

## INTRODUCTION

The strength of visual imagery lies in its ability to dramatize issues, generate emotional responses, and ‘create cognitive shortcuts that compress complex arguments’ (Hannigan 2006: 77-78). Despite this, political communication studies have been bereft of research incorporating a visual component.<sup>1</sup> As Deacon *et al.* (1998) note, accounting for visual images in news remains understudied in political communication research. This paper advocates moving beyond the dichotomy of textual vs. visual analysis towards understanding of the key role of intertextuality (the interaction between the visual and textual) in constructing imagery. The paper examines the role of intertextual images in the construction of news frames of the European Union (EU) during its current economic crisis in international news discourses, specifically, within leading business dailies in three emerging powers – China, India and Russia.

Intertextual approaches remain under-researched in studies of visual imagery (Fahmy and Kim 2008) particularly of EU external media images, and there is scope for a study of intertextual (and visual) imagery within the context of news frames and the framing process. Following Vliegthart and van Zoonen (2011: 102), this study differentiates between the concepts of framing (the process of contextual features of news making) and frames (content features of the news). Using Entman’s seminal definition that to frame is to “select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation” (Entman 1993: 52), this analysis conceptualizes the notions of frames and framing within a cognitive science tradition, i.e. assuming that political communication about foreign policy is not a random, infinite flow of information, but rather constitutes ‘packages’ of established mental maps and schemas (Fiske and Taylor: 1991; Marcus et al.: 2000). The contribution of the intertextual relationship in the outlining of mental maps and schemas is considered here within the “cascade activation” framing theory (Entman 2003, 2004) which explains “relationship between government and the media in the foreign policy process” (Entman 2003: 416). This theory argues that domestic participants communicated international relations – from administration and non-administration elites, to journalists, media and general public -- are “cognitive misers”(Iyengar and McGuire: 1993; Sniderman et al.: 1991 as cited in Entman 2003: 420), who “rarely undertake a comprehensive review of all relevant facts and options before

responding” (Entman 2003: 420). For Entman, the “implication of these cognitive limitations is that what passes between levels of the cascade is not comprehensive understanding but highlights packaged into selective, framed communications” (Entman 2003: 420). Our analysis aims to identify how these ‘selected highlights’ are created by intertextual means and what media frames of the EU are activated and spread up and down the ‘cascade’ in the three ‘emerging’ powers. A systematic multifaceted account of the media frames of foreign policy produced in the ‘rising’ powers is positioned here within the geo-political context of the increasingly multi-polar world. This changing architecture of the world means that the power of the West is challenged by global East and South. In this context, media messages serve a key indicator of the ‘selective, framed communications’ about a new order of international relations for both elites and the general public in ‘emerging powers’.

Entman (2003: 417) argues that visual and textual images that constitute frames differ in their “capacity to stimulate support of or opposition to the sides in a political conflict”. This capacity is underlined by the cultural resonance and magnitude of frames. According to Entman (*ibid.*), the former dimension is achieved by noticeable, understandable, memorable, and emotionally charged images; the latter by the prominence and repetition of the framing words and images. Armed with this set of concepts, our paper assumes that visual images in the news increase the prominence and noticeability of the image reported by textual means (attracting attention to that piece of news), make the text more understandable and memorable (by providing a concrete illustration and serving as additional sources of information and sensory inputs) and facilitate the emotional impact of the text (triggering emotive responses to visually portrayed people and events in addition to the text).

The framing capacity of visual imagery is presumed to be even stronger in the case of foreign news. Members of the general public usually have imperfect knowledge of, and ambiguous emotions towards, foreign places and people, accountable through their limited personal exposure to international political actors/events. Importantly, foreign news deals not only with distant, but also complex and changing, international actors. Studies of international public opinion on the EU confirm that the EU is not clearly understood by the external general public.<sup>ii</sup> Our Research Question asks how the relationship between the visual and textual imagery

contributes to framing of the EU as a news topic able to trigger cognitive and emotional responses to it via: (1) being visible and noticeable (measured in terms of the visual-textual match in degree of centrality), (2) being understandable (measured by the visual-textual match between themes framing); and (3) being emotively charged (measured in terms of the match between evaluations traced in the textual and visual images). As the news media is credited with a key role in identity formation due to its ability to “symbolically (re)produce certain ideas of the world and our place in it” (Olausson 2010: 139), an EU external image may be expected to emerge in this interaction. On the one hand, EU portrayals are expected to feature strong EU responses towards the euro crisis aimed at counterbalancing its Member States’ efforts to (re)claim their sovereignty. This hypothesis originates from the assumption that expectations of the EU as a coherent actor have been raised globally since the adoption of the 2009 Lisbon Treaty (Howorth 2010). On the other hand, the communicated image of the EU is expected to offset self-images of the rising powers of China, India and Russia. The ‘emerging’ powers could even use the euro crisis to strengthen their own identities of (relative) stability, growth and increasing global affluence.

