Under Construction: Images of the Enlarging EU in the Australasian News Media

Natalia Chaban
University of Canterbury, New Zealand
natalia.chaban@canterbury.ac.nz

Jessica Bain
University of Canterbury, New Zealand
jmb184@student.canterbury.ac.nz

Katrina Stats
University of Adelaide, Australia
katrina.stats@adelaide.edu.au

Abstract

Institutionalised metaphors are an everyday feature of the EU's internal discursive constructions. The relevant literature argues that one of the most well-established and frequently employed metaphors describing the EU in EU discourses is that of the 'Common European House'. This paper suggests that this metaphor is also prolific in external discourses depicting the EU. Easily comprehensible and intimately familiar to the international public, the 'common house' metaphor is argued to serve as an efficient means of organising thoughts and observations about unfamiliar and complex global phenomena such as European integration.

Exploring a case study of Australasian (Australian and New Zealand) daily news coverage of the 2004 EU enlargement, we found that the popular 'house' metaphor delivered imagery dominated by negativity and contradiction, portraying the enlarging EU as an unstable, divided and overcrowded entity. Taking into account the power of metaphors to raise the awareness of key EU concepts, policy issues and events, the imagery resulting from the media's use of the 'house' metaphor is problematic. The continued employment of negative and contradictory portrayals of an important economic and political counterpart may have concerning effects on the perceptions that the publics and decision-makers of Australasia hold of the EU as a global actor, still 'un objet politique non-identifié' on the world stage.

Keywords: EU enlargement, Common European House metaphor, Australia and New Zealand news media

1. Introduction

Despite recently celebrating its 50th birthday, the European Union's (EU) much debated 'identity' is still considered a problematic construct (Stråth 2002). Understandings of this identity oscillate between two polarised visions, namely, of the EU as a federal supra-state and the EU as an international intergovernmental organisation. The confusion over competing interpretations of the EU's identity is unsurprising, given the complex and challenging nature of the EU's decision-making processes. According to Ginsberg (1999: 453), comprehending the intricacies of this system 'requires an understanding of the interplay between national actors (as influenced by sub-national, regional, and international stimuli), and European actors and 'Europeanized' institutional norms and practices'. The cognitive categorisation of the EU in the international system is impaired by its unpredictable, 'EU-specific' mode of development, namely from 'crisis to crisis' as Jean Monnet

labelled it, (as cited in Duff 2006), as well as by the complex web of sub-, trans- and supra-national identities that EU citizens possess. It is not surprising then, that the EU is still considered to be '*un objet politique non-identifié*' (Jacques Delors cited in Schmitter 1996: 1)

Yet this complex and vague entity continues to flourish and grow, currently accommodating 27 member states and some 490 million citizens. Moreover, the queue of countries wishing to join the Union is extending, proving that this integrationist model adopted 50 years ago, though intricate and indefinite, remains an appealing construct for the international community on (and indeed, beyond) the European continent. The EU's growing geopolitical weight, its stable economic might, and its internationally respected environmental and humanitarian authority attract attention from future candidates, as well as from international counterparts. As a result, there is a rich and diverse body of literature, emerging from both within and outside of the EU, critically reflecting on the EU's achievements and its setbacks. These discourses are united by one common feature -- the need to present this unprecedented, complicated and evolving international entity to their targeted audiences using comprehensible concepts.

In order to meet this challenge, many discourses on the EU (political and media ones in particular) employ the semantic tool of metaphor, which has been recognised in the relevant literature for its potential to be a tool for learning and new knowledge (see works by Lakoff, Black, Schön, Petrie and Oshlag, and Sticht in Ortony 1993). Accordingly, the EU's political discourse has been observed to regularly and abundantly produce metaphors in order to introduce new political concepts and describe Union's complex policies. 'Eurospeak' (a lexical by-product of the EU's political discourse) features a number of institutionalised metaphors, such as *the three pillars of EU decision making*, *EU enlargement*, *two-speed Europe,* and *the democratic deficit*, for example. One of the most well-established and frequently employed metaphors describing the EU is that of the *Common European House.*

This metaphor and its resultant imagery in internal EU discourses has been extensively researched (Chilton and Ilyin 1993; Chilton and Lakoff 1995; Schäffner 1996; Musolff 2000a). Yet, as this paper argues, the metaphor of the *European Common House* is also prolific in discourses depicting the EU *outside* its own borders. This study subsequently investigates the imagery resulting from metaphor, *the EU as a common house,* used by the reputable news media of Australasia (Australia and New Zealand) to describe the EU's largest and most politically controversial enlargement in 2004.

The leading assumption of the paper is that, as Musolff (2000b) asserts, 'the metaphors used to interpret modern Europe fall into patterns that are indicative of specific public attitudes and arguments in the different nations'. Since the news media are the main source of information on foreign lands, peoples and events for the general public (Galtung and Ruge 1965), this study of media metaphors provides empirical insight into *how* beliefs about, and attitudes towards, the EU and its major evolutions are formed outside of the Union's borders. This knowledge is of instrumental value for Australia and New Zealand in terms of ensuring informed decision-making in their dealings with the EU. Indeed, based on its geographical size, its economic might and

its significant population, the EU is increasingly seen by its various international partners as a serious candidate for the role of the world's pre-eminent superpower.

