

MULTIFORMITY AT RISK IN DUTCH NEWSPAPERS?

A case study on the 'Probo Koala', an environmental incident

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Abstract

Multiformity is a concept which should be guaranteed in the newspaper industry to ensure that newspapers publish various visions. In the Netherlands, there is a discussion on multiformity of the daily newspapers, since the newspaper market is dominated by three publishers. In this study, articles of five Dutch national newspapers are analyzed concerning the environmental incident 'Probo Koala' in order to test whether multiformity is at risk in the Dutch newspaper industry. When comparing four newspapers of one Dutch publisher, it is concluded that multiformity is at risk in the Dutch newspaper industry. However this is not the case when newspapers of two Dutch publishers are compared. When checking for multiformity on a European scale, it is concluded that multiformity is guaranteed. To confirm the results of this study regarding multiformity in the environmental media coverage in the Dutch newspaper industry, more comparative studies are needed.

Introduction

News is brought to the public through a variety of media, such as television, newspapers, magazines, radio and the internet. One of the roles of mass media is presenting issues to the public in order to set a public agenda (Stamm et al. 2000: 219). The most important source of information, besides television, remains newspapers (Wijdicks and Wijdicks 2006: 1332).

Newspapers can be seen as an economic product, in which the sales serve as the most important quality criterion or as a cultural product, in which the content serves as the most important criterion. Besides the fact that newspapers are a product, they fulfil a social function in society in which the newspaper can be seen as a speaker, friend or mentor. A reader does not just read a random newspaper; he reads a specific newspaper with, for him, identifiable characteristics (Van Hoof 2000, 69-74). A newspaper with a social function can be considered as a product with a certain identity, which comprises unity and uniqueness. Through its identity, a newspaper distinguishes itself from other newspapers which can be expressed by external, relational and operational characteristics.

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External characteristics of a newspaper are the title, words, character type, pictures, margins and graphic variables (e.g. small, thick, outlined etc.). Relational characteristics refer to the role that a newspaper plays in the community it appears in. Operational characteristics are invisible characteristics of a newspaper, such as selection and treatment of the topics (Van Hoof 2000, 88-90). The identity of a newspaper is derived from a certain vision which that newspaper pursues. For instance, there are newspapers which have strong links with political parties, religious communities or interest groups.

In the newspaper industry, two types of newspapers are distinguished, namely quality and popular newspapers. The quality aspect depends on the proportion of '(political) information' and 'amusement' in a newspaper. A newspaper with a lot of (political) information and little amusement is labelled as a 'quality newspaper', vice versa is called a 'popular newspaper' (Bardoel and Bierhoff 1994: 127). Quality newspapers put more emphasis on reporting in a more nuanced businesslike way. The presentation of the news is sober, without much sensationalism. Their aim is to cover good and honest information. Popular newspapers present the news in a more sensational way, giving wide attention to spectacular events (casualties, crime, sport events etc.) and much editorial space to news concerning important persons, like artists and sports heroes (Van Gessel 1995: 15). There are several theories about how news can be brought in a more sensational way. One of these theories is described by as the 'long-focus lens reflex' theory. Articles in newspapers create a 'long-focus lens reflex', by reporting in a more sensational way about an offender or a crime. The context is not mentioned in an extensive way, only the news with the highest shocking effect gets attention. This is also the case when certain groups of people are mentioned more often as being the offenders or victims, than other groups of people. The media does fulfil the task to inform people, however this does not always happen in an objective way (Hoefnagels 1980: 28). It is expected that the vision of a newspaper is of influence on the reporting, covering and interpretation of topics. Therefore differences between newspapers should exist in the way they publish certain topics. To ensure that every newspaper publishes according to their vision, avoiding a unilateral media presentation, multiformity should be guaranteed. Media and thus newspapers are part of a society. Since every society contains numerous visions and opinions, newspapers should represent their society. This variety of opinions and visions is also known as media multiformity; a frame work where the diversity, and thus the choice of information will be guaranteed (Van Cuilenburg and McQuail 1982: 35). According to McQuail (1992: 144) diversity may be understood as a broad principle that can be fulfilled by the mass media in three ways: by reflecting differences in society (diversity as reflection); by giving access to different points of view (diversity as access); and by offering a wide range of choice (diversity as choice).