To test these hypotheses, this study conducts a cross-national intertextual analysis of EU coverage in the largest business dailies in China, India and Russia respectively: *International Finance News (IFN)*, *The Economic Times (ET)* and *Vedomosti*. The findings indicate that the relationships between textual and visual are not straightforward – both ‘resonances’ (in the thematic and evaluative dimensions) and ‘mismatches’ (in intensity category) were found. Arguably these may contribute to altered perceptions towards the EU. Therefore, systematic consideration of the framing process and media frames should account for intertextual relations.

## **VISUAL IMAGES AND “CASCADE ACTIVATION”**

There remains a lack of consensus on how to define framing and the ways to operationalise it (Adam 2009). We recognise *framing* as “the process of contextual features of news making” (Vliegthart and van Zoonen 2011: 102), an act in which “journalists emphasize certain aspects of a news event and downplay others” (Fahmy and Kim 2008: 445). Thus, *framing* becomes indispensable in “organizing a news story, thematically, stylistically and factually, to convey a

specific story line” (Lee *et al.* 2006) and concerns the organisation and structuring of various elements into a larger story than just the content.

Framing reflects a struggle over meaning concerning a number of actors. Following Riker (1986), Entman argues that framing is “the central process by which government officials and journalists exercise political influence over each other and over the public” (2003: 417). Moreover, for Entman, framing promotes certain “perceptions and interpretations” over others (*Ibid.*). Given the undoubted importance of visual images in the construction of meaning, our study offers a contribution to debates about EU external political communication.

We focus on the contribution of the news’ photo imagery to the process of framing and the resultant frames. According to Van Leeuwen and Jewitt, visual images and studies thereof tend to fall into two categories: images that “...are produced to serve as records of reality” (2002: 4); or studies examining how images provide a “(re-)constructed reality, as evidence of bias, ideologically coloured interpretation, and so on” (*ibid.*: 5). This study belongs to the latter category since, image selection may be based on aesthetics or political motivation (Perlmutter and Wagner 2004: 94). In the case of the euro crisis, photojournalists’ outputs are “manufactured and framed for consumption...” (*ibid.*: 95). By complementing visual analysis with textual analysis, this study aims to explore “the hidden or implicit text that lurks behind any given icon and photography” (Sekula 1982: 85).

Entman’s “cascade activation” model (2003, 2004) focuses on the role of news frames (words and images) in initiating and spreading ideas on foreign policy. The model emphasizes the role of the media in the spreading and activation of frames, both ‘up’ and ‘down’ the ‘cascade’. In the latter case, spreading ideas ‘is a function of the interface between journalists and elites. In the former case, media is a “pumping mechanism” (*Ibid.*) helping the public -- the least strong group in initiating and spreading foreign policy ideas – to provide feedback to elites and administration. If the idea enjoys a prominent public support, it “can affect leaders’ strategic calculations and activities” (*Ibid.*).

Thus, media frames – through words and images – remain the key intersection for spreading ideas on foreign policy relations between leaders, elites, the media and the public. A nuanced focus on textual and visual elements interacting in news frames becomes paramount in identifying and contesting public framing of ideas on nations’ international counterparts. Entman (2004) specifically noted that the “cascade activation” model provides a means of systematically analyzing visual information. Photo selection over others and their combination with text reflects a construction of content/meaning by journalists -- the construction of reality emerging from power-relations between political actors and journalists. These relations – observed in the EU’s press coverage by its three strategic partners in Asia-Pacific -- are outlined in detail below in order to contextualize our analysis of images feeding into broader news frames.

### ***GEO-POLITICAL POWER RELATIONS: THE EU AND THE ‘EMERGING’ POWERS OF ASIA-PACIFIC***

Framing, as a process and theory, encapsulates the geopolitical context within which news images and texts are produced. The media systems and roles of the press in China, India, Japan and Russia are understood in this paper to have unique features, thus underpinning the construction of news frames (Hallin and Mancini, 2012)). Understanding how news organisations operate in these countries is important for understanding how images and information is sourced. Crucially, understanding of the framing process is further advanced by its positioning within cross-national media research (Semetko and Mandelli 1997; de Vreese et al. 2001, Dardis 2006).

Our study features three locations with differing degrees of freedom from censorship or other government interferences. These range from a propagandistic party-led media in China (Brady 2009; Hague & Harrop 2010), to an increasingly patriotic, controlled media in Russia (Krasnoboka, online), to the apparently constitutionally free press in India. The freedom of the Indian commercially-driven press is implicit in the Fundamental Right of freedom of speech and expression in Article 19(1)(a) of Constitution of India, The Chinese press has been typically alleged to be not-for-profit media environment where “state agencies control the full spectrum of media programming, either through ownership or the power to regulate” (Tang and Yengar 2011:

263). In Russia, news media is increasingly characterised by intense commercialisation pressures, leading to media doing “the bidding of sparring elites in return for financial support” (Lowrey & Erzhikova, 2011, p.275). Yet, the media reality is more nuanced. In China, there is evidence that commercial imperatives are entering news media production in China (Tang and Iyengar 2011) challenging government interferences. India’s record is showing a growing disrespect to the media’s role as a ‘watchdog of democracy’. Stone and Xiao (2007) argued that Russian news bias in favour of its own post-Soviet government is now expected despite granted freedoms.