2. The dynamics of content – metaphorical imagery

Interpretations of the phenomenon of metaphor are, as noted by Cameron and Low (1999), disparate and problematic. A more traditional interpretation explains metaphor in terms of a linguistic phenomenon, as a means of expressing thoughts figuratively, or as a rhetoric device. The metaphoric mechanism in this traditionalist case is argued to be based on an identified resemblance between the two entities that are compared (see e.g. Kövecses 2002 as cited in Sacristán 2004). Alternatively, a more recent theory interprets metaphor in terms of a cognitive phenomenon, seeing it as a cognitive mechanism and a means of understanding matters. According to this second vision, rather than being placed side by side and compared, 'one conceptual domain is partially mapped onto a different conceptual domain, the second domain being partially understood in terms of the first one, with the linguistic metaphor deriving from those domains' (Sacristán 2004: 116).

This study of metaphorical imagery in media discourses employs the latter, cognitive interpretation of the phenomenon of metaphor. Lakoff and Johnson (1980), a prominent pairing of cognitive scholars, insist that metaphors are not limited to the extraordinary language of poetry but are also common in the ordinary language of daily life. As such, they argue that the way we configure the world around us – our conceptual system – is largely metaphorical. Gamson and Modigliani (2001: 37) argue that metaphors 'function as 'reasoning devices' that offer a view of the causes, effects and principles that animate the story'. The greater the distance between us and the subject, the more we rely on images, both those we are conscious of and unconscious of, to direct our reasoning. Thus, the role of metaphor in informing opinion is arguably heightened in the case of foreign affairs in general, and EU affairs in particular, from which the ordinary citizen is typically far removed and generally only experiences second-hand. This assumption is reinforced by the results of public surveys conducted in the two Australasian countries – Australia and New Zealand – which revealed that citizens of the two countries rely primarily on television and print news media for information about the EU (Chaban and Holland 2005: 48).

The metaphor of the *European Common House* was selected here to explore how meanings of and associated with the EU are categorised and presented to the international public. Within the cognitive tradition, the metaphor of the *European Common House* is an interesting case. The conceptualisation of Europe as a house is regarded to be an example of a more abstract 'container' metaphor (Schäffner 1996:43), a concept, according to Drulak (2004: 6), traditionally used for thinking about states. While the EU is not a state, it is often conceptualised in international relations discourses as such. Observing the 'state-like' qualities of the EU, Manners and Whitman (1998: 237), for example, claim that the EU is generally addressed and understood by its external partners in a capacity similar to that of a state.

Musolff (2000a) conducted a comprehensive analysis of the history of the metaphor the *European Common House* in Europe's internal political discourses. In his study, he pointed out that the metaphor the *House of Europe* (specifically in the context of a continent integrating after World War II) was first introduced by Winston Churchill in a speech in the 1950s (Churchill as cited in Musolff 2000a: 221). The metaphor was argued by Musolff to gain wider recognition much later, in the 1990s, after it was re-introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev (1987: 61; 1989: 252-4 as cited in Musolff 2000a: 218) who repeatedly evoked the imagery of a house:

> Among many other strategic goals in [the 1990 Charter of Paris], the objective of creating a *common European architecture* of security was emphasised. A united Europe, a truly united Europe will be the first *building block* in creating global security in the 21st century, a locomotive in addressing the problems and the global challenges of the new century. And I remain optimistic about this. You may remember that I started my work as the Soviet leader by calling for *a common European house.* It was a concept, now it is a project. We have done a great deal. We have ended the Cold War. We ended the confrontation so now let us *build*, fully *build*, this new *house.* (Gorbachev 2004) [*Our italics*]

Chilton and Lakoff (1995: 54 as cited in Musolff 2000a: 219) argue that Gorbachev's employment of the common house metaphor implied the following entailments:

> ...the occupants of a communal house are concerned with the security of the whole tenement block; Europeans are in the same block, therefore, they should not threaten to destroy the whole structure with nuclear weapons'. Gorbachev's conceptualisation assumed 'a single container-like space in which the USSR and the rest of Europe were all united, perhaps without North America'. (*ibid.*)

Yet, Western interpretations of this imagery turned out to be slightly different. Apart from the fact that ideologically, Western Europe did not, and could not, conceptually see itself 'in one container' with the former Soviet Union, the stereotypical concept of a house in the West was argued to be different from that held in the East. Every culture builds and lives within some form of structure; hence there is a tendency, in the view of Gozzi (1999: 246) of 'equating different cultures with their respective houses'. According to Chilton and Lakoff (1995: 54), the Western stereotype of the house includes 'the one-family, owner-occupied house: a free-standing, box-like structure on its own fenced land' with such entailments as 'a single unit, a family structure, no internal separations, no common structure, boundary walls or fences'. This image was suggested by the two scholars to contradict the Eastern European (read, 'socialist') vision of the house; namely, 'a communal tenement block containing separate individual apartments' with such entailments as 'collective responsibility, a plurality of separate, independent units but common structure (roof, entrance, etc.)'(*ibid.*).

This dichotomy of stereotypical images is open to criticism, however, if we consider the *urban* vs. *rural* way of life in both Western and Eastern Europe. Western European urbanites are more inclined to have a typical concept of a house similar to the Eastern Europeans as described by Chilton and Lakoff. Correspondingly, rural dwellers in the Eastern Europe may have stereotypical views of a house similar to Western Europe as depicted by the two scholars. Yet, the results of a small pilot study *Drawing European Home, European*

House conducted in 13 European countries[1] found that 'dream' houses for Europeans (both Western and Eastern) are generally seen as stand-alone units situated in the suburbs or in the country (Mikułowski Pomorski 2004).