In the Netherlands, multiformity is a recurring theme in public discussions since the 1960's. Since that time many fusions and take-overs have taken place in the newspaper industry. Some people believe that a smaller number of independent publishers and/or independent editors would lead to less different voices and trends, which eventually could lead to an attenuation of the opinion climate (Bakker and Scholten 2005: 19). In 1971, the Dutch government installed a press relief fund, *Bedrijfsfonds voor de Pers*, as a

temporary provision to protect the multiformity in the daily newspaper industry. The press relief fund was designed to financially support the less adaptable daily newspapers that struggled for survival. This fund became a foundation in 1974 and still exists today (Van Kranenburg and Pfann 2002: 240). In 1998 the Law of Competition is introduced, which prohibits trusts (price agreements), abuse of an economic dominant position and concentration of companies without preceding announcement (NMa). For the last couple of years, the Dutch government tries to introduce a 'multiformity test', besides the regular fusion test, to guarantee that newspaper concerns do not obtain more than 35% of the market. Currently the Dutch newspaper market is dominated by three publishers, namely PCM (e.g. Algemeen Dagblad, Trouw, NRC Handelsblad (NRC), The Volkskrant), Wegener (e.g. provincial newspapers, magazines, books) and Telegraaf Media Group (e.g. The Telegraaf, Noordhollands Dagblad, Haarlems Dagblad). The current individual market share of PCM, Wegener and the Telegraaf is about 30% each (Regering; Ministerie van OCW). Even though this is still under the maximum of 35%, the newspaper market is dominated by these three publishers, which together hold 90% of the market (Regering). For this reason, it is hypothesized that multiformity is at risk in the Dutch newspaper industry. To test this assumption, an environmental topic is chosen, since in many countries the concern for the environment is a widespread and persistent subject.

Mass media holds the key to improve public understanding of environmental problems (Stamm et al. 2000: 219). Recent studies have shown that the origin and scope of environmental issues can differ between individuals, groups and societies. When environmental issues have a direct impact on us, we are less likely to believe experts, politicians and mass media. In contrast to environmental problems, which mostly affect other people, we are likely to rely more on the information provided by the mass media (Gooch 1996: 107). The environmental issue which has been chosen for this study is the 'Probo Koala' incident. This topic has been, and still is a major issue in the Netherlands, as well as in other countries.

1. 'Probo Koala' incident

On the 20th of June 2006, Dutch company Trafigura B.V., asked an offer from Amsterdam Port Services (APS), a Dutch disposal company, for the disposal of over 400 tons of slops; a mixture of water, gasoline and caustic soda. This load was carried by the Greek tanker 'Probo Koala', which was hired by Trafigura B.V. While loading these slops from the 'Probo Koala' into an APS vessel, it became clear that the toxicity of the load was too high and APS was not able nor allowed to process this kind of disposal. Another Dutch disposal company, ATM Moerdijk was prepared to accept the toxic load for 500.000 euros instead of the initial 12.000 euros, which APS had offered. Trafigura B.V. did not accept this offer and wanted to load the waste back. The Dutch local Environmental Services prohibited the return of the waste into the 'Probo Koala' causing APS to fear that the vessel would leave without the toxic waste, leaving them with the costs of the disposal. Eventually the 'Probo Koala' was permitted to leave Amsterdam harbour with the total toxic load and set sail to Paldiski, Estonia.

In Paldiski the vessel was investigated on request of the Dutch police, but nothing out of the ordinary was found. The ship set sail to Abidjan, the capital of Ivory Coast, and arrived there on the 19th of August. In Abidjan the toxic waste was processed by local company Tommy, who had received a permit for accepting slops a month earlier. The government of Ivory Coast and Tommy were both informed about the fact that the load was highly toxic. However that night the load was spread across several locations in and around the capital city, and the 'Probo Koala' was heading back to Europe. During the following weeks ten people died and thousands of people visited local hospitals with health complaints. Meanwhile, the government of Ivory Coast had fallen after protests against the dumping of the toxic waste. People from local company Puma Energy, a daughter company of Trafigura B.V., and Tommy were arrested concerning the affair. France sent specialists to investigate the toxic load. The Dutch Ministry of Justice started an investigation on the events around the 'Probo Koala' and the United Nations (UN) was also investigating the matter to find out which persons or organizations were responsible for the incident. In the Netherlands, political debates initiated about who was to blame for the mistakes which were made during the disposal negotiations in the harbour of Amsterdam the end of June.