Our study presents media framing of foreign counterparts both in primarily free media and controlled press countries. In the former, foreign news coverage serves as an “important source of information and a potentially powerful lobbying force” (Rubin 1979: 7) for local governments and also shaping voter’s preferences. Related to cascade activation in democratic systems, “the assumption is that an enlightened public will receive politically important information through the press and in turn will provide guidance to policymakers” (Larson and Chen 1992: 82). Even in controlled media news coverage is a “prime indication...of current political attitudes” internally and externally (Rubin 1979).

In addition to ‘internal’ factors influencing news coverage, external political structure is also important. Alleyne (1995: 6) noted that ‘the global flow of news is political: it reflects and determines the international configuration of power’. China, India and Russia are ‘emerging’ powers, competing with the EU and the US for superpower status and contemplating their responses to the changing international realities (e.g. EU’s growing economic crisis), as well as calculating its effects and impacts.

While the three ‘emerging’ powers differ in many geo-political terms, the three are united by ‘strategic partner’ status in their bilateral relations with the EU. Neither a federation, nor a pure intergovernmental organisation, the EU is constantly changing, often fundamentally. The EU’s recent history has featured a set of ongoing crises – financial, economic, social, political – all triggered by the euro crisis. What is commonly referred to as the ‘euro crisis’, is, according to Shambaugh (2012), three distinct crises. Since 2009 the eurozone economy has been crippled as

a result of structural weaknesses in the European banking sector (stemming from a lack of liquid assets and overcapitalisation, as well as relaxed or non-existent government regulation); a crisis of government or 'sovereign' debt in which governments find themselves with a critical deficit; and, finally, an economic crisis in which the economies of the eurozone have slipped into successive periods of negative growth, or, recession (*ibid.*: 157). Although the situation in each country differs, the combination of these crises has seen multiple EU Member States require bailouts to save them from defaulting on debts (particularly Greece), with talk of at least one Member State leaving the eurozone (*ibid.*). From looking stable only a few years ago, the eurozone has become the reason for the EU's latest 'crisis' both economically and politically. At the heart of this EU crisis are questions about the transfer of national sovereignty to the European level, and the limits and end goals of integration: questions about the very nature and identity of the Union.

Despite the apparent novelty and intensity of the euro crisis, since the Treaty of Rome, Europe has been engaged in an "ongoing 'search' for identity" (D'Haenens 2005: 421). Thus, questions about the EU's identity and purpose are not new. Europe, though, in words of Str  th (2002) cannot be fully realised without non-Europe. Recently, the list of Europe's significant 'Others' have included a number of 'rising' powers, including China, India and Russia. The EU maintains deep relations with all three, and the interconnections between the partners are broad in scope.

Since the end of the Cold War and following intensified developments in economic globalization, Europe has become a partner of key importance for China (Deng 2007: 890). With the EU's ever-strengthening role in the world, China has been happy to reciprocate Europe's attention, and in the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, "the Sino-EU relationship has witnessed presumably the most dramatic growth among great power dyads" (*ibid.*). Trade between the two has increased dramatically: China is now the EU's second largest trading partner and the biggest source of imports. Similarly, the EU is China's biggest trading partner (*ibid.*). Failure of the EU lift the arms embargo against China (imposed after the violent treatment of student demonstrators in 1989 in Tiananmen Square) has been a sticking point in the relationship, as have issues of human rights and there was no consensus across the-then 27 EU Member States on how to proceed (*The Economist* 1 Feb 2010).

The nature of the EU's relationship with Russia is challenging and expansive, characterised by intensive bilateral relations between individual Member States and Russia, and between the EU itself and the Russian Federation (David *et al.* 2011: 183). At the EU level, the two partners share a strong economic relationship with Russia being the EU's third largest trading partner and energy being a particular area of economic cooperation. Yet despite this, problems remain in the relationship. In 2007, then-Commissioner for Trade, Peter Mandelson, claimed that the EU-Russian relationship was plagued by a "level of misunderstanding or even mistrust we have not seen since the end of the Cold War" (Mandelson 2007). Despite these, since 2008, the EU and Russia have been negotiating a new Joint Agreement which will provide a comprehensive framework for the relationship, and aims to overcome some of this mistrust (EEAS Russia, online).

India, "itself emerging as a great power" (Rajagopalan and Sahni 2008; 5), started its formal relations with the European community in 1960 (Kavalski 2008). Relations began as primarily economic, expanding to political dialogue as the EU established its external relations capacity (*Ibid.*: 69). Reflecting India's developing nation status, the EU's actions towards India have focused on support in areas like health and education, as well as a shared emphasis on growing their shared technological expertise (EEAS India, online). With the on-going economic struggles of the EU, however, and its own dramatic parallel economic growth, India's current and future influence over global challenges has strengthened considerably (Brunatti and Malone 2010: 341).

Public opinion on the EU in all three locations is influenced by the media reports -- as the most cost effective way for the public to learn about foreign affairs. The majority of voters rely exclusively on media reporting as their principle source of information on foreign and security policy (Page *et al.* 1987; Powlick and Katz 1998).

