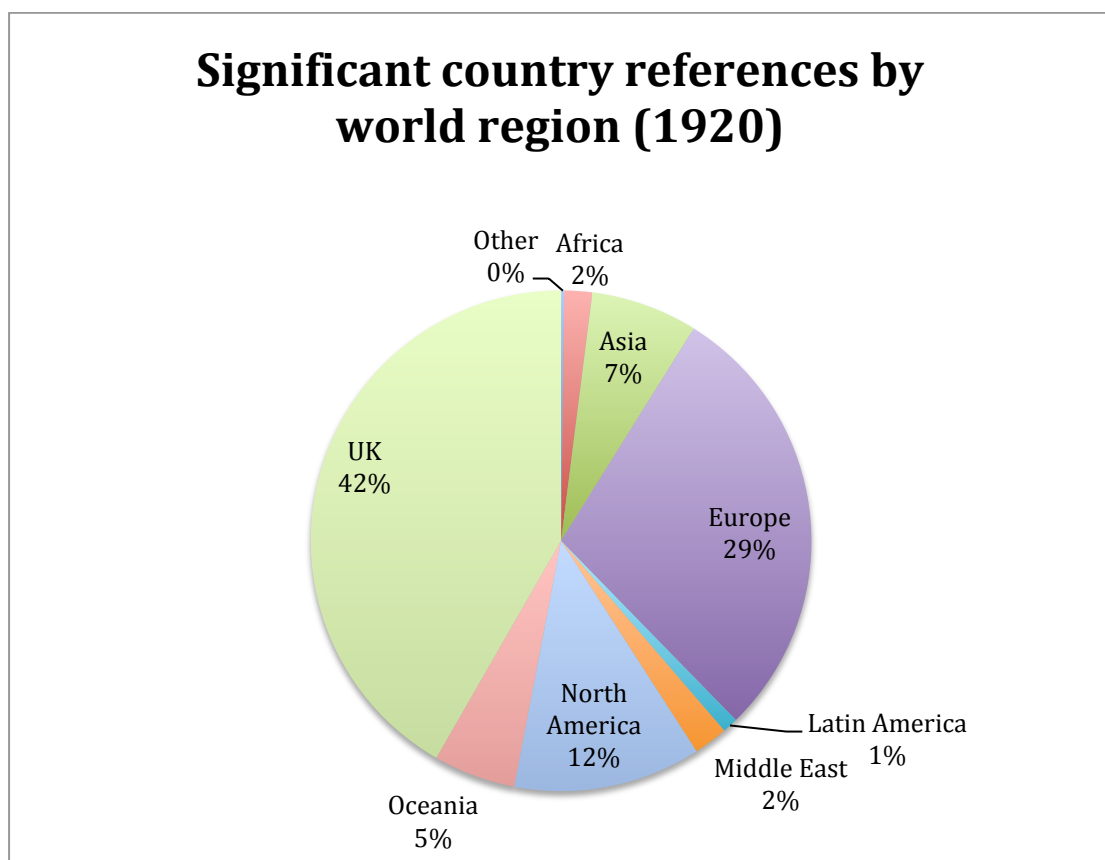


Figure 13. Country references by world regions in 1920 (Putnis & Lee 2016, p. 25)

In 1935, the third year analysed by Putnis and Lee (2016), historical events dominated news agendas, particularly in Europe because of the rise of Mussolini in Italy and Adolf Hitler in Germany (p. 26). However, the pattern of overseas news was that, still, the UK received more coverage in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* newspapers, with 37.1 per cent of the overseas news coming from this area. Again, the European region was the second most-covered area in Australia, with 26.8

per cent of the overseas news coming from the region (p. 28). In 1935, according to Putnis and Lee (2016), there were no significant changes in the origin of international news from previous years.

By 1950, Putnis and Lee (2016) identified a switch from the UK and Europe to more international news originating from North America. This year covered the aftermath of World War II and the Korean War (p. 30). In addition, Australia positioned itself differently from previous years—its geographic location in Asia became more overtly recognised (Putnis & Lee 2016, p. 34):

From the perspective of Australia's geographical position in the world, a comparison of the 1935 and 1950 data suggests a marked turning in Australia's news geography, engendered by the Pacific War and its aftermath, towards Asia and North America and away from Europe and the UK.

In 1950, the North America and Asia regions received more coverage, and the UK and Europe received less coverage, although *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age* still covered issues from the European regions (Putnis & Lee 2016, p. 31). The events from this year caused Australian newspapers to cover more issues outside the UK and Europe (Putnis & Lee 2016).

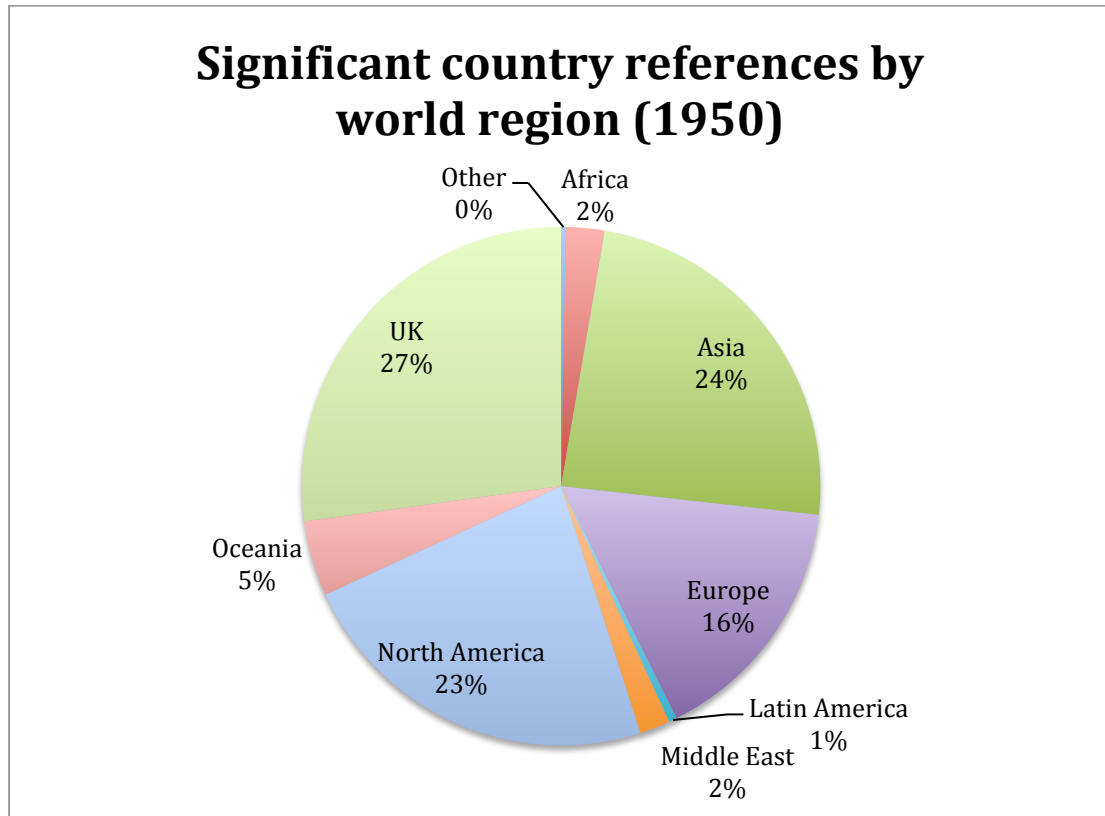


Figure 14. Country references by world regions in 1950 (Putnis & Lee 2016, p. 31)

By 1950, Australia was obtaining more coverage from different regions, rather than only from the UK. Also, the presence of more global news agencies, such as the Australian Associated Press (AAP), might have had more impact in the global news coverage, especially with the coverage of Asia in 1950 (Putnis & Lee, p. 36). This analysis, then, of the first half of the twentieth century, found that overseas news coverage in Australia fluctuated according to external world events, as we would expect. It was also affected by Australia's changing position and changing allegiances vis-a-vis other parts of the world.

Putnis followed up the work in 2000 with co-authors Penhallurick and Bourk. The study collected data in 1995, resuming 45 years after the original period of analysis. The results demonstrated that the Asia-Pacific region received more coverage during 1995, with 32.7 per cent of the content coming from that area, followed by Western Europe (26.6 per cent), and North America (25 per cent). Unlike Putnis and Lee's study (2016), this research did not include the UK as a separate region, and the authors have claimed that, within the Western Europe region, the UK was the focus of 160 stories out of the 1,930 analysed stories, around 8 per cent of the

global news coverage (Putnis, Penhallurick & Bourk 2000, p. 6). While the authors claimed a strong cultural affinity between Australia and the UK, the results from their content analysis proved this does not significantly affect international news selection.