On the 25th of September, Greenpeace, a Dutch environmental organisation, started an action to barricade the 'Probo Koala', who had just entered the harbour of Paldiski in Estonia. The next day, Greenpeace filed a criminal offence against Trafigura B.V., APS and the Environment and Construction Service of the municipality of Amsterdam, who is responsible for the environment and construction in the Dutch capital city. In this way the environmental organization tried to hold the 'Probo Koala' in the Estonian harbour to make sure that the vessel could not spread more toxic load and to secure the evidence on board of the vessel. Ivory Coast also requested Estonia to keep the 'Probo Koala' in the harbour and sent experts to investigate the vessel. On the 27th of September, Estonia called for an embargo on the vessel. According to the Estonian government, the vessel was carrying waste which appeared to be similar as the waste which was dumped in Ivory Coast. Trafigura B.V. denied this and stated that it was a different load. Even though there was no clarity on the load, the 'Probo Koala' was allowed to leave the Estonian harbour.

In Spain, the load of a sister vessel of the 'Probo Koala', the 'Probo Emu', was investigated to discover whether the load was similar of that of the 'Probo Koala'. On the 26th of October a vessel containing 3000 ton of toxic waste, which was dumped in Abidjan in August, was leaving Ivory Coast and was heading towards France for processing (NOS).

The aim of this study is to discover whether multiformity is at risk in the Dutch newspaper industry, by analyzing articles on the 'Probo Koala' incident in a qualitative way (Mayring 2000: 1). These articles are published by national newspapers (quality and popular newspapers), which belong to the three publishers which are dominating the Dutch newspaper market. In this study, it is expected that the newspapers of the same publisher are publishing unilateral on the 'Probo Koala' incident, thus risking multiformity in the Dutch newspaper industry. However with articles of newspapers which are from different publishers, it is expected that multiformity will be secured. Besides analyzing for

multiformity within the Netherlands, a side-step is taken to study multiformity on a European scale. It is expected that multiformity will not be at risk, since European countries are covering the story on the 'Probo Koala' according to their vision, independently from other countries.

2. Methods

To check for multiformity, the articles of five Dutch national newspapers concerning the environmental issue of the 'Probo Koala' are analyzed on external characteristics. Four of the national newspapers are property of PCM, namely *Algemeen Dagblad*, *Trouw*, *NRC* and the *Volkskrant*, and one by the *Telegraaf Media Group*, namely the *Telegraaf*. For the international side-step, *El Pais*, a Spanish national newspaper is chosen since several environmental incidents occurred in Spain during the last couple of years. Several years ago there was an accident with an oil tanker near the Spanish coast and more recently the 'Probo Emu' created a political debate in Spain. The Dutch articles are gathered in the *LexisNexis Academic* database by using "Probo Koala" as the search term. For the Spanish articles, the same search term is used on their website. The search is done within the timeframe of the 1st of September until the 31st of October 2006.

The articles on the 'Probo Koala' incident are analyzed on the number of articles published on the incident, number of words per article, page number, nuance-factor, type of news and broadness of the actors involved (Van Lier 2004: 11-42; Berger 2000: 27).

To investigate the importance of the incident per newspaper, the total amount of articles published on this subject within the two months is gathered to calculate the fraction of these articles on the total amount of articles.

The page number per article is assumed to be an indicator for the importance of the news considered by the newspaper (Van Hoof 2000, 98). The first category is the front page, since it is assumed that front pages are equally important to every newspaper. The second category is page 2 until 10 and the third category contains the 'rest' sections. The latter category can be very diverse (e.g. science, media, sport) and are assumed of less importance to the newspaper, therefore these sections are placed together.