## **METHODOLOGY**

### *Categories of analysis*

Research on photographs tends to focus on dramatic and tragic images of war, death and mass protests (Fahmy 2005, 2007; Fahmy *et al.* 2006; Fahmy and Kim 2008; Perlmutter 1998). Our



study did not intentionally focus solely on images of protests. Instead our study took inspiration from an approach utilized by DiFrancesco and Young (2011) in their investigation of visual narratives accompanying news texts on climate-change. The authors deployed an intertextual discourse analysis of certain image-language combinations in the climate-change coverage in Canada. Similarly, we were interested in photos accompanying texts that referenced the EU to see how images complemented and contextualised (or not) news coverage on the euro crisis.

According to international newsmakers,<sup>iii</sup> the EU is challenging to visually portray due to its abstract, intricate, and evolving nature, and as such this paper expects the intertextual relationship between text and image in EU news stories to be nuanced. Following Entman's call to differentiate between visual and textual images that 'make up the frame' from the rest of the news (2003: 417), empirical analysis is guided by notions of the cultural resonance and magnitude of frames. These dimensions are facilitated by noticeable, understandable, memorable, and emotionally charged images. Respectively, the relationship between the visual and textual imagery is assessed according to whether it is: (1) visible and noticeable (measured by the visual-textual match in *degree of centrality*), (2) understandable and memorable (measured by the visual-textual match between *themes* framing and (3) emotionally charged (measured by the match between *evaluations* traced in the textual and visual images).

Both textual and visual imagery of the EU was first assessed in terms of its intensity – or *degree of centrality* (Kevin 2003). The EU's media visibility was evaluated through whether the EU and its actors were visually and textually presented from a *major*, *secondary* or *minor* perspective. Textually, the *major* perspective was assigned to a story which profiled the actions of the EU and/or its institutions and actors as the sole theme of the article. Visually, the *major* perspective was used to classify photographs which pictured only EU actors (humans and institutions) or EU symbols and placed them in a dominant position. The *secondary* perspective in the text was coded when events in the story described the EU and its actors as equally important to other actors in the story. The EU in this case was one of many actors, with each actor receiving equal share of attention. Similarly, photos were coded to have a *secondary* angle when the EU's actors or symbols were depicted on par with other actors and symbols. Finally, articles were coded as having a *minor* perspective textually when the EU was reported in a minor reference. In the visual

analysis, this angle was coded when the EU actor or symbol enjoyed limited visibility (e.g. small size and/or peripheral placing).

Secondly, EU imagery was assessed using the qualitative measure of *themes* – whether there was visual or textual evidence of the EU acting in the field of economics, politics, social affairs, environment, or as a developmental actor (Chaban and Holland 2008). Examples of *economic* themes, both textually and visually, included representations of topics such as agriculture, industry, trade, business and finance, growth, decline, stagnation, and/or crisis of economy. *Political* themes were illustrated through representation of political actions of the EU within or outside its borders (e.g. elections, summits or bilateral visits). *Social affairs* themes encompassed a wider range of topics – e.g. migration, welfare, social legislation, education, crime, or sports. *Environment* themes included representations of the EU's environment-related actions (e.g. EU at UN Climate Change Convention). Finally, *development* included depictions of the EU's actions such as administering aid after natural disaster, etc.)

Degree of centrality and themes are viewed as substantive elements of the intertextual news frame: “[s]ubstantive elements refer to those characteristics of communication messages that help us to cognitively structure and discern among various topics” (Kiousis and Wu 2008: 62). This analysis also considered affective elements -- the valence dimension of attribute salience. As Entman argued, “scholars have shown that the cognitive and affective realms are thoroughly intertwined...emotion is not the opposite of rational thought but its frequent companion” (2003: 429). The notion of *evaluation*, despite ambiguity, is widely used in communication studies (de Vreese *et al.* 2006). The case-studies presented in this paper involved the assessment and coding of a judgement and tone of EU textual representations, and the stance of the visual image towards the EU by trained native speaking coders. Depending on an articles' approach towards the EU and its style, three categories were identified: *neutral*, *negative* and *positive*. Language clues (literal as well as metaphoric) guided evaluative textual analysis of the actions by the EU and its actors. Evaluative coding of the visual element noted visible emotions of the people on the photos. Photos containing only symbols were typically coded as neutral.