These results were confirmed further in 2011 by the author's earlier research, which partially replicated Putnis's original method (1996). I similarly found only about 10 per cent of international news items related to the UK, or emanated from there. This broader and established trend away from the UK and towards coverage of the Asia-Pacific and, to a lesser extent, North America, was caused by earlier government approaches to the Asia-Pacific region. For instance, former Prime Minister Gough Whitlam initiated economic and diplomatic relationships between Australia and Asia, specifically with China. In 1973, Gough Whitlam became the first Australian prime minister to visit China, and the relationship started to develop (Whitlam Institute 2015). As a consequence, this relationship, and the historic diplomatic trip for Gough Whitlam to China, enhanced interest in news from this region. Despite this milestone in Australian politics, coverage of the Asia-Pacific region needs to continue to improve (Putnis, Penhallurick & Bourk 2000, p. 15):

Of course, since World War II there has been a 'turn to Asia', though in the media, as well as in other circles, there has been a tension between the need for greater links (including media links) with the region and the traditional pull of old cultural ties. Writing in the early 1960s researcher Sprague Holden commented that "Among top-echelon editors ... I observed a general dissatisfaction with Australia's coverage of Pacific news" (Holden 1961, p. 130).

In summary, there is strong evidence that news coverage of the UK has decreased in Australia. At the same time, there has been an increase in news from North America and the Asian region. Increasing cultural affinity between Australia and the US is clearly driving some coverage, along with the US' place as a global power at the top of the 'hierarchy of nations'. Wu reminds us: 'The fact that international news coverage gravitates to the few powerful nations is intriguing, and the implications of this phenomenon certainly await further scholarly research' (2000, p. 127).

After studying the origin of the international news in Brisbane from the proposed three news bulletins, and how the determinants of global news coverage in Australia affect the publication of these news items, it is critical to understand what topics are covered within these foreign news items. For the purposes of this research project, and as outlined in the Methodology chapter, I used those categories proposed by Putnis (1996), and made some alterations to reflect more contemporary changes in the news agenda—such as the emphasis on terror-related conflict.

5.3 Topics chosen to publish in newsrooms

According to the content analysis from this research project, the three most-covered topics in the news bulletins were: (1) Terror-related conflict (29.3 per cent); (2) Sports (12.6 per cent); and (3) Crime (10.8 per cent).

First, I will discuss the importance of terror-related conflict in the selection and presentation of international news. ‘Terror has become a global threat, which elevates the value of media coverage on the topic’ (Yarchi et al 2013, p. 265). The coverage from terror-related conflict events is important to highlight, because some news from France and Brussels developed during the content analysis constructed week. As this analysis demonstrates, Terror-related conflict topics appeared more frequently in news bulletins, regardless of its geographical proximity to Australia. In short, terror events are a global news event regardless of where they occur, although terror events in major Western nations appear to gain more attention than terror events in the Middle East. Galtung and Ruge (1965) stated that negativity is one of the main drivers of international news (i.e. the more negative the news is, the more likely it is to be published due to its broad appeal) (p. 69), and Terror-related conflict events fall into this category. Mogensen (2008), for instance, analysed the importance of television journalism and the terror attacks happening worldwide, and stated that terrorism is a topic that continues to be published because of its core values, such as coverage of national crises (p. 32). Mogensen suggested that ‘terrorism attacks killing random civilians result not only in a wish to unite against the threat but also in a fear of the unknown terrorists’ (Mogensen 2008, p. 32). Also, ‘the media’s function in covering terrorism is ... important to the terrorist, the government, the audience, and the media’ (Nossek 2004, p. 349). In addition, aside from the fact that terrorism is triggered

because of its newsworthiness, it has heightened appeal to news organisations because elite nations are usually involved in these conflicts. This is emphasised when Australia is involved, because ‘journalists and editors *wear a pair of domestic glasses* [my emphasis] when dealing with foreign news’ (Nossek 2004, p. 349). Australia’s support of the US in the ‘war against terror’ ensures Australia’s interest in all terror-related incidents, which helps explain the high percentage of Terror-related conflict news items.

Sports is the second most-covered topic in the Brisbane news bulletins. Previous work by Jordan Pérez (2011) found sport to be the most-covered topic in two news bulletins and one commercial current affairs program, with nearly 32 per cent of all the foreign content dedicated to this topic. However, five years later, it was still one of the most-covered topics, although overtaken by terror-related news. It is important to highlight, though, that this content analysis is slightly different from that carried out in 2011 because this study has used a constructed week to analyse the news items, whereas the author (2011) used a linear week, which may have affected the results.

Continuing with the same pattern and similar analysis as Sports, I will further discuss the results for the third most-covered category in this research: Crime. During this research period, the Crime category had twelve news items, becoming the third most-covered topic in foreign news, with 10.8 per cent of all the published international content from the three news bulletins. In 1996, Putnis (1996) found that crime was covered in nine news items in the three news bulletins studied from *Seven News*, which constituted around 16 per cent of the total amount of international news published in his study. However, this percentage is far less than in this author’s previous research (2011), where I found that, from the news bulletins and current affairs programs, only 5.26 per cent of the international content fell into the Crime category. These results, therefore, suggest a fluctuating amount of foreign crime news published in Australia. The rationale behind this may be diverse and possibly complex to describe. For instance, those news items might work as fillers, depending on the amount of highly newsworthy local and national news on any particular day (Putnis 1996, p. 101). In addition, it might be possible that some foreign crime news items are not interesting to the Australian audience because it may not affect them; and as Elizabeth Egan from *9 News* and ABC (2015, interview, 2 April) has previously

suggested, ‘good vision’ is essential to television news coverage, so this vision may have been less likely in crime stories than, say, in sport, or terror attacks.

Also, there is a probability that the Australian newsrooms consider it more important to publish local or national crime news items rather than international; as Mark Braybrook (2016, interview, 22 April) and Graham Cairns (2015, interview, 7 December) explained in the interviews, these items affect us more directly. Furthermore, Lee Duffield (2016, interview, 27 May) further described this matter, saying that in the case of commercial media, they focus more on local news, and try to source global news from cheaper sources (e.g. news wholesalers) while they struggle to obtain a profit. In addition, it could be possible that images coming from the news wholesalers may not be appropriate, or even too distressing, for the news bulletin (e.g. mass murders). The Crime category includes, for the purposes of this research project, all those events where the law in a country outside Australia is breached, with the exception of terror-related conflict events. This definition could draw a large portion of foreign news items into this category. However, according to this content analysis, the Crime category has a low percentage of items published. This could mean that gatekeepers consider crime stories as not ‘good enough’ for publication, or gatekeepers might not obtain quality images and so reject the items.

Again, these images could be considered as a valuable resource useful to fill content, especially in television news bulletins and online news websites. Former correspondent from the ABC Monica Attard said this influences whether a news story is covered (2016, interview, 6 May):

If there are incredibly good resources then even the most non-newsy story that many people would consider not necessarily all that significant but which give a flavour, or an indication of where a nation is standing, will get coverage. So resources, I think, is a very big indicator of when a story will be covered, and other times there are political considerations. At other times there are simply considerations of audience attraction to a particular story.

Former 4BC news director and former ABC news editor Graham Cairns (2015, interview, 7 December) explained that the audience might not be interested in international news that does not directly affect Australia:

... international news, as I say, is not something that the audience is particularly interested in. Whether that's right or wrong, whether they should be more interested or not is a question for a different time, but the fact remains that the standard Australian radio listener is not particularly interested in international news, unless it has an impact on them.

Again, this lack of interest from the audience might be part of the *gut feeling* that Putnis (1996) suggested is applied by news gatekeepers in his research on *Seven News* Sydney and Brisbane, and it could apply to the crime news items. In addition, the *gut feeling* gatekeepers need to have in order to perform their duties might be affected by the timeframes of the news bulletins, and the nature of the news items published that affect the audience, such as national and local news. News director from 4BC, Mark Braybrook, said this happens in commercial radio, and explained an example of how local news is prioritised over international news (2016, interview, 22 April):

International stories, depending on the nature of the story or the size of the story, aren't necessarily ... *would be down, sort of down the bottom of the bulletin* [my emphasis]. For example, we've got about six stories today from overseas that haven't been run yet because we can't fit them, but one story, that Prince having died today when we're doing this interview, that's been leading the bulletins. Now that's an international story that impacts on a lot of people. Yet at the moment, I haven't found room in the bulletin to be able to run, say, three stories; for example, Canada may be legalizing cannabis, Volkswagen offering to buy back cars in the United States, and Japan raiding the offices of Mitsubishi. Now those three stories I haven't been able to get to yet *because we have had more important local stories than those* [my emphasis].

I will now turn to some of the key themes and concerns of this thesis—notably, the perspectives of international news gatekeepers about their international news selection, and particularly their thoughts on cultural training for international news editors. These key themes, as covered much earlier in the thesis, stem from the recommendation of the MacBride report in 1980, which called for increased cultural training for international news editors and journalists to ensure greater coverage of the global South, and greater understanding of cultures and societies beyond advanced Western democracies. The following section therefore further analyses the answers from the news editors about cultural training in journalism and reports perspectives from media researchers about the current situation in Australia.