In this study, the way news was brought on the 'Probo Koala' incident has also been analysed. To bring news in a more sensational way, provocation and overstatements are used. A more objective reporting can be achieved, when exaggerated terms are avoided and a more nuanced view is given. Nuances are often used as sentences which point out reasons or causes. When more than one vision is represented in a certain article, these sentences can present the different views in a more nuanced way (Van Lier 2004: 25-26). The nuance-factor is determined by counting the words that have a comparative meaning, namely conjunctions of causality, conditional conjunctions and conjunctions with a concessive function. To compile the nuance-factor for the newspapers, the articles are scanned on 13 different 'nuance' words, namely because, since, so that, for, why, for this reason, whereas, but, however, as, thus, although and nevertheless. For each newspaper the

number of times a nuance word is present is calculated in percentages of the total number of words used in all the articles.

The articles of the *Telegraaf*, *Trouw* and *NRC* are analyzed on the type of news (Van Lier 2004: 29). When a newspaper expresses an opinion concerning a certain topic in an article, it is categorized as opinion based news. If articles contain pure facts, mentioning only numbers and events, it is categorized as facts. When the news is brought as a combination of these two categories, they are in this study considered as reflective news.

The actors involved are also analyzed. The position of the newspapers' editorial line and the way they recognize power authority in public issues is reflected in the way they choose and present the actors involved (Avraham 2002: 69). The actors involved in the 'Probo Koala' incident are grouped in seven categories, namely Dutch Politics, Ivorian Politics, International Politics, Commercial Companies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), Locals of Ivory Coast and Other.

For the international comparison, *NRC* is chosen as the Dutch newspaper where the Spanish newspaper *El Pais* will be compared with. They are both considered as quality newspapers in their country.

To correct for inter-observer reliability, a random sample of newspaper articles is reviewed more than once. To correct for intra-observer reliability, per topic a table is set up containing the requirements of coding. The statistical package of SPSS 11.0 is used to calculate the significances per topic.

3. Newspapers

The *Telegraaf* is the leading daily, sensational newspaper (802.500 copies a day) in the Netherlands, which is read by 18.2% of the Dutch population. This paper is not related with any political or religious party (LexisNexis; De *Telegraaf* Media Group: 2). *Algemeen Dagblad* is a popular national newspaper (331.000 copies a day), which is known for its clear information and which is also not related to any political or religious party (AD). *Trouw* is an idealistic national newspaper (128.000 copies a day), which is one of the most quoted Dutch journals. The newspaper provides concise stories and comprehensive coverage (LexisNexis; *Trouw*). *NRC* is a national and liberal evening newspaper (270.000 copies a day), with no relation to political and religious parties. Their news is aimed at people who want objective, comprehensive news which allows them to form their own opinion (LexisNexis; *NRC*). The *Volkskrant* is the largest qualitative newspaper of the Netherlands (332.000 copies a day), which quotes facts the way they are; rapidly, unprejudiced and without prepossession, and tries to inform the people in a broad sense. The newspaper has a catholic background (LexisNexis; *Volkskrant*). *El Pais* is a Spanish quality newspaper (450.000 copies a day), in which opinions are highly valued and news is presented under high grammar and language standards. Subjects are current and focus mainly on national issues, and international news that holds a strong relation with Spain (*El Pais*).

4. Results

4.1 Total number of articles published on the 'Probo Koala' incident

The percentage of articles published on the 'Probo Koala' incident is the highest in the Volkskrant, followed by NRC and Trouw and the lowest in Algemeen Dagblad and the Telegraaf (Table 1).

Table 1: Totals per newspaper.

	De Telegraaf	Algemeen Dagblad	Trouw	NRC	De Volkskrant
Total number of articles	10113	7505	8325	8015	10009
Articles 'Probo Koala'	14	17	28	31	55
% Articles 'Probo Koala'	0,14%	0,23%	0,34%	0,39%	0,55%
Total number of words Probo Koala	2367	3957	7465	11811	20528

4.2 Article length

The Volkskrant covers the news with the highest number of words, over 20.000 words, whereas the Telegraaf covers the topic with almost 2.400 words (Table 1). However there is no significant difference in the number of words per article between the newspapers (Kruskal Wallis; Chi-square=4.088; d.f.=5; P=0.537). The Telegraaf and Algemeen Dagblad are well represented in the category 0-250 words and 251-500 words, but almost absent when the number of words is higher than 500 (Figure 1). The Volkskrant uses the highest number of words in the latter three categories, especially in the category 251-500, compared to the other newspapers. For NRC and Trouw the highest number of words can be found in the first two categories.