Despite the potential clash of 'Western' and 'Eastern' interpretations of the metaphor, the *Common European House*, and some conceptual 'loopholes' in assigning meanings to the stereotypical imagery of a house in the West and in the East, the metaphor has become a popular trope with the creators of political and media discourses, both inside and outside of the Union. This paper explores the imagery resulting from the usage of this well-established metaphor in the news media discourses external to the EU, and focusing on the Australasian case study. It is argued that Australia and New Zealand, being two OECD English-language countries in the Pacific and featuring a prominent history of European immigration, share a concept of a house similar to the Western European one. Unsurprisingly, the metaphor of Europe as a common house surfaced in the Australasian public discourses reflecting upon the EU and its various policies (Chaban *et al.* 2005; Chaban *et al.* 2006; Chaban *et al.* forthcoming). This study investigates how the metaphor of house was used to inform the Australasian public on the EU's largest and most politically controversial enlargement in 2004.

3. Methodology

The data for this paper comes from the transnational, comparative project *Public, Elite and Media Perceptions of the EU in the Asia Pacific Region.* The project's goal was to identify and compare the imagery of the EU in the public discourses of the news media, the general public and national elites in the four Asia-Pacific countries of Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Thailand.[2] The study is the exception to a dearth of empirical research into contemporary understandings of the EU in non-EU countries. Its systematic identification of external perceptions and images of the EU is argued to be a missing element in the construction of the EU's identity.

Scholars have suggested that a 'view from outside' and reflections on the European/EU 'Self' through the eyes of 'Others' may provide crucial insights into the task of resolving the on-going crisis of modern Europe's self-identification (Stråth 2002). It is argued that when positive actions and features are highlighted by Others, this helps to validate and cement the Self's own experience of these characteristics. Negative external perceptions, on the other hand, serve either as a trigger for internal change or for a defensive reaction in which the Self's features are reinforced. In both cases, these characteristics become more prominent for the insiders, thus contributing to the demarcation of the Self from Others. In this context, a study of EU images existing in the Asia-Pacific region (Australia and New Zealand in this case) may serve as an important feedback opportunity for the EU to learn about itself.

For both Australia and New Zealand, two of the Asia-Pacific's key economic and political players, the EU is an important trading partner (Australia's largest and New Zealand's second largest), as well as a leading investor, and a major source of tourists. But economic incentives are not the only ones that

motivate the two Australasian countries to closely follow the EU's developments. The EU's growing repertoire of political roles in the Asia-Pacific region requires that both Australia and New Zealand remain alert to the EU's policies and actions. Among those EU roles are: the EU as a safety and security negotiator with China and North Korea; an advocate for human rights in dealings with North Korea and Myanmar (Burma); an interlocutor with ASEAN; a peacekeeper in Aceh; and an aid donor in the Pacific. In addition, the EU's progressive humanitarian, cultural, and environmental initiatives are often viewed as points of reference for both the Australian and New Zealand governments. In the context of the EU's growing importance for the region, this study assumes that knowledge of the EU's enlargement is vital to Australasian understandings of the EU. Images of the enlargement, formed and reinforced by the Australian and New Zealand public discourses, could potentially influence the two countries' attitudes and, as a result, engagement with the EU.

Presented here is a selection of the metaphor of *the Enlarging EU as a House* from the ten monitored newspapers and four prime-time television bulletins from Australia and New Zealand during the acute period of coverage of the EU 2004 enlargement – April-June 2005.[3] This three month period encompasses not only the event itself, which took place on 1 May, but also some of the pre- and post-enlargement analysis. The New Zealand newspapers were found to have published 53 news items on the subject of EU enlargement in this period, while the Australian sample published a total of 102 articles. The television sample included nine news items from New Zealand and five from Australia.[4]

While this paper examines the presence of one particular metaphor in the sample, the overall approach of the study was corpus-driven. Researchers collected a pool of 917 metaphoric expressions occurring in sentences referencing the 'EU' or the 'European Union' and reporting EU enlargement. Two comprehensive sets of metaphoric expressions located in the news were compiled – 835 metaphors from the print sample (219 from New Zealand and 616 from Australia) and 82 metaphors from the television coverage (51 from New Zealand and 31 from Australia). The conceptual metaphor of a house was traced in 189 of these metaphoric expressions, almost 21 percent of the total sample.

It was observed that the concept of a HOUSE was used to indicate two different phenomena with very broad meanings; namely, *a house as a building/structure used for some specific purpose (e.g., for dwelling, or schooling (schoolhouse) or for storing (warehouse), etc.)* and, *a house as a household with inhabitants, usually a family.* The first version of the concept – a *house as a building/structure used for some specific purpose* – suggested architectural interpretations including the idea of a space surrounded by walls and a roof to provide protection from the elements, a foundation to guarantee stability, and a doorway to provide access. This is a structure with boundaries set in a landscape from which it is distinctly different. The second version – a *house as a household with inhabitants, usually a family* – invoked images of an indoor space, which functions as home for one family. This concept of a house as a home for residents shifted the conceptual accent from a construction *per se* to the dwellers inside this construction, and the various social patterns within the house.

While noting differences where relevant, the primary purpose of this paper is not to contrast the images of the enlarged EU in terms of a house that were present in the two countries, but instead, to provide an overall picture of how the EU's ongoing policy of enlargement is represented in the influential media of two important regional players in the Asia-Pacific.

4. Results

4.1 House as a structure/architecture

4.1.2 Fragile architecture

The architectural/structural image of the enlarged EU was pronounced in the Australian press, where the EU was often depicted as a '*structure*'[5] (Wilson 2004) designed by '*architects*' (Trade the cornerstone of EU 2004). Trade was considered to be the '*cornerstone*' of the European building (*ibid.*). The alternative political 'design' of the majority of the newcomers – communism – had '*collapsed*' (Moskwa 2004).