5.4 Cultural training and the gatekeepers in Australia

Hancock and Hamelink (1999) offered a summary of the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) (commissioned by UNESCO in the 80s), and the recommendations included closing the communication gap between developed and developing countries. To briefly recap, the NWICO made two important recommendations related to this research project: (1) that journalists and news editors working with international news items receive cultural training; and (2) that gatekeepers working in media organisations from developed countries should become aware of the issues and news from the developing countries (i.e. Third World countries), and should be aware of their culture in order to appropriately report on them (Hancock & Hamelink 1999, p. 289). While the report was completed more than thirty years ago, it contains interesting points for the selection of international news and presentation, and its central tenets were put to current Australian international news editors in qualitative interviews. To analyse the cultural training, it was necessary to see what the gatekeepers in Australia thought about it and if they had any notions about it. Therefore, the semi-structured journalistic interviews allowed this research project to gain an insight into the duties a news editor performs in the newsroom and how the cultural training affects their performance in the selection and presentation of overseas news.

In the interviews completed with Australian gatekeepers, all agreed that the selection of global news is done using a ‘gut feeling’ that Putnis (1996) proposed in his study. They agreed that the coverage of an issue is commensurate with the impact the editors ‘feel’ it will have on them. In addition, the resources that form the coverage—the quality of the vision and sound, and the ‘appeal’ of the visual content—are very important (Egan 2015, interview, 2 April; and Attard, 2016, interview, 6 May). These resources can be exclusive images, sounds, or small packages coming from the news wholesalers, which are far cheaper than sending a foreign correspondent to distant locations. This is an example of how the news wholesalers affect the gatekeeping process and, therefore, the selection of international news (also Paterson 1998). Waite (1992) explained that ‘[t]he broadcasters are battling for as much exclusivity as they can get, as cheaply as they

can get it' (Waite 1992, p. n/a). And the news wholesalers have their own gatekeeping process too (Paterson 1998, p. 83):

An agency's decision to cover a story in the developing world may be influenced by the general interest of international media, but the choice of what to photograph (or even who to choose to shoot the video) is an ideological one, as is the choice of who to interview, of how many seconds to give each aspect of the story, and who to send the story to.

However, there is no notion of cultural training, even among the international news wholesalers, reaffirming the position of the Australian news editors when they select foreign news by their *gut feeling*. When I asked the news editors about the suggestion that they might take part in cultural training in order to work as gatekeepers and editors on the international news desk, I received mixed responses. For instance, foreign editor from *The West Australian*, Alan Kirk (2014, interview, 31 May), said journalists are aware of cultural sensitivities, and he believed any additional training was not necessary. He mentioned in the interview that he researched a bit more about cultural training after I contacted him for this research project, and he did not recall any complaints about cultural sensitivities. In contrast, Fairfax Foreign Desk editor, Lia Timson, says Fairfax Media does not have cultural training per se, but the organisation makes an effort to expose their journalists to different cultures, which substitutes for training 'on the ground' (2016, interview, 1 June):

No, there is no such thing as cultural training. What we do do, however, is we host a lot of journalists and delegations from other countries and we actively say 'yes' to those things because that gives us an opportunity to talk to journalists and people from other countries whilst here, to expand our knowledge of their places and forms of government, their systems of government—I should say, their culture etc. I try to foster my contacts around the world and to learn about other cultures. I think as a team—just not a corporate training process or policy—but as a team, we try to impart as much culture from each one of the places because we are naturally inclined to be curious. We are always learning on the job but there is no such thing as cultural training, not that I am aware of anyway.

Alan Evans from *The Guardian Australia*, for instance, would have liked cultural training in the media organisation he works for, although this training was not his primary concern (2015, interview, 25 September):

I suppose I would quite like to, and I think it probably would benefit a little bit, yes; more knowledge is always good. I don't see it as a huge priority but, yes, it would probably be a good thing.

Other news editors though, such as news director from 4BC, Mark Braybrook, believed this training is useless as a means to selecting international news (at least in the organisations he works for) because there is no space for them; also, this training 'does not make sense' (2016, interview, 22 April):

I don't necessarily see that there is any need for that. An international story is an international story, and most, you can't teach common sense. If someone comes here, it's a learning process ... Language, no, there is no need for that. I mean most services we subscribe to—the BBC and etc., and it gets translated before it gets here anyway.

The news editors' answers obtained from the semi-structured interviews are mixed and, in some instances, at odds with one another. For instance, the results contradict some of Masterson's findings (2009) about the relationship with culture and journalism. He interviewed Australian foreign correspondents, and all of them agreed that cultural training is needed, because journalism is practised in some countries, such as Asian countries, in a different way. Moreover, the journalists working as foreign correspondents say that a cultural clash is unavoidable, and some kind of training is needed to avoid conflict (Masterson 2009, p. 21). Furthermore, there is a difference between Western journalism with other areas, such as in Asia (Masterson 2009, p. 23). It seems, however, that cultural training is considered as a low priority in the Australian newsrooms, even though almost all of the news editors acknowledge that the multicultural society in Australia is important, and that it is critical to understand what is happening overseas in order to publish the news items outside Australia to reflect this multicultural society. However, the content analysis demonstrates that it is news from culturally similar countries (either due to affinities with those nations, or the 'hierarchy of nations' determinant) that Australian newsrooms are more likely to cover. Therefore the level of cultural training is low, and in some cases non-existent, according to the Australian news editors.

The final section of this Discussion chapter will reflect on the radio documentary, and review the processes undertaken to create both the documentary and the data for the exegetical component.

5.5 The radio documentary as part of this research project

For this particular section, I will reflect on the radio documentary process. My work here relies on earlier reflections on the work from Lindgren (2011) and Redman (2011), both of whom produced documentaries as part of larger research projects for PhDs. In this research project, I worked as a radio documentary maker (using journalistic practices) and as researcher for this project (i.e. journalism studies). ‘For a study that tries to understand the theory and practice of making a radio documentary – a creative activity – the experience of the producer is an important aspect of that knowledge’ (Lindgren 2011, p. 132).

The experience I obtained working for the radio program *The Wire* has assisted me, as a journalist, to gain technical and practical skills. During the research process, I wanted to not only offer academic research about the selection of international news in Australia, but to bring the topic to a wider audience and to bind the researcher and the journalist in a project. Therefore, I pitched the documentary to *The Wire*, a national current affairs program broadcast through the national community radio network and accessed by more than one hundred stations around Australia. Because *The Wire* is a 25-minute program, the documentary needed to be divided into six radio features, so I produced six 5-minute radio features for broadcast across five episodes of *The Wire*.

The interviews with the news editors and the media experts were different because their positions in the radio documentary were, in some ways, opposite. On the one hand, the media experts provided insight into their expertise (and academic research in some cases) about the topic. On the other hand, the news editors described their duties as part of a media organisation, and this often conflicted with the views of the academics. However, both set of interviews were similar in structure (i.e. semi-structured interviews), so the interviewees could give as much information as possible, as would occur in a fairly standard, wide-ranging journalistic interview.

These interviews also brought in-depth perspective to the international news selection process in Australian newsrooms, and provided relevant information both for the creative project (the radio documentary series), and for the data that inform the exegesis. As a consequence, these interviews worked for journalism and journalism studies applications, such as Iorio (2004) discussed and analysed. That is, the interviews carried out formed the ‘talent’ interviews for the documentary series and formed the qualitative semi-structured interviews as part of the data gathering for the exegesis. This information-gathering technique is further analysed in research as well (for instance, Iorio 2004a; Iorio 2004b; Lindgren 2011; and Lamble 2004). While the interview technique applied was deeper than that used for journalistic interviews, it gave enough insight and information to qualify them as qualitative, academic interviews. It was sufficiently targeted to also be able to provide clear and focused quotes for the radio documentaries. Figure 15 illustrates how the interviews contributed to both journalism research and journalism practice.

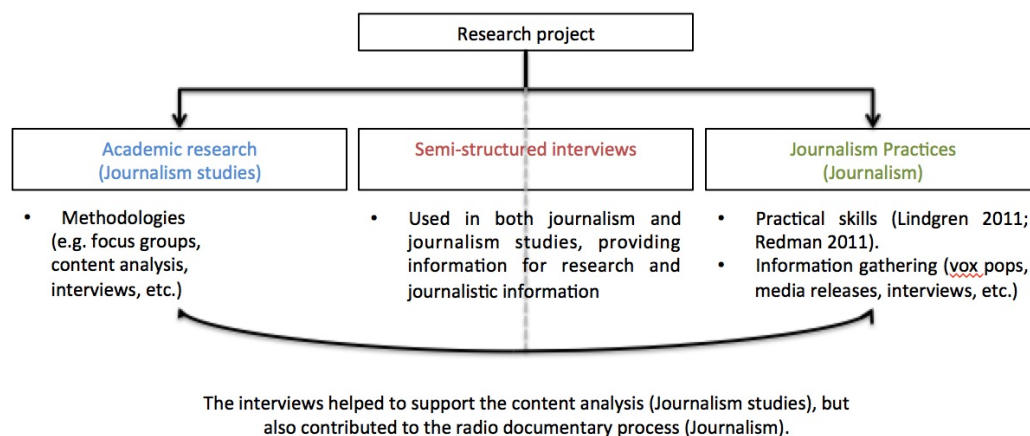


Figure 15. Connection between journalism studies and journalism using the semi-structured interviews