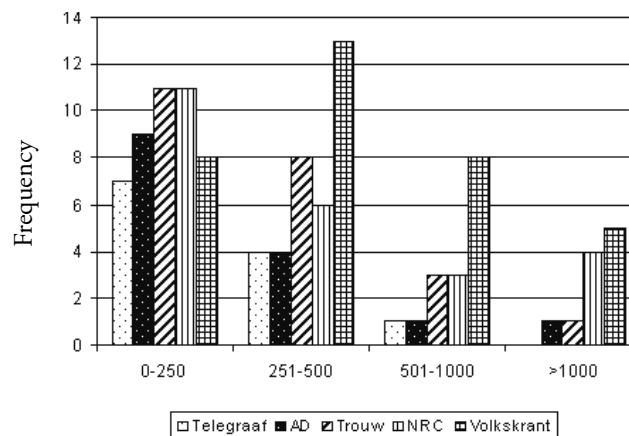


Figure 1: Article length per category per newspaper.

4.3 Page number

The Volkskrant has printed most of the articles on the 'Probo Koala' incident on the front page compared to the other newspapers (Figure 2). Algemeen Dagblad and the Telegraaf are absent from the front page. Trouw and NRC have printed articles on the front page, as well as on following pages. However all the newspapers are mainly printing on pages 2-10.

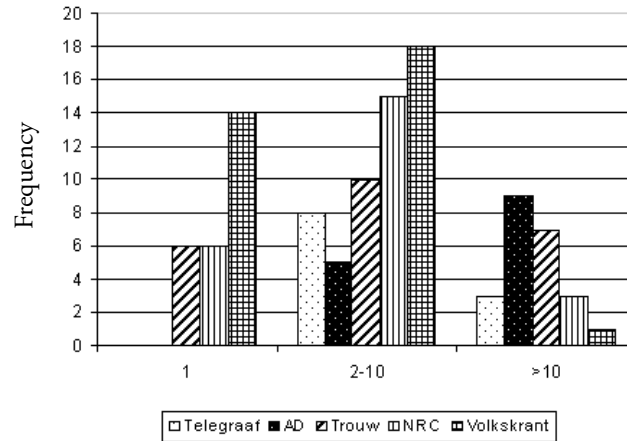


Figure 2: Page number per category per newspaper.

4.4 Nuance-factor

There is a significant difference between the nuance-factor of the different newspapers (Kruskal Wallis; Chi-square=10.052; d.f.=4; P=0.040). Trouw and Algemeen Dagblad contain the highest factor, respectively 2.01 and 1.74, shortly followed by the Volkskrant with 1.68 (Figure 3). Both NRC and the Telegraaf are newspapers with the lowest nuance-factors, respectively 1.47 and 1.14.

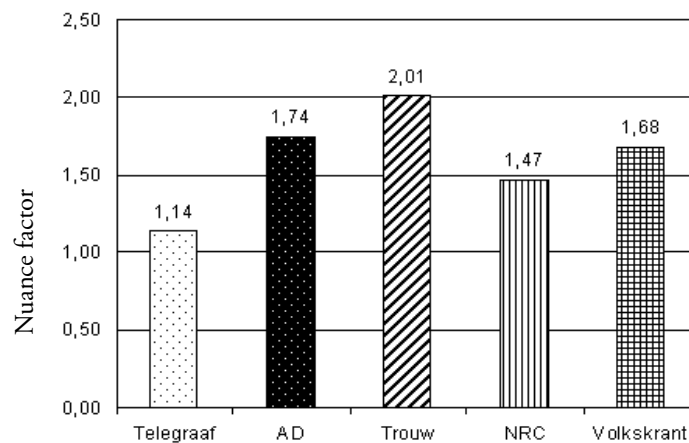


Figure 3: Nuance-factor per newspaper.

4.5 Type of news

The news on the 'Probo Koala' incident is brought more in a reflective way by the newspapers NRC and the Telegraaf, while Trouw brings it in a reflective and factual way (Figure 4). The Telegraaf expresses their opinion concerning the incident more often than the other two newspapers.