## *Data*

Data for this analysis comes from the trans-national comparative project, “The EU in the Eyes of Asia Pacific: Media, Public and Elite Perceptions of the EU” ([www.eupereceptions.canterbury.ac.nz](http://www.eupereceptions.canterbury.ac.nz)). Involving 21 locations since 2002, including China (2006 and 2011), India (2010 and 2011) and Russia (2011), this analysis focuses on media data collected between 1 January and 30 June 2011 – a period marked by the on-going euro crisis. The focus, on the three largest business dailies with national outreach,<sup>iv</sup> was chosen due to its targeted readership – business professionals are more inclined to deal with the EU first-hand and thereby potentially affected by the euro crisis. All papers are published in native languages.<sup>v</sup>

The unit of analysis was a single news article including text with accompanying picture(s). Monitoring concerned only pieces of news mentioning the keywords: the European Union/EU or its institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, European Central Bank and European Court of Justice). The project aimed to trace media and public imagery of the EU, thus, our monitoring did not code individual Member States unless they appeared alongside the EU. Irrespective of the intensity of EU reportage, the news piece entered the database if it referenced any of the key terms. In total, 901 news items were collected (Table 1), and a third of that coverage was devoted to euro debt crisis (31% in China, 30% in India and 35% in Russia) making this topic the most reported EU topic in the first half of 2011; unsurprisingly, given that the media tend to give considerable attention to the economy when it is ‘bad’ (Shah *et al.* 1999, cited in Fogarty 2005: 151). A high share of euro crisis news in a business daily is also predictable. Euro crisis news items were accompanied by photos in 39% of the Chinese sample, 14% in the Russian case and 34% in the Indian coverage.

**Table 1: EU news (sample under analysis)**

	China	India	Russia
<b>No. items referencing the EU and /or its institutions</b>	403	313	185
<b>No. items on euro debt crisis</b>	128	92	65
<b>No. EU crisis items with photos</b>	50 (39%)	31 (34%)	10 (14%)

## DATA ANALYSIS

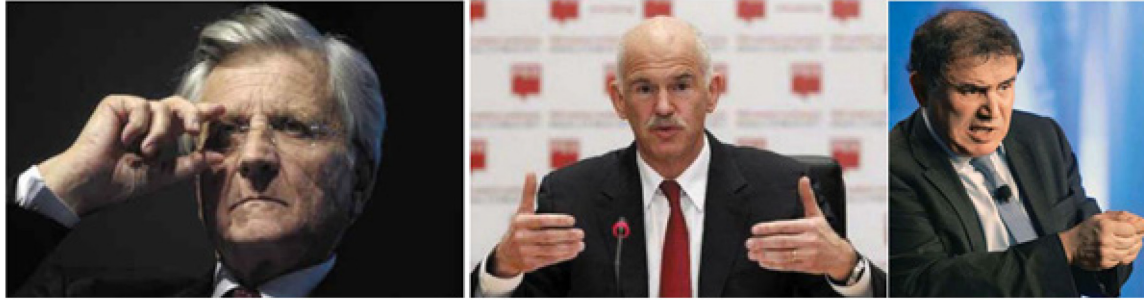
### *Degree of centrality*

This study discovered several instances when the intensity of the EU's textual imagery was undermined. The EU's visual imagery was either absent or had a low degree of centrality (Table 2). Two thirds of the Russian photo sample did not include any obvious EU imagery. In all three textual categories in India, a total of 13 photos, or 42%, had no visual reference to the EU. In China, the EU symbol and flag was highly visible in the majority of the images, although this was typically in news items which featured named EU representatives as well, so that the visual representation of the EU did not make the Union itself visible, but rather heightened its existing presence.

In those articles that were coded in both the text and image as having a minor perspective on the EU, the focus of the euro crisis was firmly placed within the Greek, Portuguese or Irish context, and although the EU was mentioned, it was not the primary focus.

The intensity of the EU's textual imagery was further undermined by a mismatch in degree of centrality with the accompanying visual imagery. Only one third of the Russian sample had a match in intensity between textual and visual imagery (*i.e.* the EU was profiled from a major degree of centrality in the text and enjoyed a major degree of centrality in the accompanying picture). In India, of the 'major' texts depicting the EU's involvement in the euro crisis there were only five accompanying images. Although the majority of news stories in China were found to have an intensity match between the textual and visual imagery (32 of the 50 stories), there were some notable cases of mismatch, particularly in those stories in which the EU was the major focus, where more than half had no visual representation of the EU.

Most news items featuring EU-centric pictures which matched the major degree of EU centrality in the text depicted EU bureaucrats solving (or attempting to solve) the crisis. Overwhelmingly the dominant individual *people* image of the euro crisis in the three papers was individual white men. Generally, they were older, often wearing glasses (arguably delivering a message of experience and wisdom), and all wearing dark suits (rendering a notion of professionalism in dealing with the crisis).



**Figure 1. Sources (left to right): IFN, 25/3/2011, p. 4; IFN, 8/3/2011, p. 4; Vedomosti, 15/6/2011, p. 1.**

This typical image of Europe reflects the findings of previous research (Bain, 2007) and of the common critique of an EU staffed by ‘faceless eurocrats’. The men were typically portrayed speaking to cameras and in tight head and shoulder shots, thus giving them a considerable degree of importance – the pictorial denotation reflected the textual framing that these men had something important to say relating to the on-going crisis. Their expressions were usually concerned or anxious; indicating that despite their rhetoric of solidarity and determination, the crisis remained a major problem. In Russia, the photos portrayed the financial leaders of the EU: the former and incoming heads of the ECB, Jean Claude Trichet, Wim Duisenberg and Mario Draghi. In China, the gallery included two photos of von Rompuy, and several other EU ‘leaders’, including Barosso, Trichet and Klaus Regling, CEO of the newly created European Financial Stability Facility. In India, Trichet was also the most-depicted EU representative. Despite the major focus, international recognition of these actors is doubtful. Often no name was provided, requiring expert knowledge to know who the picture portrayed. For an unfamiliar reader, this ‘major’ visual centrality would be less effective. Consequently, questioning the efficacy of these images in presenting a clear EU image to international news audiences.