The process of completing the radio documentary was challenging, since the news editors have time constraints, and some even ignored my requests for an interview about their duties. In addition, the editing process for the radio documentary was challenging because the documentary series needed to fulfill the broadcasters’ requirement to provide interesting content in a short space of time, while also

ensuring that the features dealt with the key concerns of the research project. Due to my previous experience in radio, I could edit the pre-recorded interviews, and used the key parts as ‘grabs’ for the documentary. Also, some of those grabs were important for explaining the points of view from the news editors and the media experts, and were used as part of the research involving the topic. As a consequence, the interviews served a dual purpose in this project: they formed the basis of the radio interviews, and they have also been drawn upon to enrich the content analysis component of this exegesis and to provide insight into the news selections of international news editors (Creswell (2013) also discussed the usefulness of qualitative interviews to provide insight into work duties etc.). In addition, this radio documentary, which the audience has public access to it through *The Wire*’s website, fulfilled the educational aim to offer a perspective to the audience that almost is ignored in media organisations: the duties of the gatekeeper and the relationship the news editors have with the Australian multicultural audience to gatekeep foreign news. The following chapter will conclude this research project and provide some thoughts about the future directions of the study of international news coverage.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Overview

The aims of this research project were (1) to obtain a general understanding of the international news coverage in Australia by examining the news content of two news bulletins and a news portal from Brisbane, Queensland—*ABC Brisbane 612 AM*, *Seven News Queensland*, and the *Brisbane Times*; and (2) to gain a thorough understanding about the responsibilities of news editors, and how their cultural knowledge and training affect the coverage of global news in Australia. To successfully obtain the desired outcomes, the research project was divided into three components: (1) an exegesis to describe the previous work on global news coverage. This encompassed three well-studied determinants: geographical proximity, cultural affinity, and hierarchy of nations; the notion of the gatekeeping process in journalism; and the relationship between the journalists/editors and their cultural training, a concept discussed in *Many Voices, One World* and commissioned by UNESCO; (2) a content analysis partially replicating Putnis's method (1996), which verified how non-international news takes precedence over foreign news in Australia. This analysis was extended to the above-mentioned news bulletins and analysed the international news published during one constructed week; and (3) a series of semi-structured interviews with news editors across Australia conducted to understand their responsibilities and whether the editors' cultural training affected their gatekeeping process in the coverage of international news. The semi-structured interviews were used for both the exegesis and a radio documentary.

International news coverage is a topic extensively covered in journalism studies, and it has been widely researched (see Galtung & Ruge 1965; Golan 2010; Harcup & O'Neill 2017; Hjarvard 2002; Putnis 1996; Putnis et al. 2013; Putnis, Penhallurick & Bourke 2000; Wang 2010; Wu 2000). The groundbreaking research by Galtung and Ruge (1965) was one of the most influential studies for the field, displaying twelve determinants in foreign news coverage. Two of these determinants have been widely studied and are considered in this research: cultural affinity, and hierarchy of nations. In addition, Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. (1985) proposed that geographical proximity is another important determinant for world news coverage, and studies regarding this

determinant have been published as well (Golan 2010; Putnis et al. 2013; Wu 2000). Research has shown that other determinants are critical to understanding this phenomenon, such as GDP, military expense, population size, and even religion, but since there is no standard for these determinants, the coverage of global news becomes more complex to study.

These determinants, though, do not act independently. News editors are responsible for selecting those news items that will be published in a particular news bulletin or news portal. The news editor is seen as the gatekeeper, who considers more elements than only the above-mentioned determinants. The gatekeeping process has been studied and applied in many areas (Lewin 1947; Roberts 2005; Shoemaker & Vos 2009; White 1950). Lewin (1947) introduced the concept in sociology, and it became a theory applied to different areas, including journalism. White (1950) was the first researcher to connect the gatekeeping theory with journalism with the help of *Mr Gates*, an anonymous news editor who helped understanding of how the responsibilities of editors in the newsroom shape the news content. In addition, Roberts (2005) mentioned that news editors perform their duties in a particular way, in which their cultural background is not relevant. Bleske (1991) replicated White's method with a different news editor, and found many similarities with White's study, indicating that different factors should not change the outcome of the news. The question relies on how news editors select international news when a multicultural community is looking for news from their cultural background.

Culture influence in journalism has been a common topic of discussion in recent years. UNESCO commissioned the Many Voices One World (UNESCO 1980) report, which was chaired by Irish Nobel laureate Sean MacBride. The MacBride report made recommendations on how to close the communications gap between the developed countries (i.e. the First World) and the developing countries (i.e. the Third World) to establish the New World Information and Communication Order. At the time, the Socialist and Third World blocs agreed on adapting these recommendations, but developed countries such as the US and the UK rejected them, saying the report was a threat to their communications schemes (Nordenstreng 2012, p. 81) and left UNESCO as a protest against it. Even though the report was commissioned more than thirty years ago, it has raised much discussion in the public sphere about how to close

this gap, bringing journalism into the spotlight as an agent to change the practices. Two of the main points regarding journalism are that journalists and news editors should be given cultural training, and that developed countries should allocate more international news items, to aid understanding of the culture of developing countries (Hancock & Hamelink 1999, p. 289). The research focused on whether cultural training is delivered in Australian newsrooms and how it can affect the coverage of global news.

6.2 Key discoveries

The results of the content analysis show that non-international news is more prominent than international news in the Australian media, with approximately 75 per cent of the news published in the selected news bulletins and online portals dedicated to it. The international news coverage was evaluated according to the country of origin, and categorised according to Putnis' method (1996), with some modifications, such as the inclusion of terror-related conflict. The most-covered region in this analysis was the US. This means that news editors obtain more news coming from that region because it might be cheaper to obtain news packages from there thanks to the news wholesalers, and also because the US is one of the most powerful nations in the world (i.e. is part of the hierarchy of nations). While every news company establishes their own agenda, it is important to consider that, when talking about international news coverage, the Australian newsrooms do not consider publishing news from nearby countries (i.e. geographical proximity) unless it might directly affect Australians. In addition, the US shares more cultural factors with Australia, such as language and similar economies, and the news packages purchased from the news wholesalers are more appealing to the Australian audience. In addition, while Australia and the UK are culturally closer than other countries due to their historical background, the news coming from this region has decreased since the beginning of the twentieth century (see Putnis & Lee (2016); Putnis, Penhallurick & Bourke (2000); Jordan Pérez (2011)). Therefore, the news editors do not choose foreign affairs items according to their proximity to Australia, but they might choose them if they originate from a culturally related country. Also, international news is chosen if the country of origin is economically and politically strong (i.e. hierarchy of nations).

The Australian news editors not only chose these determinants for selecting or rejecting international news. As the eleven news editors and four media experts expressed in their semi-structured interviews, global news is also selected past the determinants proposed by Galtung and Ruge (1965) and Sreberny-Mohammadi et al. (1985). However, all of the news editors confirmed that their duties are ruled by a *gut feeling*, which Putnis (1996) proposed in his research of international news coverage on television news bulletins from *Seven News Sydney* and *Seven News Brisbane*. Moreover, resources and available news packages from news wholesalers affect the gatekeeping process, according to the news editors. These determinants, along with geographical proximity, cultural affinity, and the hierarchy of nations, make the research of international news coverage more complex. In addition to asking the news editors about their responsibilities, a discussion about cultural training, proposed by the Many Voices One World report (UNESCO 1980), took place in the interviews. The media experts agreed it is important news editors receive cultural training. However, mixed reactions about the concept were revealed when the news editors were asked. Some editors said it would 'be great' to receive cultural training; some others liked the idea, although they said it would not change their gatekeeping process; and others did not know about the concept at all, and believed it would not change the way they selected international news.

The semi-structured interviews, carried out with media experts and news editors, were utilised to produce a radio documentary on community radio. The documentary exposed the responsibilities of the news editors, what they thought about obtaining cultural training, and included the comments of media experts about exploring global news coverage outside the newsroom. The semi-structured interviews were used as an academic qualitative research methodology and as part of a journalistic process to develop the radio documentary. Iorio (2004a), Lindgren (2011) and Tuchman (2002) agreed that using this type of interview in both areas is acceptable because they share similarities. Furthermore, the radio documentary has become a more accepted component of journalism studies (Lindgren 2011; Lindgren 2014a; McHugh 2014).

6.3 Limitations of this project

Although this research project provides an understanding of foreign news coverage in Australia, the effect that it has on the gatekeeping process, and the cultural training the news editors receive from their media organisations, there are some opportunities to acknowledge the shortcomings of both the research methodology and the subsequent findings.

