

## THE DOMESTICATION OF EUROPEAN NEWS: THE POLISH EXAMPLE

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There is a variety of literature on the media coverage of the European Union. However, most authors seem to agree that a fully functioning European public sphere is not yet a reality. One of the factors that could impede its creation is the domestication of the news on the European Union, exemplified in the analysed article. An article published in Polish by *Gazeta Wyborcza* (Bielecki, 2014) and entitled, “Co dla Polaków w Unii. Dziś pierwsze posiedzenie nowego europarlamentu” (“What Poles get from EU. The first meeting of the new EP”, my translation), describes the first session of the new European Parliament at the end of June, focusing on the Polish perspective. The domestication could be tracked by the fact that the majority of actors, defined as individuals (e.g. MEPs) or groups of persons (e.g. political parties), are domestic. The examined article mentions 15 actors from the country of the news outlet, compared to 11 foreign or EU actors. Moreover, the angle from which the news is presented has national character, concentrating on the effects of the nominations and allocations of functions on Poland.

The presented article features national domestication, as the EU news is subjected to “domestic adaptation with national colors”. Consequently, it strengthens the “us” versus “them” distinction, in this case Poland versus Europe, which hinders a common European sense of belonging. The detected domestic bias would correspond with other studies that note that even during election campaigns, one of the rare truly pan-European events, the coverage of the European Union across member states is still national in focus.

Having acquainted themselves with the article, participants at the CIDOB workshop listed numerous reasons for the prevalence of the nationally domesticated news. Some focused on the role of the media. They recognised the media’s inherent nationalism, emphasising that their role is to provide news for national audiences within specific linguistic and cultural boundaries. Others mentioned that insufficient EU knowledge among journalists or a declining number of EU correspondents could also lead to domesticated coverage. Moreover, some of the participants pointed towards the influence of journalistic news values and the role of

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proximity in determining the newsworthiness of an event, as featured, for instance, in the most prominent list of news values proposed by Galtung and Ruge (1965).

Undoubtedly, the media is not the only responsible party, with some of the participants blaming citizens' detachment from the European Union. In this sense, domestic bias could be driven by 'EU fatigue', citizens' lack of interest and knowledge about the EU and the inability to see the significance of EU affairs for their daily lives.

In their proposed ways to improve the quality of EU news coverage and decrease the amount of domestication in EU coverage, the participants incorporated utopian or realist perspectives on the European public sphere. Some of them proposed the introduction of new denationalised channels of communication, which would correspond to the utopian vision of a unified pan-European media sphere that stretches beyond nation states. Others have rejected the idea of pan-European media, doubting that it would attract sufficient audience. Instead, they suggested a change in reporting, with stories focusing on the interconnections between different countries, giving more voice to actors from the EU and other member states. This idea corresponds to the realist perspective, which favours Europeanised national public spaces with interlinked communicative spaces connecting different national public spheres.

All in all, participants in the seminar acknowledged that the coverage of the EU is characterised by a low degree of Europeanisation on the one hand and a high level of domestication on the other. However, some of them also remarked that despite discouraging the creation of a European public sphere, the national angle can also have positive implications. For instance, by relating EU politics and institutions to a national context, the organisation and work of the European Union could become more comprehensible to the citizens of member states. Consequently, the issue of domestication is not clear-cut and thus demands further investigation.

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