Despite representatives of the EU being prominent in these EU “major” stories, in only one of the five instances in China was the EU’s symbolism apparent. In India, only one illustration in the major-major category featured the euro symbol covered in euro cents. No EU symbolism was observed in Russia.

Arguably, framing of the EU with scarce visual images means that EU frames have poor visibility and impact – which consequently diminishes the magnitude and cultural congruency of

EU media frames and potentially shapes the EU into a media subject that is not viewed as meaningful for activating and spreading ideas along the “cascade”. The press framing of the EU as an international economic actor, addressing the euro crisis, was impaired by minor and mismatched intertextuality, creating an image that was either absent or unimportant in dealing with this crisis, thus questioning the authority of the individual images discussed above.

**Table 2: Degree of centrality in EU textual and visual imagery**

	Russia		China		India	
	Text	Photos	Text	Photos	Text	Photos
<b>Major</b>	7 Major	3 Major 4 Absent	12 Major	5 Major 7 Minor	15 Major	5 Major 2 Secondary 5 Minor 3 Absent
<b>Secondary</b>	2 Secondary	2 Absent	10 Secondary	4 Major 3 Minor 3 Secondary	11 Secondary	1 Major 3 Minor 7 Absent
<b>Minor</b>	1 Minor	1 Absent	28 Minor	1 Major 24 Minor 3 Secondary	3 Minor	3 Absent

### *Evaluation*

Generally, visual evaluations rendered echoed assessments carried textually (Table 3). Although this was clearer in Russia, in China only 46% of the total sample had an evaluative match between the text and image (15 of the 33 neutrally framed stories were accompanied by a neutral image, and 8 of the 17 negative stories had a negative image). In the Indian case, over half the images were mismatched with the text.

Whereas in the *centrality* category the mismatch between textual and visual images was generally to the detriment of the EU, in evaluations there were more cases of visual imagery neutralizing or strengthening a negative EU textual frame than there were of negative images damaging a positive one. This positive mismatch was most visible in China and India. A third of all stories with a negative or neutral textual evaluation in the *IFN* had either a neutral or positive visual image accompanying them. In India, of the 8 articles which negatively referenced the EU in the text, only two photos were correspondingly negative, the rest displayed a neutral image.

Whereas the Russian press focused almost exclusively on images of male politicians, Chinese coverage included a considerable number of images of identified women. Angela Merkel and Christine Lagarde were the two most prominent, and much like their male counterparts, they were depicted speaking to camera (with the exception of one image of Merkel and Nicholas Sarkozy, in which Merkel pulled away from Sarkozy and their body language indicated dislike). Interestingly, Merkel was always depicted with an expression of concern, at times bordering on anger or frustration, while Lagarde was typically seen relaxed and smiling (the only individual with a smile in the Chinese sample). Merkel also appeared in the Indian coverage. In Russia, one exception to male dominance was Greek protestors with pots and pans featuring three unidentified elderly women.



**Figure 2. Sources (left to right): IFN, 7/3/2011, p. 4; IFN, 16/3/2011, p. 4; IFN, 25/3/2011, p. 4**

The leading ‘group’ images were of protesters. Photos of civilians demonstrating against austerity measures contained the most emotive imagery of the sample -- images filled with hostility and anger. Often these images included groups of riot or military police, and in these the police were often seen to be under attack. The Chinese sample included a shocking image of a policeman who had been set on fire. Arguably the positioning of civil servants as under attack denotes a sentiment by the newspaper in support of the state, rather than the protestors (perhaps unsurprising from a Chinese newspaper). Interestingly, despite the intense negative evaluation associated with such images, overall our study observed a deficit of images of crowds. Arguably, photo imagery was not led by a ‘populous’ sentiment, but presented the euro crisis as an arena for professionals. In a way, this is a positive outcome for the EU as the message is that the ‘crisis will be handled’ by experts.





**Figure 3. Source: IFN 25/2/2011**

With *emotive charge* a core element of the frames that comprise an impact in the activation spreading of ideas, this analysis discovered an overall trend of an ‘upgrade’ in terms of the evaluation visual images provided to textual images. This trend can be viewed as a positive development for the EU’s image in the business press of three ‘rising’ powers. However, neutral images and neutral textual discourse were the overall norm, – meaning a low emotive charge challenging to activating the spread of ideas when the EU news frames ‘cascade down’. This is especially of concern in a topic like the euro crisis where the EU arguably needs to be seen as an actor able to produce an impact and elicit strong reactions. Observed neutrality – while preferable to overtly negative imagery – does not help achieve an overall image that the EU would arguably desire in the three ‘rising powers’.