A potential limitation was the number of constructed weeks the content analysis considered. In earlier work (Jordan Pérez 2011), I recommended analysis of international news coverage using constructed weeks, and proposed to replicate Putnis's methodology (1996) over two or three constructed weeks. While a constructed week gave us an insight into news coverage (Connolly-Ahern, Ahern, & Bortree 2009, p. 863), the greater the number of constructed weeks used in this content analysis, the better the understanding of the coverage of global news in Australia would be. In addition, an analysis of the categories proposed by Putnis (1996) would be essential for long-term continuity. For instance, Jordan Pérez (2011) used the same categories as Putnis (1996). Also, Putnis et al. (2013) used similar categories, but expanded them to reflect which Italian news items were published in Australia. However, for this research project, the same categories from Putnis (1996) were used, but I needed to add more categories due to the nature of the actual news (i.e. adding the terror-related conflict) published in the news bulletins. Therefore, a new construction of topics and more analysis would strengthen the current panorama of the coverage of foreign news in Australia.

In addition to analysing more constructed weeks in the content analysis, more media organisations need to be included. In this research project, I analysed one commercial television news bulletin, one public radio news bulletin and one commercial online news portal from Brisbane, Queensland. While this sample offered a good perspective of the coverage of international news in Brisbane, more news bulletins need to be included to gain a broader perspective. For instance, newspapers and community media were not included in this research project, and these could add more information to the topic. Also, community media and independent journalism organisations are essential for understanding this phenomenon. While it is almost

impossible to analyse all the news bulletins and online news portals in Australia (or in any country), increasing the amount of platforms in all Australian states and territories will bring a better understanding of the topic; for example, with Putnis et al. (2013), television news bulletins, current affairs programs, and print media were included in their analysis to review the coverage of Italian news in Australia. Therefore, studying and analysing more news bulletins and online portals would be critical for achieving a better panorama of the topic.

Another limitation for this research project was obtaining the semi-structured interviews with news editors. Restricted time in their organisations and the fast-paced environment they work in might be two of the reasons some news editors did not reply to the interview queries. Having said this, it seems the industry and academia are not strongly connected – at least in this case, there was limited industry support to cooperate with the research project. For example, there were no interviews in this research project granted from any media organisation belonging to News Corp Australia (i.e. *The Courier-Mail*, *The Australian*, *The Daily Telegraph*, *Gold Coast Bulletin*, and so on), because the news editors I contacted simply did not reply. The same situation occurred with Reuters and the Australian Associated Press. In television, Seven Network and Nine Network did not reply (an email sent to a news editor at *Seven News Adelaide* had a filter for blocking emails from universities). Therefore, a mutual collaboration between the journalism industry and the academia is critical for understanding the journalistic processes more, and for obtaining a better idea of the gatekeeping processes from journalists and news editors in regards to the coverage of foreign news. Further, adding more qualitative semi-structured interviews from more organisations, and a better collaboration between these industries, will bring a better understanding to the research project.

While it is critical to understand the process where international news is covered in Australia, it is recommended that the results be compared against a ‘culturally close’ country. This subject could not be analysed in this project due to the time and costs involved in the research. However, analysing and researching this topic will offer a better perspective about how countries culturally close to Australia, such as the UK or New Zealand, select their global news coverage. This limitation could be considered as a future work, and is described in the following section.

I wish to suggest some of these areas for future work that would enable a better understanding of the issues and a stronger application of the theoretical concepts presented in the project: determinants of international news coverage and presentation, the current gatekeeping process in newsrooms, and the effect of cultural training for journalists and news editors, as proposed in *Many Voices One World* (UNESCO 1980).

6.4 Future work

The following recommendations are designed to enhance the results provided by this research project and to point to future, fruitful fields for research to build on this work.

1. *Comparison between Australia and a culturally close country:* As previously mentioned, it is critical to understand where the Australian newsrooms stand in regards to the coverage of foreign affairs compared with newsrooms in a country with a similar culture. Some examples of this could be the UK, New Zealand or the US. While there are a few studies from the US (e.g. Golan 2010) and the UK (Putnis, Penhallurick & Bourke 2000) that briefly examined international news coverage between Australia and the UK, the research was more focused on Australia, and a thorough comparison between them seems to not be widely conducted. Such a study would provide results that may improve the panorama in Australia.
2. *A more comprehensive study involving more news organisations and outlets:* In this research project, I included radio, television and an online news portal as the selected media organisations chosen for examination of their coverage of international news through the content analysis, partially replicated from Putnis (1996). However, more news organisations need to be included, such as newspapers, and more television and radio news bulletins. Commercial radio news bulletins were not added to this research project due to their lack of focus on international news – but at the same time, they are a source of news and information for many people (particularly youth) and so their approach to covering and selecting international news would be beneficial. In addition, including community

media, independent journalism platforms, and 24-hour news channels in the study could offer a different and a more complete view on the coverage of world news in Australia.

3. *A framework developed to implement cultural training in Australian newsrooms:* As seen in this research project, the concept of cultural training receives mixed reactions, according to the semi-structured interviews with the news editors and media experts. Therefore, it is vital to develop a scheme that could be introduced in the media industry that would include more international news. At this stage, the academic research within this topic is very limited. This could contribute to journalism practices and to journalism studies by further developing theory about the importance of cultural training in the process of international news coverage, and about how the responsibilities of news editors are affected by this training.
4. *Including news wholesalers in order to analyse their influence on global news coverage:* Paterson (1998) studied the structure of the global wholesalers and how they distribute news to regional areas. Further, Paterson (2011) analysed how these corporations work to obtain a profit. However, there is no evidence or literature referring to the gatekeeping process these companies perform to deliver international news. Some potential tasks for analysing this potential project is to interview editors from news wholesalers and analyse how the news bulletins select which international stories to publish (or which stories to sell to newsrooms across the globe). News wholesalers are now significant sources of international news – many organisations are limited to simply choosing from the array of material offered to them by news wholesalers. The gatekeeping processes undertaken as those organisations, then, is becoming increasingly important to understand.

In summary, this research project provided a snapshot in time about the coverage of international news in Australia, and how this news is selected by news editors and journalists. In addition, it provided an understanding of what the editors believe cultural training is, and if it is important for performing their duties in the

newsroom. The project suggests that, in 2017, the most-covered issue was terror-related conflict, meaning that there is a switch to covering more in-depth international news, especially that affecting the relationship between countries allied to Australia. It also suggests that international news coverage is still not appropriately covered, because only 25 per cent of all the news covered from *ABC Brisbane 612 AM*, *Seven News Queensland*, and *Brisbane Times* is international. And a good portion of this is international sport news, and sometimes celebrity gossip. This percentage may reflect a lack of cultural training in providing more news, considering Australia's multicultural society, from communities in countries geographically close to Australia to communities that may have nothing in common with Australia. Furthermore, the findings suggest the key determinant factors of cultural proximity, geographical proximity, and the hierarchy of nations play a key role in choosing which international news is selected for broadcast via Australian news outlets, with a significant emphasis on both cultural proximity and the hierarchy of nations more so than geographical proximity. These findings are borne out by both recent and classic studies in the international news analysis field.

ENDS

Appendix A

Raw data from the content analysis

The following appendix shows the raw data from the content analysis for this research project.

Table 8: Proportion of international and non-international news within the selected constructed week.

| News Bulletin | 9-Nov (Mon) | | 17-Nov (Tue) | | 25-Nov (Wed) | | 3-Dec (Thu) | | 11-Dec (Fri) | | 19-Dec (Sat) | | 27-Dec (Sun) | |
|----------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| | <i>Intl</i> | <i>NI</i> | <i>Intl</i> | <i>NI</i> | <i>Intl</i> | <i>NI</i> | <i>Intl</i> | <i>NI</i> | <i>Intl</i> | <i>NI</i> | <i>Intl</i> | <i>NI</i> | <i>Intl</i> | <i>NI</i> |
| Seven News QLD | 7 | 29 | 9 | 24 | 5 | 33 | 7 | 22 | 6 | 33 | 3 | 17 | 5 | 23 |
| ABC 612 AM BNE | 2 | 19 | 8 | 17 | 5 | 19 | 7 | 14 | 2 | 19 | 8 | 14 | 6 | 17 |
| Brisbane Times | 7 | 12 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 16 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 16 | 60 | 23 | 47 | 17 | 61 | 16 | 45 | 13 | 68 | 13 | 36 | 13 | 42 |

Table 9: Total of news published by each news bulletin, categorised by international and non-international, and its percentage.

| News Bulletin | TOTAL (n) | | % | |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| | <i>Intl</i> | <i>Non-Intl</i> | <i>Intl</i> | <i>Non-Intl</i> |
| Seven News QLD | 42 | 181 | 18.83 | 81.17 |
| ABC 612 AM BNE | 38 | 119 | 24.20 | 75.80 |
| Brisbane Times | 31 | 59 | 34.44 | 65.56 |
| TOTAL NEWS | 111 | 359 | 23.62 | 76.38 |

Table 10: Average of news coverage per day from the proposed news bulletins.

| Average of news coverage per day in news outlets | | |
|--|---------------|-------------------|
| News outlet | International | Non-International |
| Seven News QLD | 6.00 | 25.86 |
| ABC Brisbane 612 AM | 5.43 | 17.00 |
| Brisbane Times | 4.43 | 8.43 |
| TOTAL | 5.29 | 17.10 |

Table 11: Amount of international news stories classified by their origin from the three studied news bulletins.