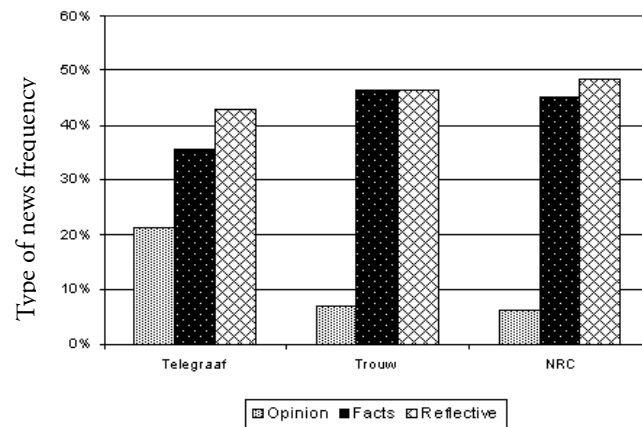


Figure 4: Type of news in percentage per newspaper.

4.6 Actors

There is a significant difference between the newspapers in relation to the actor 'Ivorian Politics' (Kruskal Wallis; Chi-square=18.023; d.f.=4; P=0.001) and 'Locals' (Kruskal Wallis; Chi-square=10.052; d.f.=4; P=0.040). The actor 'Dutch Politics' is over-exposed in the Telegraaf, doubling its presence in comparison with 'Commercial Companies' (Figure 5). In the Volkskrant the actor 'Dutch Politics' is also over-exposed. Trouw and NRC are more balanced between 'Dutch Politics' and 'Commercial Companies'. The least mentioned actors in all the newspapers are 'Locals of Ivory Coast', 'NGO' and 'Ivorian Politics'.

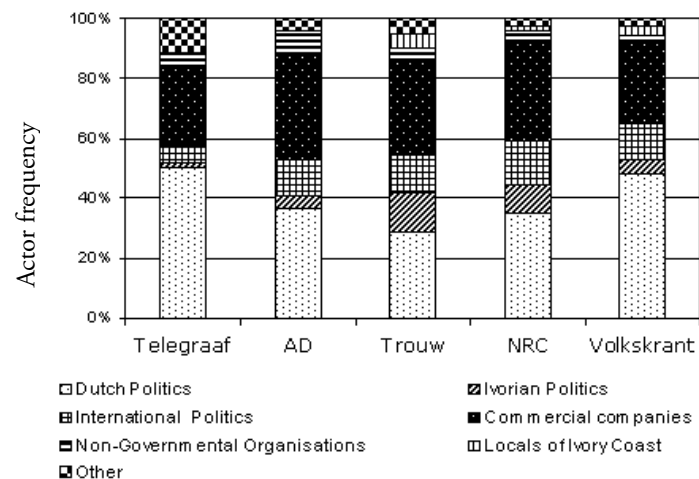


Figure 5: Actor representation per newspaper.

4.7 International comparison

El Pais has published 15 articles on the ‘Probo Koala’ incident, which accounts for 0.09% of the total number of articles published by this paper within the two month period. The number of articles is low compared to NRC, which has 0.39% of the total number of articles published on the incident. However when comparing the number of words, El Pais uses significantly more words per article on the incident than NRC does (Mann-Whitney U test; $U=147.0$; $N=46$; $P=0.045$). The articles of El Pais are always printed on pages 35-45, while NRC is mainly printing on pages 2-10. The Spanish newspaper has a higher nuance-factor, namely 1.71, in comparison with NRC. However there is no significant difference between the newspapers (Mann-Whitney U test; $U=69.0$; $N=26$; $P=0.420$). There is also no difference in the type of news between the two newspapers. Both newspapers bring the news on the ‘Probo Koala’ incident in a more reflective way (Figure 6).

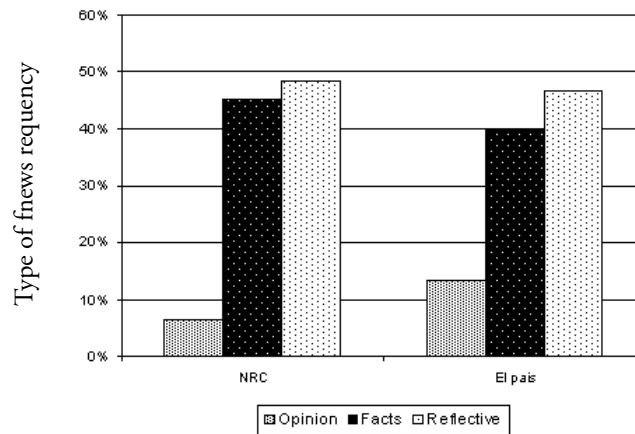


Figure 6: Type of news NRC and El Pais.