**Table 3: Evaluation of EU textual and visual imagery**

	Russia		China		India	
	Text	Photo	Text	Photo	Text	Photo
<b>Negative</b>	2	3	17	19	8	10
<b>Neutral</b>	8	4	33	22	20	15
<b>Positive</b>	0	1	0	8	1	5

*Thematic framing:*



In Russia, the majority of the economy-themed text sample (8 out of 10 pieces of observed news) was supported by economically-themed photos. These were either identified financial leaders (ECB chief, prominent business people), experts on economic matters (an NYU professor), or anonymous stockbrokers (Table 4).<sup>vi</sup>



**Figure 4. Source: Vedomosti, 17/6/2011, p. 14**

In China, this alignment between the visual and textual was less clear. Less than half the economically-themed stories had a correspondingly economic image (typically an ECB representative, or Member States finance ministers, but also images of stock-markets and banks). Yet, 36% of the Chinese sample had a political image attached to an economically focused story. These were often images of politicians (such as Member State leaders or EU political representatives), but also included images of Greek protestors -- highly politicized with clear power imbalances.

A substantial share of a thematic ‘mismatch’ between the visual and textual imagery was observed in India. Of the 29 articles identified, only 51% of the photos depicted economically-related images. As with the Chinese case, many of the featured pictures were politicized. Instances of this case were dominated by Member State leaders or protesters.

Two types of groups featured in the visual images, one of which was politicians. These images were interpreted as adding a political theme to the article regardless of the textual theme. In

China's *IFN*, photos included images of small groups of politicians engaged in meetings or press conferences. One notable exception was an image of three EU leaders (von Rompuy, Barosso and Hungarian PM Viktor Orban) sitting beneath an EU flag, each wearing a different expression: Orban has his hands over his eyes, von Rompuy stares down at the table in front of him and Barosso is listening to headphones. The overall image is analogous to the 'hear no evil, see no evil, speak no evil' monkeys from popular culture, and arguably paints a rather negative image of three leaders as unable or unwilling to deal with the reality they face.



**Figure 5.** Source: *IFN* 28/03/2011 p. 4

While the focus of the news stories might have been strictly economic in the text, the image associated often politicized this debate. This is unsurprising given the politics surrounding the euro crisis, and the difficulty of separating the two. Equally, this finding might be attributed to the reality of protest imagery providing an exciting visual narrative to accompany news articles about topics otherwise considered dull by readers. Yet, thematic 'mismatches' between textual and visual imagery are argued to be counterproductive to efficient information processing by readers -- impacting understanding and knowledge about the EU – another core element in the cultural resonance of frames. A frame that is not understandable and memorable is not successful in activating and spreading ideas within the "cascade activation" model.

**Table 4: Thematic frames of EU textual and visual imagery**

	Russia		China		India	
	Text	Photo	Text	Photo	Text	Photo
<b>Economic</b>	10	8	50	25	29	15
<b>Political</b>	0	1	0	20	0	8
<b>Social</b>	0	1	0	5	0	4
<b>Environmental</b>	0	0	0	0	0	2
<b>Developmental</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Mass communication is “saturated with images” (Deacon *et al.* 1998: 185). In an increasingly visualized world, the visual informs our very first and most profound decisions (Gladwell 2005 quoted in De Vries 2008). Yet despite this, Deacon *et al.* (1998: 85) note that “[the] work on the visual dimensions of [mass] media remains relatively under-developed”<sup>vii</sup> and systematic insights into the intertextual relation between visual and textual elements are rare. This study attempted to address these scholarly deficits recognizing that while images do “offer... the actual witnessing of reality ... [and] substantiate an objective record of what actually happened,” inevitably they also have to “catch up with the event, or rather the event as it has become a news event” (*ibid*). Positing its inquiry within “cascade activation”, this analysis re-emphasized the importance of visual images in framing. Entman’s mass communication theory is useful for tracking the interaction of visual and textual imagery in the context of the frames’ *cultural resonance* and assessing its contribution to the “cascading activation” of ideas. Intertextual relationships were assessed in terms of its creation of visible and noticeable, understandable, memorable and emotionally charged frames. These are credited with the potential for activating the spreading of ideas up and down the ‘cascade’ and with becoming a key contributor to the ‘selective, framed communications’ on foreign policy and international relations between different levels of the network – administration and non-administration elites, media and the general public – all operating with various degrees of cognitive limitations.