| Area | # of international news |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| US | 30 |
| UK | 9 |
| Russia/EX-USSR | 7 |
| Middle East | 16 |
| Asia-Pacific | 19 |
| Rest of Europe | 21 |
| Rest of the world | 9 |

Table 12: Amount of international news stories classified by their origin from Seven News Queensland.

| Area | # of international news |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| US | 19 |
| UK | 4 |
| Russia/EX-USSR | 1 |
| Middle East | 4 |
| Asia-Pacific | 4 |
| Rest of Europe | 7 |
| Rest of the world | 3 |

Table 13: Amount of international news stories classified by their origin from ABC Brisbane 612 AM.

| Area | # of international news |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| US | 4 |
| UK | 4 |
| Russia/EX-USSR | 3 |
| Middle East | 5 |
| Asia-Pacific | 12 |
| Rest of Europe | 7 |
| Rest of the world | 3 |

Table 14: Amount of international news stories classified by their origin from Brisbane Times.

| Area | # of international news |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| US | 7 |
| UK | 1 |
| Russia/EX-USSR | 3 |
| Middle East | 7 |
| Asia-Pacific | 3 |
| Rest of Europe | 7 |
| Rest of the world | 3 |

Table 15: Total of international news topics published in Seven News Queensland, ABC Brisbane 612 AM, and Brisbane Times.

| Type of news | Results (ABC, 7, BT) | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| | Total (n) | % |
| Domestic politics | 7 | 6.31 |
| Crime | 12 | 10.81 |
| Sport | 14 | 12.61 |
| Human Interest | 7 | 6.31 |
| Social/Environment Issues | 5 | 4.50 |
| Int'l Trade/Business | 5 | 4.50 |
| Terror-related conflict | 33 | 29.73 |
| International Conflict | 4 | 3.60 |
| Diplomacy | 6 | 5.41 |
| Space/Technology | 1 | 0.90 |
| Arts/Entertainment | 1 | 0.90 |
| Medicine | 1 | 0.90 |
| Weather | 2 | 1.80 |
| Celebrities | 4 | 3.60 |
| Natural Disasters | 9 | 8.11 |
| TOTAL | 111 | 100.00 |

Table 16: Total of international news topics published in Seven News Queensland.

| Type of news | Results (7 News QLD) | |
|---------------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| | Total (n) | % |
| Domestic politics | 0 | 0.00 |
| Crime | 6 | 14.29 |
| Sport | 7 | 16.67 |
| Human Interest | 5 | 11.90 |
| Social/Environment Issues | 1 | 2.38 |
| Int'l Trade/Business | 1 | 2.38 |
| Terror-related conflict | 6 | 14.29 |
| International Conflict | 0 | 0.00 |
| Diplomacy | 4 | 9.52 |
| Space/Technology | 0 | 0.00 |
| Arts/Entertainment | 1 | 2.38 |
| Medicine | 1 | 2.38 |
| Weather | 0 | 0.00 |
| Celebrities | 4 | 9.52 |
| Natural Disasters | 6 | 14.29 |
| TOTAL | 42 | 100.00 |

Table 17: Total of international news topics published in ABC Brisbane 612 AM.

| Type of news | Results (ABC BNE 612 AM) | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|
| | TOTAL | % |
| Domestic politics | 3 | 7.89 |
| Crime | 4 | 10.53 |
| Sport | 6 | 15.79 |
| Human Interest | 0 | 0.00 |
| Social/Environment Issues | 3 | 7.89 |
| Int'l Trade/Business | 1 | 2.63 |
| Terror-related conflict | 13 | 34.21 |
| International Conflict | 3 | 7.89 |
| Diplomacy | 2 | 5.26 |
| Space/Technology | 1 | 2.63 |
| Arts/Entertainment | 0 | 0.00 |
| Medicine | 0 | 0.00 |
| Weather | 0 | 0.00 |
| Celebrities | 0 | 0.00 |
| Natural Disasters | 2 | 5.26 |
| TOTAL | 38 | 100.00 |

Table 18: Total of international news topics published in Brisbane Times.

| Type of news | Results (BT) | |
|---------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| | TOTAL | % |
| Domestic politics | 4 | 12.90 |
| Crime | 2 | 6.45 |
| Sport | 1 | 3.23 |
| Human Interest | 2 | 6.45 |
| Social/Environment Issues | 1 | 3.23 |
| Int'l Trade/Business | 3 | 9.68 |
| Terror-related conflict | 14 | 45.16 |
| International Conflict | 1 | 3.23 |
| Diplomacy | 0 | 0.00 |
| Space/Technology | 0 | 0.00 |
| Arts/Entertainment | 0 | 0.00 |
| Medicine | 0 | 0.00 |
| Weather | 2 | 6.45 |
| Celebrities | 0 | 0.00 |
| Natural Disasters | 1 | 3.23 |
| TOTAL | 31 | 100.00 |

Appendix B

List of news editors and media experts who participated in this research project

The following appendix shows the details of the interviews done with the news editors and media experts for this research project. It includes name, position, organisation, length of the interview, and if the interview was conducted face-to-face or through the phone.

Table 19: Details of the interviewees who participated in this research project.

| Interviewee | Position | Organisation | Length | Interview conducted |
|--------------------|---|-------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|
| Alan Evans | Editor | <i>The Guardian Australia</i> | 13:40 | Phone |
| Alan Kirk | Foreign editor | <i>The West Australian</i> | 26:28 | Phone |
| Bridget Backhaus | Former producer | <i>The Wire</i> | 17:14 | In person |
| Carol Holmes | Editor | <i>SBS World News online</i> | 24:01 | Phone |
| Elizabeth Egan | Former editor | 9 News and ABC | 20:32 | In person |
| Graham Cairns | Former news director and former editor | 4BC and ABC | 26:28 | In person |
| Jess Hill | Editor | ABC Sydney | 24:31 | Phone |
| Lia Timson | Foreign editor | Fairfax Media | 25:25 | Phone |
| Linda Lopresti | Foreign editor | ABC Melbourne | 24:33 | Phone |
| Mark Braybrook | News director | 4BC | 22:28 | In person |
| Simon Holt | Editor-in-chief | <i>Brisbane Times</i> | 25:13 | In person |
| Colleen Murrell | Lecturer | Monash University | 23:03 | Phone |
| Lee Duffield | Lecturer | QUT | 24:03 | In person |
| Monica Attard | Freelance/ former foreign correspondent | ABC | 22:11 | Phone |
| Peter Putnis | Lecturer | University of Canberra | 22:31 | Phone |

Appendix C

Scripts for the radio documentary

The following appendix shows the scripts for the radio documentary of this research project. The author wrote them in Newsboss.

Does Australia have good international news coverage? Part 1

Have you ever thought about the variety of international news you get on commercial media and how it gets made?

Studies show news editors select those stories according to gut instinct.

But does their instinct match with the kinds of foreign news we want?

In a special series on international news coverage Eduardo Jordan investigates all the ins and outs.

(sound effect)

News is everywhere.

Maybe before going to work, you tune in the morning news bulletin. Or maybe after work, you tune in to hear the latest news in the evening.

During the day, you may buy the newspaper to read what's happening or check the news online.

But how do we know what we're getting is important - the information we need to know.

And when it comes to international news, who decides?

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, one in five Australians, or around 6.6 million Aussies, were born overseas.

So does the international news we get reflect the kind of society we have?

A study on news production at Channel Seven in Sydney and Brisbane by Professor Peter Putnis in 1996 found news editors decided on international coverage by their gut feeling.

He also found they devoted very little time to international affairs.

So, what role do news editors play today in international news coverage? Are we still hearing from their guts or has the situation changed?

I interviewed news editors and three media experts from across Australia to talk about the role of news editors in the selection of international news.

(sound effect)

Here's a question we usually don't ask: what are the daily tasks of a news editor?

Freelance journalist and former senior producer from ABC and Nine News Elizabeth Egan, says they change throughout the day.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Elizabeth Egan gatekeeper work changes constantly.wav
Time: 25s
Title: EJ Elizabeth Egan gatekeeper work changes constantly
Description: EJ Elizabeth Egan gatekeeper work changes constantly
Out-cue:]

And the role of the news editor is very broad.

For instance, SBS Online news editor Carol Holmes closely collaborates with reporters and other outlets to keep their website updated.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Carol Holmes SBS daily tasks.wav
Time: 30s
Title: EJ Carol Holmes SBS daily tasks
Description: EJ Carol Holmes SBS daily tasks
Out-cue:]

But journalists also decide what news they would like to cover.

Casual producer from ABC Sydney Jess Hill, says producers consider what gets published and journalists "pitch" their idea to them.

It's then that the producers or editors select those stories from instinct.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Jess Hill meetings.wav
Time: 32s
Title: EJ Jess Hill meetings
Description: EJ Jess Hill meetings
Out-cue:]

And a lot of the time this means editors make a judgment about what their audience wants.

Editor-in-chief for the Brisbane Times Simon Holt, says it's important to select the stories readers will connect with.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Simon Holt BNE Times setting agenda.wav
Time: 27s
Title: EJ Simon Holt BNE Times setting agenda
Description: EJ Simon Holt BNE Times setting agenda
Out-cue:]

When it comes to international news Foreign Editor for The West Australian Alan Kirk, says his job involves getting the news from different sources.