The EU 'structure' was seen to be problematic both in the past and in the future. The previous construction of the EU-15 required '*fundamental changes*' (Kennedy 2004) and '*structural* reform' (Kitney 2004). Thus, a '*[n]ew European architecture*' (Uniting States of Europe 2004) was necessary. But, this new design was seen as involving too many new elements and, subsequently, it was depicted as being in danger of '*collapsing*' (Just too big for its roots 2004) or '*implod[ing]*' (*ibid.*). Unsurprisingly, the enlarged EU was labelled by one Australian newsmaker as having a '*fragile architecture*' (*ibid.*).

4.1.3 Half-opened doors

The most frequent structural metaphor encountered in both the Australian and New Zealand media reports of enlargement was the metaphor of a *door* to the European building, on which the new candidates '*keep banging*' (Dyer 2004). Occasionally an inclusive space, '*throw[ing] open its doors to newcomers* from Eastern Europe' (Field 2004a), the EU was more frequently painted in the Australasian media as an exclusive space. The EU was seen as opening its doors to the new members – '*but not too far*' (Fray 2004a), 'welcoming [entrants] with *the door half open*' (*ibid.*). It was reported that '[o]nly Ireland intended to '*fully open its doors* and treat the new Europeans as equal partners' (*ibid.*). At the same time, it was considered doubtful that the EU would 'ever be *willing to open its doors*' (Just too big for its roots 2004) to 60 million Turkish Muslims.

4.1.4 Fortress Europe

The images of doors being closed and safeguarded evoked an interpretation of the 'European building' in terms of a fortress. This heavily guarded '*fortress*' (Wallace 2004) was shown as looking for any opportunities to '*restrict*'

(Espiner 2004) access to it, in spite of the recent opening of its '*gates*'. New member states were involved in a '*struggle to be admitted*' (A motley lot 2004) while the old EU-15 was depicted as the door keeper. Occasionally, this 'fortress' was seen as protecting something so wondrous that it was compared to the Gardens of Paradise – the enlargement candidates were required to wait patiently in a '*queue*' (Dyer 2004) in order to access the so-called '*garden* of Europe' (*ibid*.).

4.1.5 Walls and fences

While Australian newsmakers highlighted the imagery of a 'fragile architecture' of the enlarged EU, their New Zealand colleagues often used structural images of solid walls and fences to describe a Europe divided in the past and (possibly) dividing in the future. In the past, 'Old Europe' was seen as a continent '*divided by fences and walls*' (Field 2004b). The present reunification of Europe in the form of the EU was shown as a process of removing a '*jagged fence of steel, concrete and barbed wire*' (*ibid*.), and '*dismantl[ing]* geographical *barriers* to the free movement of people and goods' (Meyer 2004). It was anticipated that the EU-15 – representatives of the 'Old Europe' – would be '*busily erecting fences* faster than Brussels [could] *tear them down*' (Espiner 2004). These new '*hastily erected* restrictions' (Meyer 2004) are interpreted as structures used to enclose and divide.

4.1.6 Gaps and the possibility of bridging the gaps

Other prominent structural metaphors used were those of gaps, and of bridges erected to subsequently close those gaps. Australasian print and television news audiences saw a continent '*bitterly divid[ed]*' (A day of unity 2004) by an '*Iron Curtain*' (The European Union has become the world's largest free trade region 2004) in the past, while the 2004 enlargement, in which eight former communist nations joined the EU, was seen as a force that finally closed Europe's '*east-west divide*' (Moskwa 2004). The image of a bridge was used to describe both the EU, '*spanning* a region of 370 million citizens from the Aran Islands to Carpathia' (Weekend of celebration for EU 2004), and the enlargement process, which was seen as '*bridging* the German and Polish economies' (Burgess 2004) as well as '*bridging* the cultural, religious and territorial tensions which fomented past conflicts' (Uniting States of Europe 2004).

Though typically carrying positive connotations, reunification was not entirely unproblematic. Heavily symbolic as it was, the reunification of East and West was seen as '*bring[ing] together* two unequal and often *fractious* sides' (Fray 2004a); two halves of a whole that did not quite fit back together properly. Discouragingly, the new members were seen bringing with them 'a disturbing wealth *gap*' (Uniting States of Europe 2004; The new European Union will be the world's biggest trading bloc 2004), a '*gulf*' (Fray 2004b) between levels of technology, and a 'new Europe/old Europe *rift* over the Iraq war' (Wilson 2004). There remained 'cultural *gaps*' (Bell 2004), and 'clear *divisions*' (Fray

2004c) were depicted as having emerged on the issue of the new constitution. The EU's trajectory was predicted to 'move more towards discord and *division* than towards unity' (Meyer 2006) with foreseen wealth gaps that would '*take decades to close*' (Weekend of celebration for EU 2004).

4.1.7 The house as part of a neighbourhood

Images of the expanded EU conceptualised as a house in a '*community* that shares the same values and visions' (Field 2004b) were visible in the New Zealand print news discourse. In this depiction, the EU acquired some new attributes as a result of the enlargement – new 'unstable ... *neighbour*[s]' (*ibid.*) on its '*doorstep*' (Field 2004c) (namely, Russia) and a '*new backyard [in] a morass* of failing states' (Meyer 2004) (Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova) while a new '*back door*' (Marinas 2004) (the poorer Eastern European countries, such as Romania) was being used by US firms to access a reluctant EU (particularly for the introduction of genetically modified organisms into the European market).

4.2 House as home for a family

4.2.1 Warm and cosy house

Images of a house as a home for a family typically conjured up images of a warm and welcoming space and indeed, there was 'joy as east [came] in *from cold*' (Este 2004), while Russia was left '*out in the cold*' (Womack 2004). The new member states were seen to be '*returning home*' (Field 2004b) after '*wandering* in the east' (Kennedy 2004). New Zealand television news reported on parties that were thrown in honour of the new entrants ('The formation of the world's largest trading bloc...' 2004) who were '*welcom[ed]*' (*ibid.*) and '*embraced*' (*ibid.*) by the older member states, though not always '*with open arms*' (Fray 2004a). As noted earlier, the old member states were still often seen as '*welcoming* [the new members] with *the door half open*' (*ibid.*).