El Pais expresses their opinion slightly more in the articles than NRC does. When comparing the actors, there is a significant difference between the newspapers for the actor ‘Dutch Politics’ (Mann-Whitney U test; $U=144.0$; $N=46$; $P=0.020$) and ‘NGO’ (Mann-Whitney U test; $U=143.5$; $N=46$; $P=0.008$) (Figure 7).

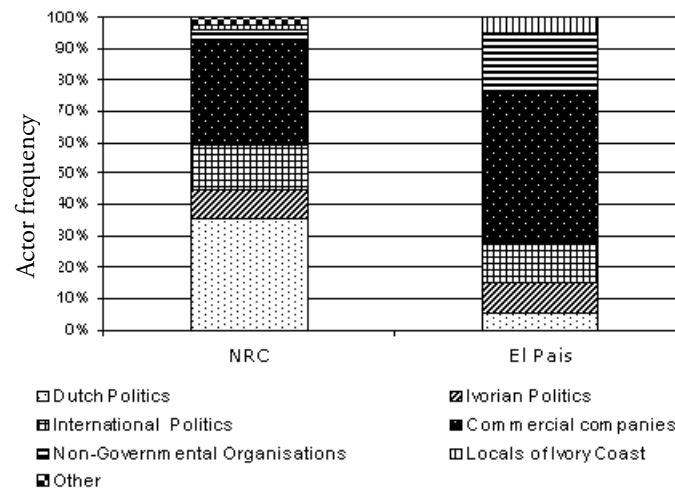


Figure 7: Actor representation NRC and El Pais.

5. Discussion

5.1 Methods

Unfortunately only one national newspaper is published by Telegraaf Media Group, in contrast to four national newspapers which are published by PCM. In the Netherlands there are 7 national newspapers of which four are owned by one publisher, namely PCM, and the other three are all owned by different publishers. Hence, for this study it was inevitable to make a comparison with only one newspaper. Secondly there is a large difference in the number of articles between the newspapers, e.g. 55 articles of the *Volkscrant* against 14 articles of the *Telegraaf*. However this could not be avoided, since a certain time frame is used to collect the articles and beforehand it is not known how many articles a newspaper eventually will publish. Even so, the difference in the number of articles is an outcome of this study. The *Telegraaf* and *El Pais* also publish on Sundays, which makes the results not completely comparable due to the different publishing periodicities the newspapers apply. Besides, some of the Dutch newspapers distribute a magazine within the newspaper on Saturday and it is not known whether the LexisNexis Academic database includes these articles as well.

For the international comparison only one foreign newspaper, namely the Spanish newspaper *El Pais*, is chosen to make a comparison between two countries to test for multiformity. This comparison is just an example how multiformity can be tested on an international level.

It is important to keep in mind that the 'Probo Koala' incident is still developing in the media at the time of writing and new facts emerge almost daily, which could cause the results not to behave as predicted.

5.2 Results

It is concluded that multiformity is indeed at risk in the Dutch newspaper industry, when we compared the articles on the 'Probo Koala' incident published by the four newspapers of PCM (Algemeen Dagblad, Trouw, NRC and the Volkskrant), regardless of the efforts made by the Dutch government. There is no significant difference in the number of words between the four newspapers, the nuance-factor and between several actors, and there is no difference in the type of news. Therefore it can be said that the newspapers have covered the story of the 'Probo Koala' more or less in a unilateral way, which is not multiform. The only differences which are found are the number of articles which are written on the incident and the page number on which the article was printed. The Volkskrant has written much more articles on the incident and also printed more articles on the front page than Trouw, NRC and the Telegraaf. It can be said that of the four newspapers, the Volkskrant has paid most attention to the story. The difference with Algemeen Dagblad, who has paid the least attention to the subject of the four newspapers, can be due to a difference in target groups. The readers of quality newspapers are strongly represented by the higher income and education categories, while readers of popular newspapers are more represented by the average public (Bakker and Scholten 2005: 7). The mission of the Volkskrant is to inform people in a broad sense, meaning that they are spending more articles on backgrounds and opinions of experts. This is in contrast to popular newspapers, which quickly move on to different subjects once the 'news-value' diminishes. Even though no significant difference in nuance-factor between the four PCM newspapers is found, NRC, regarded as a quality newspaper, has surprisingly the lowest nuance-factor. Unfortunately, no explanation for this result can be given.