His main sources though, are wire services The West Australian pays for to get content.

And it's up to him to decide which of those international stories get published in the paper.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Alan Kirk his job.wav

Time: 50s

Title: EJ Alan Kirk his job

Description: EJ Alan Kirk his job

Out-cue:]

Does Australia have good international news coverage? Part 2

Last week, The Wire delved into the daily tasks of a international news editor.

This week we look into how they got there in the first place.

Eduardo Jordan continues this investigation of international news coverage in Australia in an exclusive for The Wire. .

(sound effect)

News is everywhere.

Maybe before going to work, you tune in the morning news bulletin. Or maybe after work, you tune in to hear the latest news in the evening.

During the day, you may buy the newspaper to read what's happening or check the news online.

But how do we know what we're getting is important - the information we need to know.

And when it comes to international news, who decides?

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, one in five Australians, or around 6.6 million Aussies, were born overseas.

So does the international news we get reflect the kind of society we have?

A publication done by the UNESCO in the eighties called "New World Information and Communication Order" recommended international news editors and journalists report more on issues affecting developing countries.

It also says editors need experience and training to report foreign affairs appropriately

So, how experienced are our news editors in foreign affairs? And what challenges did they face when they started on the job?

I interviewed news editors and three media experts from across Australia to talk about the role of news editors in the selection of international news.

(sound effect)

Now you know the daily tasks of a news editor in the newsroom. It constantly changes depending on the outlet.

But what about them personally? What motivated them to be a news editor?

Former producer for ABC and 4BC news in Brisbane Graham Cairns, says he always had a curiosity about foreign politics.

Then, he realised there's more to cover in the world than politics.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Graham Cairns motivated with intl news.wav
Time: 16s
Title: EJ Graham Cairns motivated with intl news
Description: EJ Graham Cairns motivated with intl news
Out-cue:]

Some editors get involved with international news by coincidence.

Deputy News Editor from The Guardian Australia Alan Evans, covered all kinds of news on the evening shift, and then he decided to focus more on international news.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Alan Evans The Guardian Australia involvement with intl news.wav
Time: 21s
Title: EJ Alan Evans The Guardian Australia involvement with intl news
Description: EJ Alan Evans The Guardian Australia involvement with intl news
Out-cue:]

But not everything is smooth on the road.

Many of our editors were surprised about their roles in Australia.

For instance, SBS Online News Editor Carol Holmes found the way Australia tackles international news was different to what she was used to.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Carol Holmes SBS Online surprises on her job.wav
Time: 21s
Title: EJ Carol Holmes SBS Online surprises on her job
Description: EJ Carol Holmes SBS
Out-cue:]

While Casual Producer from ABC Sydney Jess Hill says personal interest often determines which stories are chosen.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Jess Hill ABC surprises with intl news cvg.wav
Time: 20s
Title: EJ Jess Hill ABC surprises with intl news cvg
Description: EJ Jess Hill ABC surprises with intl news cvg
Out-cue:]

Does Australia have good international news coverage? Part 3

In our special series of international news coverage, we've explored how our news editors got the job and their duties.

Now, we look at which countries are covered more by the media and which ones are ignored.

Eduardo Jordan continues his investigation.

(sound effect)

News is everywhere.

Maybe before going to work, you tune in the morning news bulletin. Or maybe after work, you tune in to hear the latest news in the evening.

During the day, you may buy the newspaper to read what's happening or check the news online.

But how do we know what we're getting is important - the information we need to know.

And when it comes to international news, who decides?

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, one in five Australians, or around 6.6 million Aussies, were born overseas.

So does the international news we get reflect the kind of society we have?

In 1965 Johan Galtung and Mari Ruge looked at how foreign news is made and their article "The structure of foreign news" is groundbreaking research in journalism.

They found international news coverage is determined by twelve factors, including what they call 'cultural proximity'.

Recently Guy J Golan in his paper "Determinants of International News Coverage" added another item to the list: 'geographical proximity'.

So which world regions are most likely to be selected by our news editors in Australia? And which ones are ignored?

What countries do our news editors think Australia has a connection with?

I interviewed news editors and three media experts from across Australia to talk about the role of news editors in the selection of international news.

(sound effect)

So, does the theory match the practice in our international news?

Former Producer from The Wire in Brisbane Bridget Backhaus, says she considered the Pacific and South East Asia as a priority in international news.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Bridget Backhaus country areas The Wire.wav
Time: 29s
Title: EJ Bridget Backhaus country areas The Wire
Description: EJ Bridget Backhaus country areas The Wire
Out-cue:]

Freelance journalist and former senior producer from ABC and Nine News Elizabeth Egan, says a country's closeness to Australia is a factor in selecting news from that area.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Elizabeth Egan geo prox as a factor.wav
Time: 24s
Title: EJ Elizabeth Egan geo prox as a factor
Description: EJ Elizabeth Egan geo prox as a factor
Out-cue:]

But, as Ms Egan says, it's not the only factor to consider.

For Foreign Editor of The West Australian Alan Kirk, it's more about their readership than how close those countries are to Australia.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Alan Kirk country areas.wav
Time: 47s
Title: EJ Alan Kirk country areas
Description: EJ Alan Kirk country areas
Out-cue:]

Editor-in-Chief for The Brisbane Times Simon Holt, agrees with Mr Kirk, and says they consciously don't reject any news items.

Instead, The Brisbane Times will check if those stories will connect with their audience.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Simon Holt rejection of news not happening.wav
Time: 47s
Title: EJ Simon Holt rejection of news not happening
Description: EJ Simon Holt
Out-cue:]

But some times, news is ignored because of its geographic location.

Casual Producer for ABC Sydney Jess Hill says the location affects their coverage of foreign affairs.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Jess Hill obstacle.wav
Time: 30s
Title: EJ Jess Hill obstacle
Description: EJ Jess Hill
Out-cue:]

Does Australia have good international news coverage? Part 4

In our special series of international news coverage, we've seen how editors work in the newsrooms and which international news they select.

But would cultural training make their jobs easier?

Eduardo Jordan found out more in our special investigation of international news coverage.

(sound effect)

News is everywhere.

Maybe before going to work, you tune in the morning news bulletin. Or maybe after work, you tune in to hear the latest news in the evening.

During the day, you may buy the newspaper to read what's happening or check the news online.

But how do we know what we're getting is important - the information we need to know.

And when it comes to international news, who decides?

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, one in five Australians, or around 6.6 million Aussies, were born overseas.

So does the international news we get reflect the kind of society we have?

A publication done by UNESCO in the eighties recommended international news editors and journalists get cultural training when reporting foreign affairs.

In 1979, researcher Sophia Peterson examined news editors' cultural backgrounds at The London Times, and found more multicultural newsrooms select stories from a greater variety of countries.

So do our news editors get cultural training on the job?

Are they interested in getting it? And do they think it's important?

I interviewed news editors and three media experts from across Australia to talk about the role of news editors in the selection of international news.

(sound effect)

Cultural training.

News editors have mixed reactions to it. Some of them don't even seem to know what it means.

4BC News Director in Brisbane Mark Braybrook, says his role is to guide journalists on the job.

He says 4BC has limited time for international news and they only select from a narrow pool of sources.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Mark Braybrook no language needed.wav
Time: 20s
Title: EJ Mark Braybrook no language needed
Description: EJ Mark Braybrook no language needed
Out-cue:]

Some of our editors wouldn't mind being culturally trained.

Deputy News Editor from The Guardian Australia Alan Evans, says it might help him out, but it wouldn't be his priority.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Alan Evans Guardian AUS yes to cultural training.wav
Time: 14s
Title: EJ Alan Evans Guardian AUS yes to cultural training
Description: EJ Alan Evans Guardian AUS yes to cultural training
Out-cue:]

Freelance journalist and former senior producer from ABC and Nine News Elizabeth Egan, agrees, and says it might be helpful.

But she feels comfortable the way she learnt to select international news.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Elizabeth Egan yes and no.wav
Time: 35s
Title: EJ Elizabeth Egan yes and no
Description: EJ Elizabeth Egan yes and no
Out-cue:]

In some instances training isn't as important as having access to the right people.

SBS Online News Editor Carol Holmes says she's lucky to work in a multicultural workspace and have liaisons who help her get in contact with different ethnic groups.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Carol Holmes lucky in intl news.wav
Time: 32s
Title: EJ Carol Holmes lucky in intl news
Description: EJ Carol Holmes lucky in intl news
Out-cue:]

And cultural training might be hard to get in the newsroom.

Foreign Editor for The West Australian Alan Kirk says journalists may be culturally sensitive, but it's impossible to prepare them for all situations.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Alan Kirk difficult training.wav

Time: 37s

Title: EJ Alan Kirk difficult training

Description: EJ Alan Kirk difficult training

Out-cue:]

Does Australia have good international news coverage? Part 5

In our special series of international news coverage, we'll look at media and multiculturalism.

Do our editors acknowledge how multicultural Australia is? Would they add more foreign news even knowing this?