4.2.2 Overcrowded space

Positive images such as those described above were tempered with more cynical assessments suggesting an overcrowded table (Weekend of celebrations for EU 2004), hinting at the '*difficulties of accommodating* more disparate members' (EU expansion a historic step 2004), and questioning whether all 'Europeans [even] inhabited a *common house*' (Meyer 2004).

4.2.3 House inhabited by an unhappy and squabbling family

Images of the EU in terms of a home were reinforced by imagery of familial relations. With the '*youthful* political systems' (A motley lot 2004) of the new member states, there was an implied need for a parental figure. Some

European politicians auditioned for that role – former German Chancellor Helmut Köhl was named 'one of the *fathers* of European reunification' (Moskwa 2004) while French President Jacques Chirac '*berated*' (A motley lot 2004) the new nations in a parental fashion for their backing of the United States and Britain in Iraq conflict.

Newspaper commentators predicted that future problems awaited the 'enlarged European Union *family*' (Weekend of celebrations for EU 2004). Firstly, the members of this newly expanded family were not thought to be especially familiar with each other. An Australian journalist, for example, suggested that '[w]hen the leaders of the new 25-nation EU pose for their next *'family photo'* at [May 2004] summit in Dublin, even experienced diplomats will struggle to put names to some of the faces' (A motley lot 2004). Secondly, the members of this new, larger family were seen to be involved in '*spats*' (Meyer 2004), '*squabbling* over budgets and subsidies' (Dyers 2004), and '*tackling* looming disputes over power and money' (Weekend of celebrations for EU 2004) even though the family 'inheritance' was little more than a 'series of territorial and ethnic disputes' (A motley lot 2004). Finally, references to the EU as a family inhabiting the 'common European house' also invoked descriptions of the new member states as '*poorer cousins*' (Espiner 2004). '*Anything but a happy family*', the EU-15 was seen welcoming the new members in a '*chilly manner*' (*ibid.*).

5. Discussion

One may argue that metaphorical categorisations are just one, slightly 'cheeky' way of ascribing meanings to reality, and that literal categorisations are more frequent and more 'serious', thus possessing greater potential influence. Yet, scholars in this area argue that metaphors in media discourses are neither merely entertaining nor benign and should not be disregarded as insignificant phenomena. By having a dual role in signification, metaphors can be used both to strengthen culturally shared concepts and to create new ways of seeing the world (Chilton and Ilyin 1993 as cited in Hellsten and Renvall). By highlighting some aspects, and ignoring others, conceptual metaphors located in media discourses are claimed to 'form cognitive models which organize thought and action' (Gozzi 1999: 10).

There are a number of ways in which the metaphor of the *European Common House* may be viewed as a powerful metaphor in international public discourses on the EU. As Gozzi notes, we are all 'familiar with architectural structures because we live, work, and play in them all the time' (*ibid.*: 246). This intimate familiarity with the concept allows it to serve as an efficient means for organising thoughts and observations, even about complex phenomena such as European integration.

Recognising that this metaphor is a well-established and frequently employed metaphor in the Australasian media discourses on the EU, the imagery resulting from its usage is of concern. The 'house' imagery used by the Australian and New Zealand newsmakers implies that the enlarging EU is an unstable, divided and overcrowded entity. The structural/architectural version of the EU house metaphor presented Australasian news audiences

with a very specific vision of the post-enlargement EU. The expanded Union was shown to be a construction with a fragile architecture and in danger of imploding and collapsing. The only sturdy element of the building was its heavily safeguarded door. Naturally, the opening up of the EU and of Central and Eastern Europe to the rest of the world inspired many references to the doors of this building. As with an exclusive space, metaphors of doors have the potential to be both positive (opening) and negative (closed). In the Australasian media, the latter was by far the more prominent version – the doors were rarely and barely opened to admit the newcomers, thus requiring them to constantly knock on and queue at the door. This house was also seen as standing on a precarious terrain with bridges attempting to close the gaps. Yet, even once these gaps were overcome, additional internal walls and fences were erected within the building, thus further dividing and separating the inhabitants of the common European house into new compartments. The backyard of the house was seen to be in a mess and its back door insecure. The evaluations attached to such imagery are undeniably negative and certainly at odds with Gorbachev's vision (and that of Churchill) of the Common European House.

The second identified conceptualisation of the enlarging EU in terms of a home for a family brought to news audiences' attention a string of rather contradictory images. On the one hand, it introduced the EU as a welcoming, cosy and warm place for those who made it through the door. These images carry strongly positive evaluations. The social roles assigned to the newly extended family inhabiting the house included both youthful and parental roles (the new and old EU members respectively). These metaphorical categorisations were of somewhat mixed connotations – being 'youthful' could imply being strong and energetic, but might also intimate a lack of sophistication and experience. Additionally, while acting in a 'parental' fashion could indicate wisdom and experience, it might also be understood to represent age and authoritarianism. Yet, the remaining images within this metaphoric group carried negative connotations. The enlarged EU was pictured as a place that had become overcrowded and torn by new squabbles and disputes. The new member states, sometimes introduced as poor relations from the East, were in this way represented as unwanted additions to the family.