When one compares the articles on the 'Probo Koala' incident published by the newspaper of the Telegraaf Media Group, namely the Telegraaf, with the four PCM newspapers, it appears that multiformity is less at risk. No significant differences are found in the number of words, the nuance-factor and in several of the actors. However it can be said that the Telegraaf has paid the least attention to the incident in comparison to the PCM newspapers, since less articles are published by this newspaper. This is probably due to the fact that popular newspapers use bigger headings and more pictures (De Telegraaf Media Group 2004: 5-6) and thus leaving less space to cover the topic in number of words and articles. The Telegraaf did not print any article on the front page, which can be due to the fact that the newspaper is only printing articles on the front page to let people get touched, astonished or laugh about a subject (De Telegraaf Media Group 2004: 3). With the 'Probo Koala' incident this was apparently not the case. This is an unexpected outcome, since an environmental issue of this scale one would expect more sensationalism from popular newspapers. However it is likely that due to the long lasting chain of events which led to the huge environmental issue the news value diminished.

When analysing the nuance-factor, the Telegraaf has the lowest factor in comparison to the four PCM newspapers. Since this newspaper is the biggest popular newspaper of the Netherlands, it can be said that this newspaper brings the news in a more sensational way by using provocation and overstatements, as is expected by popular newspapers. The analysis regarding type of news shows a difference between the Telegraaf and the PCM

newspapers. The Telegraaf expresses their opinion more often than the other papers do, which is in line of the expectations regarding popular newspapers. When looking at the actors mentioned in the articles, there is a significant difference between the Telegraaf and the PCM newspapers concerning the actor 'Ivorian Politics' and 'Locals'. In detail, it shows that the Telegraaf and the Volkskrant both have a frequency of more or less 50% of the actor 'Dutch politics'. The 'long-focus lens reflex' theory predicts that certain groups of people are mentioned more often as being the offenders or victims, than other groups of people (Hoefnagels 1980:28). When this theory is applied, it can be said that these newspapers hold the 'Dutch Politics' responsible for what has happened in Ivory Coast.

From the international comparison between NRC and the Spanish newspaper El Pais, it is concluded that multiformity is not at risk. News concerning the 'Probo Koala' incident is of less importance to the Spanish quality newspaper El Pais compared to NRC, as is shown by the number of articles published on the subject and the page number where the articles are printed. There is a significant difference in the number of words between the two newspapers. El Pais has on average longer articles concerning the incident compared to NRC. This maybe due to the fact that news like the 'Probo Koala' (society news) is merely always published in the same section, where there is enough space for large articles. After analyzing the nuance-factor, no significant difference is found between El Pais and NRC and no difference is found in the type of news. The news is brought by both newspapers in a nuanced, reflective way. For the actors, there is a significant difference in 'Dutch Politics' and 'NGO'. This difference could be the effect of geographical proximity. Dutch newspapers are obviously focused on 'Dutch Politics' and El Pais emphasizes on 'Commercial Companies' and limits attention to 'Dutch Politics'. In the articles of El Pais, 'Dutch Politics' are mentioned in relation to the 'green' image of the Netherlands, which is damaged according to their opinion. It is possible that on an international level, people indeed believe that the 'green' image of the Netherlands is damaged and that the Dutch politics are reacting on this by taking actions in finding who is to blame.

The 'Probo Koala' incident was chosen as an example, since it was expected that environmental issues with huge negative consequences to third world countries caused by first world countries would create a variety of visions and opinions which would be expressed in newspaper articles. The conclusion that multiformity is indeed at risk in the Dutch newspaper industry imposes a strong signal. If an extraordinary event like the 'Probo Koala' already places multiformity of newspapers at risk, questions arise how less extraordinary events will be dealt with in the Dutch newspaper industry.

Overall, more comparative studies in terms of different topics and different countries, are needed, in order to confirm the results of this study regarding multiformity in the environmental media coverage in the Dutch newspaper industry.

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