While visual images are powerful in raising the prominence of news stories, our analysis exploring intertextuality in the degree of centrality and themes and evaluation, has demonstrated that the interaction between textual and visual elements in each category fails to produce influential news frames about the EU. During the euro crisis, the scrutinising eyes of the world have watched the EU’s reaction. No solution is clear, as Commission President Barroso (2011) acknowledged: “our citizens, the markets, and our partners in the world have not yet been convinced that we are capable of taking on [this] fight and winning it decisively”. In this light, our first hypothesis – that intertextual images will evoke external recognition of a strong EU response to the euro crisis -- was not supported. In our study, intertextual frames undermined the EU’s media visibility when the intensity of visual images was low or absent and when intensity ‘mismatches’ were found. The resulting interaction between text and image made the EU’s frame

less understandable and memorable when the thematic focus of the associated pictures did not coincide with the text. Arguably, thematic ‘mismatches’ introduced cognitive puzzles complicating recognition and understanding of this complex supranational actor tackling its crisis. The EU’s categorization was once again a cliché of a bureaucrat, this time in opposition to unhappy crowds of ordinary European citizens. Despite occasional evaluation ‘mismatches’ in the three samples when visual imagery ‘upgraded’ the EU’s textual images, overall intertextual relations framed the EU as lacking an emotional charge. Despite the potential for conflict, the EU was reported from a predominantly neutral perspective, arguably not meaningfully connecting with international news audiences. Despite its economic and strategic importance, the EU remains distant, ideologically, geographically and/or familiarly, for China, India and Russia.

The second hypothesis – that the intertextual image of the EU (the ‘Other’) in crisis is used by the ‘emerging powers’ discourses to strengthen their own identities as ‘rising’, stable and affluent actors – was supported. The EU’s visual narratives delivered the message that the once successful, powerful and even arrogant Europe is in trouble. Arguably, the EU’s intertextual portrayal in global business news media constructs Europe as failing to deal with its financial problems. There is perhaps a sense of quiet anticipation on behalf of its external partners who may seize the opportunity to fill the space in international markets for a stable leader.

Our findings suggest that ‘weak’ and mismatched intertextual frames of the EU ‘in crisis’ were observed in the three countries irrespective of their diverse media and political contexts. This renders the conclusion that the quality of the subject of reportage (*i.e.* abstract vs. concrete, familiar vs. unfamiliar, distant vs. close), will influence the process of intertextual framing in various media systems: the more abstract, unknown and complex the concept, the more intertextual mismatches could be expected. However, it is important to remember that these very qualities make the EU more ambiguous, and such events “present more opportunities for players outside of administration, including the media themselves, to affect framing” (Entman 2004: 50). A much more nuanced framing process should be anticipated and accounted for when analysing *external* media images of international partners. In our case, occasional parallels in thematic and evaluative aspects between the textual and visual images of the EU arguably intensified the cultural resonance and thus the influence of news frames, yet the generally low visibility of EU-

themed photo imagery and mismatches in intensity of EU representations in all three countries suggest that the photo imagery does not convey an idea of the EU as a recognizably competent actor in dealing with its crisis. Instead it was the EU's elites who were portrayed as being in charge -- a message appropriate for national (business) elites. Arguably, the business papers rendered a certain dichotomy in their visual message: despite the crisis, elites are still in charge, even if the crowds are raging. These elites, though, continue to experience anxiety about their efforts. Perhaps the detected anxieties were in anticipation of how their 'solutions' would be received by an angry public.

The implications of this interaction for the EU's global image and identity are manifold given the EU's aspirations to be a leading world player and the rise to prominence of the three countries in the case study. Manners and Whitman (1998: 237) have noted that to account for the totality of the EU's identity and how this is understood, multiple standpoints must be considered. Arguably, one such standpoint would be perceptions of the EU held by those outside of its borders. Indeed, Bretherton and Vogler (1999: 45) have argued that an incorporation of this external focus into the EU debate may play an important role in the development of coherent internal EU policies.

This study observed the interaction of the textual and visual in three aspects – intensity, evaluation and thematic framing. Future studies may explore other areas -- the focus of domesticity of textual *vs.* visual reportage or textual *vs.* visual metaphors. The former could be a useful indicator to assess motivation, power and strategy, and cultural congruence as the three key variables in the “cascade activation” theory. The latter is particularly suitable for the study of political cartoons accompanying texts. The research agenda of textual *vs.* visual interaction in framing processes could be also extended to other press genres and to different media. Finally, future studies could link this study of news frames with the analysis of public and elite opinion. Despite limitations, this study is among the first to observe the interaction of the visual and textual in the framing of the EU in global news discourses.

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<sup>i</sup> With the exception of studies of conflict and war – as discussed below

<sup>ii</sup> See for example relevant publications of the research project "The EU in the Eyes of Asia-Pacific" <http://euperceptions.canterbury.ac.nz>.

<sup>iii</sup> Interviews conducted with Asia-Pacific newsmakers from 21 countries. ("The EU in the Eyes of Asia Pacific", 2002-2012).

<sup>iv</sup> Daily circulation of *IFN* is 300,000 copies; *ET* 757,000 copies, and *Vedomosti* 75,000 copies..

<sup>v</sup> English is one of India's national languages.

<sup>vi</sup> The photos of civilians demonstrating against austerity measures were categorized as part of the social affairs category in the Russian press (only one such observed image was identified). They were cast as 'social' as, unlike the Chinese and Indian coverage, in the Russian case, there were no police or politicians or political buildings evident in the protest – just ordinary stressed civilians.

<sup>vii</sup> It is important to note here that art history and similar disciplines have been studying the significance of artistic images for centuries. Deacon *et al.*'s reference here is to the relative lack of studies examining the images of television, film and other mass communications with 'pictures'.