Positively loaded imagery of the enlarging EU surfaced only occasionally in our study of the two media discourses, even though the possibilities for positive imagery accompanying such concepts as structure or a family home were strong in either case; consider, for example, the way it was employed by Gorbachev. Thus, the popular depiction of the EU as a house, either in terms of a structure or a family home, arguably transmits largely negative evaluations of the EU and the enlargement process to Australasian news audiences, who may be oblivious to these subtle metaphorical messages because of the presupposed objectivity of news.[6] It is argued that such imagery may have long-term consequences for the EU, but also for Australasia. The perception of the EU as a house built on shaky foundations, for example, may provide a disincentive for the Australian and New Zealand governments – supported by media-influenced public opinion – to invest further in each country's relationship with the EU, despite its proven and growing economic importance for the Australasian nations and the global economy. This would

inevitably impact the Australasian economies more severely than the EU, since the EU-Australasian relationships are extremely asymmetrical in nature; while the EU accounts for 20 percent of Australia's total trade, Australia constitutes a mere two percent of the EU's export trade and contributes only 0.8 percent of its total imports (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australian Government).

The EU has been noted for its reluctance to promote its external image aggressively (Gouiveia and Plumridge 2005). It might be argued that this peaceful and integrationist entity, proclaiming humanitarian values to be at its core, and seeing itself as such from within, 'automatically' expects a corresponding international appreciation. Yet, this study provides evidence that the public discourses of the EU's external counterparts are inclined to interpret the EU's evolution in somewhat different terms. If allowed to accumulate but left unacknowledged, imagery such as this may solidify to the detriment of the EU in terms of its international engagement and its internal identification. Indeed, one of the linguistic metaphors highlighted in this study, namely that of a 'fortress Europe', has already become an accepted addition to the growing dictionary of 'Eurospeak' and as such, has become a charge against which the EU must constantly defend itself, rather than one that its detractors must prove.

An awareness of its discursive construction in the media of Australia and New Zealand is particularly important given the EU's aspirations to become a respected player in the Asia-Pacific. In this context, cooperation with two of the major actors in the region, Australia and New Zealand, is paramount. With prime-time television news being the major source of international information for the general public (Larson 1984), and the national reputable newspapers significantly influencing the opinions of the national elites (Schulz 2001), it is contended that media images have a very specific influence on Australasian attitudes towards the growing EU. For example, the image of the EU as a closed and exclusive 'fortress' arguably undermines its credibility as a cosmopolitan normative actor in areas such as the protection of the environment and the promotion of human rights, as well as its reputation as an 'economic muscle' of the world. This image therefore provides justification for other actors to disregard and challenge its actions in these fields, such as the Australian government's persistent refusal to sign the Kyoto Agreement on the basis of national interest. In New Zealand, where the national economy depends very much on agriculture, the image of 'Fortress Europe' has become firmly associated with the EU's Common Agricultural Policy. The EU is seen as 'closed' and 'defensive' to any international interlocutors, and as continually insisting on 'malicious' regulations which are perceived to hurt New Zealand agricultural producers.

Such negative evaluations are not exclusive to the metaphor of the *European Common House*; our previous research has revealed that other conceptual metaphors used by the Australasian media discourses to depict the EU also often carried a strong charge of negativity (Chaban *et al.* 2005; Chaban *et al.* 2006; Chaban *et al.* forthcoming). This preference for negativity as a means of selling copies and holding viewers' attention has been extensively noted in the literature, as has the news media's general bias against peaceful news (Hoge 1994; Arnett 1998; Ginsberg 2002). According to Ginsberg (2002: 49),

reporting peaceful news is 'grabbing and holding [the public's] attention to some faraway place when they don't feel directly threatened or affected by it', and thus risks the public 'tuning out'. It seems that the EU in the international news has become a 'hostage' of its own design – a peaceful unity promoting integration and cooperation. In a consumerism-driven media environment, such harmonious images are difficult to sell and tend to be disregarded by news editors; instead there is an ongoing quest for negatively-loaded categorisations to attract and keep audiences. However, constant negative and contradictory portrayals of an important economic and political counterpart may have worrying effects on the public's and decision-makers' perceptions. Indeed, as Movahedi (1985) noted, badly nuanced images in international relations could lead to misguided policy decisions in the future.

6. Conclusion

Understanding the EU's enlargement policy, the process's dynamics and consequences is of paramount importance for the EU's international partners, including Australia and New Zealand, if they wish to keep up with the constant evolution of this significant Other. As both ongoing and vital, EU enlargement occasionally steals the limelight of the international media, thus exposing the EU to the average news consumer. In light of the relative lack of research in this area, this paper identified and measured the nature and content of the Australasian media imagery of the EU's largest and most politically controversial enlargement in 2004, and has discussed the possible attitudes deriving from this imagery. In particular, this paper considered one example of such imagery – the enlarged and enlarging EU in terms of a *common house*. The power of metaphors to raise the awareness of key EU concepts, policy issues and events has been discussed, and it has been argued that the influence of metaphors, like the one examined, on decision-makers and publics within and outside of the EU is extensive.

Naturally, from the in-depth analysis of one particular metaphor, it is only possible to infer which attitudes the discourse participants might develop towards the EU and its further enlargements. Yet, there are strong indications that international media discourses are resorting to conceptually familiar imagery in order to present the complex evolution of the EU to their audiences. Seemingly simplistic and transparent, concepts which originate from people's everyday experiences are nevertheless extremely powerful and efficient when used to introduce new and complex information in recognisable and common ways. Although the opportunity to highlight the positive aspects of the identified imagery existed, the Australasian media gatekeepers instead demonstrated a preference for exploiting the negative or ambiguous aspects. This specific media framing of the enlarging and evolving EU may result in long-term effects on the attitudes towards the EU of the regional decision-makers and the general public. It is also a matter that should be of concern to the EU as it celebrates its 50th birthday and continues its search for a positive international identity.