Eduardo Jordan has more.

(sound effect)

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But how do we know what we're getting is important - the information we need to know.

And when it comes to international news, who decides?

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, one in five Australians, or around 6.6 million Aussies, were born overseas.

So does the international news we get reflect the kind of society we have?

We see a wide variety of multicultural businesses and faces on the streets, but we barely see them in the media.

In 2000, American researcher Oliver Boyd-Barrett asked if media outlets are culturally diverse in international news coverage, and his conclusion was a big NO.

So, do our news editors believe multiculturalism in Australia is important? Do they really understand it?

I interviewed news editors and three media experts from across Australia to talk about the role of news editors in the selection of international news.

(sound effect)

Former producer of The Wire in Brisbane Bridget Backhaus, says she understands multiculturalism and historically, Australia has welcomed diverse cultures.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Bridget Backhaus her understanding of multiculturalism.wav
Time: 31s
Title: EJ Bridget Backhaus her understanding of multiculturalism
Description: EJ Bridget Backhaus her understanding of multiculturalism
Out-cue:]

Former Producer at ABC Brisbane and former 4BC News Director Graham Cairns, says he's fully aware of the multicultural community in Australia.

For this reason he says he has to be careful about the sources he chooses for international news coverage.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Graham Cairns check both sides.wav
Time: 33s
Title: EJ Graham Cairns check both sides
Description: EJ Graham Cairns check both sides
Out-cue:]

Casual Producer for ABC Sydney Jess Hill, agrees with this approach, but says the ABC has a different point of view.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Jess Hill multicultural ABC.wav
Time: 13s
Title: EJ Jess Hill multicultural ABC
Description: EJ Jess Hill multicultural ABC
Out-cue:]

SBS Online News Editor Carol Holmes says she is very aware of multiculturalism in Australia.

They even have tools to break down the demographics of Australian society, which is helpful for reporting international news.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Carol Holmes very aware.wav
Time: 38s
Title: EJ Carol Holmes very aware
Description: EJ Carol Holmes very aware
Out-cue:]

So let's wrap up a bit about our news editors.

They're aware of the multicultural society Australia is

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Understanding of multicultural Australia GOOD CUT.wav
Time: 33s
Title: EJ Understanding of multicultural Australia GOOD CUT
Description: EJ Understanding of multicultural Australia 3
Out-cue:]

...but a less aware of the role of cultural training.

They're aware of how multicultural Australia society is, but international news is often used as filler.

So what's the real deal with it?

Our media experts will join the discussion.

Does Australia have good international news coverage? Part 6

In our last look at international news coverage in Australia we look at the divide between the ideal and the reality on the ground.

We've examined news editors' perspective on their job, and how they deal with reporting on cultures different to their own.

In our final report we step out of the newsrooms, and into academia to ask media experts for their view on the matter.

Eduardo Jordan has more.

(sound effect)

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During the day, you may buy the newspaper to read what's happening or check the news online.

But how do we know what we're getting is important - the information we need to know.

And when it comes to international news, who decides?

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, one in five Australians, or around 6.6 million Aussies, were born overseas.

So does the international news we get reflect the kind of society we have?

Journalism is practically a 'new' research area in academia, and there's a constant battle between researchers and journalists about what should be done and what is actually done.

So when it comes to international news what do the experts think? What really should be done?

I interviewed news editors and three media experts from across Australia to talk about the role of news editors in the selection of international news.

(sound effect)

Freelance journalist Monica Attard has more than thirty years of experience working in newsrooms, including ABC, SBS, and The Global Mail.

Ms Attard was also a foreign correspondent for the ABC in Moscow.

Overall she says the Australian media doesn't cover foreign affairs as they should.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Monica Attard lack of intl news.wav
Time: 25s
Title: EJ Monica Attard lack of intl news
Description: EJ Monica Attard lack of intl news
Out-cue:]

But there's no shortage of news around.

Emeritus Professor of Communication at the University of Canberra Peter Putnis, has researched international news in Australia for more than twenty years.

He says international news is more accessible than ever before.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Peter Putnis no lack intl news.wav
Time: 26s
Title: EJ Peter Putnis no lack intl news
Description: EJ Peter Putnis no lack intl news
Out-cue:]

And because there's so much news around, experts say editors should take greater care to inform themselves of developments overseas.

Senior Lecturer at Queensland University of Technology Dr Lee Duffield, worked for the ABC as the Europe correspondent in 1989, and he specialises in international journalism.

He says the foreign news editor has a big responsibility in the newsroom.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Lee Duffield foreign news editor.wav
Time: 29s
Title: EJ Lee Duffield foreign news editor
Description: EJ Lee Duffield foreign news editor
Out-cue:]

But it's not only about knowledge of what's going; other things affect international coverage.

Monica Attard says resources and political factors may affect the foreign news we receive.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Monica Attard factors intl news.wav
Time: 25s
Title: EJ Monica Attard factors intl news
Description: EJ Monica Attard factors intl news
Out-cue:]

And on top of all that, problems can arise when journalists lack cultural understanding of what they're reporting on.

Because of this, Professor Peter Putnis says cultural training is essential for news editors.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Peter Putnis cultural training.wav

Time: 25s

Title: EJ Peter Putnis cultural training

Description: EJ Peter Putnis cultural training

Out-cue:]

With cultural training in our newsrooms and editors understanding its importance in a growing multicultural country like Australia, we should get more and more international news.

Dr Duffield says eventually we will get more of our news from overseas.

[CutID: <The Wire> EJ Lee Duffield more intl news happening.wav

Time: 17s

Title: EJ Lee Duffield more intl news happening

Description: EJ Lee Duffield more intl news happening

Out-cue:]

So... now you've had a glimpse into a news editors' job and how they shape the international news we see.

Could it be better? Maybe. Will we have more foreign news coverage in the future? Only time will tell.

Appendix D

Questionnaires

The following appendix shows the questions used for the interviews that were done for this research project. A set of questions was created for the news editors, and the other questions were asked to the media experts.

Questions for the news editors and/or journalists

1. For the purposes of getting my sound levels right to ensure we can use this interview for our final radio documentary, could you please state your name and position, and perhaps just describe briefly what it is you do in your role?
2. If we can think specifically about your role, what daily tasks does your job as a news editor/journalist working in international news involve?
3. What kind of news items do you look for to broadcast or publish for your media outlet? What are the 'news values' you look for in particular items, and why?
4. In the same way, what sort of news do you find you regularly reject as an editor OR as a journalist who is deciding on what international stories you might choose to cover?
5. Have you noticed in your position that there are countries which regularly appear in your news bulletins? What countries are most likely to be covered by you?
6. Have you considered why you choose to select news from these countries more so from others?
7. Which news items from which countries – or from what type of countries -- are most likely to be rejected?
8. What experience did you have when you started being an international news editor or journalist? Were there aspects of the job that you didn't expect, that surprised you?
9. How did you come to be involved in this aspect of the news?
10. Have you received any cultural training from your organisation to work in international news?
11. Would you like to receive cultural training – do you think it would benefit you in carrying out your work?

12. And just a general question to finish up: What is your understanding of Australia's population in terms of cultural diversity? Are you aware of what sort of cultural or ethnic background the Australian population has? Is this knowledge relevant to your work, do you think?

Questions for media experts

1. For the purposes of getting my sound levels right to ensure we can use this interview for our final radio documentary, could you please state your name and position?
2. Do you believe there's a lack of international news coverage in Australia? Why is that?
3. According to your expertise, what's the main role of a foreign news editor in any media organisation?
4. If we have a quick look at the news bulletins on different media outlets, what countries' events are likely to be published by the Australian media and why?
5. Research done by many academics, including John Galtung and Mari Ruge, suggests that there are determinants for covering international news. What factors can we see from the Australian media on the matter?
6. What other factors do you believe affect the international news coverage in Australia?
7. From your perspective as an Australian media expert, do you feel news editors need to obtain cultural training to perform their job? Does a cultural training matter?
8. Do you think the cultural diversity of Australia will positively affect the coverage of international news in the future?

Appendix E

Methodology coding

The following appendix shows the difference between the categories proposed by Putnis (1996) and those used in this research project.

For this research project, the news items published from the proposed news outlets were analysed through the selected constructed week. Then, the item was placed into a specific category according to the context of the news item, and counted into a geographical region, specified in this exegesis.

Categories by Putnis (1996)

1. *Domestic politics*
2. *Crime*
3. *Sport*
4. *Human interest*
5. *Social/environment issues*
6. *International trade/business*
7. *International conflict/diplomacy*
8. *Space/technology*
9. *Arts/entertainment*
10. *Medicine*
11. *Weather*
12. *Celebrities*
13. *Natural disasters*

Categories used in this research project

1. *Domestic politics*
2. *Crime*
3. *Sport*
4. *Human interest*
5. *Social/environmental issues*
6. *International trade/business*

7. *International conflict*
8. *Diplomacy*
9. *Terror-related conflict*
10. *Space/technology*
11. *Arts/entertainment*
12. *Medicine*
13. *Weather*
14. *Celebrities*
15. *Natural disasters*

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