---

[1] The 'European' countries in the pilot study were the UK, Austria, Belorussia, Bulgaria, Germany, Norway, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Sweden, Ukraine, and Turkey. The 'non-European' countries were Japan, Kazakhstan, and the USA.

[2] For further information, see: http://www.europe.canterbury.ac.nz/appp/.

[3] New Zealand newspapers: *New Zealand Herald, Waikato Times, Dominion Post, The Press, Otago Daily Times*; Australian newspapers: *Herald-Sun, Sydney Morning Herald, The Australian, Australian Financial Review*. New Zealand television news networks: *TV1, TV3*; Australian television news networks: *ABC, Channel 9*

[4] In fact, over the 12 month period of media analysis, enlargement - including possible future enlargements and the question of Turkish membership - emerged as the most prominent EU issue in the media of both countries. It garnered approximately 9% of all EU print media coverage in both Australia and New Zealand, and 41% of all New Zealand and 33% of all Australian television news related to the EU. These are relatively high figures considering the short length of the actual event and the number of other significant EU events in 2004 such as the European Parliament elections, the election of a new Commission president, the constitutional debate and terrorist attacks in Madrid, just to name a few, and significant events in the Asia Pacific involving or impacting relations with the EU such as the Avian flu in the region and the WTO trade talks.

[5] The quotes feature our italics.

[6] According to Juan Ramón Muñoz-Torres (2007): 'objectivity is the most fundamental principle that journalists must abide by in their work', (p.237) and 'the general criteria that characterize objectivist Anglo-Saxon journalism [... are] namely the separation of facts from opinion, the self-exclusion of the author in the quoting of the sources, the impartial reporting of contending opinions, the avoidance of 'evaluative' adjectives, the use of the inverted pyramid, the ban of first-person singular pronoun, etc.'.

References

Primary references

A day of unity: The seeds of the EU - Where it all began for Europe (2004) *Canberra Times*, 30 April.

A motley lot: Good, bad and the ugly (2004) *Canberra Times*, 1 May.

Bell, L. (2004) Push more pens: Europe - A worldwide special report - the bureaucracy. *The Australian*, May 3.

Burgess, J. (2004) Unease about Poland's EU entry. *Otago Daily Times*, 3 May.

Dyer, G. (2004) Where to the EU? Like as not, from Portugal to Pacific. *Otago Daily Times*, 29 April.

Espiner, C. (2004) Chilly welcome awaits new EU. *The Press*, 27 April.

Este, J. (2004) EU joy as east comes in from cold. *The Australian*, 3 May.

EU expansion a historic step (2004) *Canberra Times*, 1 May.

Field, C. (2004a) EU vision leaves voters cold. New Zealand Herald, 14 June.

Field, C. (2004b) Emotions flow as EU welcomes 10. *New Zealand Herald*, 3 May.

Field, C. (2004c) Big bang redraws the map. *New Zealand Herald*, 28 April.

Fray, P. (2004a) Europe's biggest gamble. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May.

Fray, P. (2004b) Poles apart. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May.

Fray, P. (2004c) France and Germany no longer fulcrum of expanded Europe, says Blair. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May.

Just too big for its roots (2004). *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May.

Kennedy, A. (2004) Spotlight on… the European Union. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 May.

Kitney, G. (2004) Old Europe gambles on infusion of new blood to invigorate EU. *Australian Financial Review*, 1 May.

Marinas, R. (2004) Romanian farmers all for GM soya. *Otago Daily Times*, 14 June.

Meyer, M. (2004) End of a golden era. *New Zealand Herald*, 1 May.

Moskwa, W. (2004) Joy as Europe swells by 10. *Sunday Herald Sun*, 2 May.

Trade the cornerstone of EU-; Partners in learning (2004). *Canberra Times*, 30 April. (Headline only)

The European Union has become the world's largest free trade region (2004) *ABC News*, 1 May.

The formation of the world's largest trading bloc has been heralded by fireworks, celebrations, speeches and singing as ten new members were welcomed into the European Union (2004). *TV3 News*, 1 May.

The new European Union will be the world's biggest trading bloc (2004) *TV1 News*, 2 May.

Uniting States of Europe (2004). *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May.

Wallace, N. (2004) Expanding EU impacts on NZ trade. *Otago Daily Times*, 1 May.

Weekend of celebrations for EU (2004). *Otago Daily Times*, 3 May.

Wilson, P. (2004) New faces - Regional overview (2004). *The Australian*, 3 May.

Womack, H. (2004) Russia out in the cold. *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May.

Secondary References

Arnett, P. (1998) Goodbye, world: International news reporting in U.S. papers. *American Journalism Review* 20(9): 50-68.

Black, M. (1993) More about metaphor. In A. Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought (2nd edition)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.19-41.

Cameron L. and Low, G. (1999) Metaphor. *Language Teaching* 32 (2): 77-96.

Chaban N. and M. Holland (eds.) (2005), *The EU through the eyes of the Asia-Pacific: public perceptions and media representations. NCRE Research Series*, No. 4.

Chaban, N., Stats, K. Bain, J. And Machin, F. (2005) Past imperfect, present continuous, future indefinite?: Images of Turkey in the context of EU integration in ANZAC media. *Insight Turkey* 7 (3): 12-34.

Chaban, N., Bain, J. and Stats, K. (2006) 'Political Frankenstein' or 'Fiscal Gargantua': Metaphors of personification in the Australasian news reports of the EU enlargement. *Proceedings of Ural State Pedagogical University* (19): 76-94.

Chaban, N., Bain, J. and Stats, K. (forthcoming) 'Frenemies'?: Images of the US-EU relations in Australasian media'. *Critical Policy Analysis*.

Chilton P. and Ilyin, M. (1993) Metaphor in political discourse: The case of the 'common European house'. *Discourse and Society* 4 (1): 7–31.

Chilton P. and Lakoff, G. (1995) Foreign policy by metaphor. In C. Schäffner and A. Wenden (eds.) *Language and Peace*. Dartmouth: Aldershot. pp.37-59.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australian Government). *Market Information and Analysis Section*. 'Australia Factsheet'. Retrieved on 5 December 2006 from http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/fs/eu.pdf.

Drulak, P. (2004) Metaphors Europe lives by: Language and institutional change of the European Union. Retrieved on 19 November 2006 from http://hdl.handle.net/1814/2632.

Duff, A. (2006) Plan B: How to rescue the European constitution. Retrieved on 20 April 2007 from http://www.notre-europe.eu/uploads/tx_publication/Etud52-en_01.pdf.

Galtung. J. and Ruge, M.H. (1965) The structure of foreign news. *Journal of Peace Research* 2: 64-91.

Gamson W. and Modigliani, A. (1989) Media discourse and public opinion on nuclear power: A constructionist approach. *The American Journal of Sociology* 95: 1-37.

Ginsberg, R. (1999) Conceptualizing the European Union as an international actor: Narrowing the theoretical capability-expectations gap. *Journal of Common Market Studies* 37 (3): 429-454.

Ginsberg, T. (2002) Rediscovering the world: September 11 showed all too clearly what a terrible mistake it was for America's news media to largely ignore foreign news. *American Journalism Review* 24 (1): 48-53.

Gorbachev, M. (1987) *Rede zum 70: Jahrestag der Oktoberrevolution*. München: Heyne.

Gorbachev, M. (1989) *Perestroika: Die zweite russische Revolution*. München: Knaur.

Gorbachev M. (2004) *Speech on the Occasion of The Launch of The WMD Awareness Programme*, London, September 23. Retrieved on 14 August 2006 from http://www.comeclean.org.uk/articles.php?articleID=47.

Gouiveia P.F. and Plumridge, H. (2005) *European Infopolitik: Developing EU Pubic Strategy*. London: The Foreign Policy Centre.

Gozzi, R. (1999) *The Power of Metaphor in the Age of Electronic Media*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Hellsten, I. and Renvall, M. Inside or Outside of Politics? Metaphor And Paradox in Journalism. Retrieved on 24 May 2006 from http://www.nordicom.gu.se/common/publ_pdf/29_hellsten.pdf.

Hoge, J. (1994) Media Pervasiveness. *Foreign Affairs* 73 (4): 136–145.

Kövecses, Z. (2002) *Metaphor: A Practical Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lakoff, G. and Johnson, M. (1989) *Metaphors we Live by*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Lakoff, G. (1993) The contemporary theory of metaphor. In A. Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.202-251.

Larson, J. (1984) *Television's window on the world: International affairs coverage on the U.S. networks*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing.

Manners, I. and Whitman, R. (1998) Towards identifying the international identity of the European Union: A framework for analysis of the EU's network of relationships. *European Integration* 21 (2): 231-249.

Marks, G., Scharpf, F., Schmitter, P. and Streeck, W. (eds.) (1996) *Governance in the European Union*. London: Sage.

Mikułowski P.J. (2004) Drawing European home, European house. Paper present at the *SIETAR Congress Berlin,* Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 31 March – 4 April.

Movahedi, S. (1985) The social psychology of foreign policy and the politics of international images. *Human Affairs* 8: 18-37.

Muñoz-Torres, J.R. (2007) Underlying epistemological conceptions in journalism: The case of three leading Spanish newspapers stylebooks. *Journalism Studies* 8 (2): 224-247.

Musolff, A., Schäffner, C. and Townson, M. (eds.) (1996) *Conceiving of Europe – Unity in Diversity*. Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishers.

Musolff, A. (2000a) Political imagery of Europe: A house without exit doors?'. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*. 21 (3): 216-229.

Musolff, A. (2000b) *Mirror Images of Europe. Metaphors in the public debate about Europe in Britain and Germany*. Munich: Iudicium

Ortony, A. (ed.) (1993) *Metaphor and Thought (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Petrie, H. and Oshlag, R. (1993) Metaphor and learning. In Andrew Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Sacristán, M. V. (2004) Metaphor and ESP: Metaphor as a useful device for teaching L2 Business English learners. *IBÉRICA* 10: 115-131.

Schäffner C. and Wenden, A. (eds.) (1995) *Language and Peace*. Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishers.

Schäffner, C. (1996) Building a European house? Or at two speeds into a dead end? Metaphors in the debate on the united Europe. In A. Musolff, C. Schäffner and M. Townson (eds.), *Conceiving of Europe – Unity in Diversity*. Aldershot: Dartmouth Publishers. pp.31-59.

Schmitter, P. (1996) Examining the present Euro-Polity with the help of past theories. In G. Marks, *et al.* (eds.), *Governance in the European Union*. London: Sage. pp.121-150.

Schön, D. (1993) Generative metaphor: A perspective on problem-setting in social policy. In A Ortony (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.137-165.

Schulz, W. (2001) Foreign news in leading newspapers of western and post-communist countries. Paper presented at the 51st Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, Washington D.C.: USA, May 24-28.

Sticht, T. (1993) Educational uses of metaphor. In A. Ortony, (ed.), *Metaphor and Thought (2nd ed.)*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. pp.621-632.

Stråth, B. (2002) A European identity to the historical limits of a concept European. *Journal of Social Theory* 5 (4): 387–401.

Street, J. (2001) *Mass Media, Politics and Democracy*. New York: Palgrave.

Young, H. (1998) *This Blessed Plot: Britain and Europe from Churchill to Blair*. London: MacMillian.