

F. Philippines – Researcher: Maita Santiago

i. Discussion

Maita Santiago, the IMPACS' researcher stationed in the Philippines, selected for her study three daily newspapers, the Manila Bulletin, the Philippine Daily Inquirer and the Philippine Star, along with a broadsheet devoted to business issues, Business World. Also examined was a news broadcast from Radio DZRH and another from Pulso, a TV station.

The research into the Philippine media coverage of the 1999 APEC Summit in Auckland, New Zealand revealed that although several newspapers devoted coverage to the meetings, the boundaries of discussion overall were rather constricted and the chorus of 'voices' was quite flat and monotonal.

Ms Santiago examined four publications and found that their coverage of the issues surrounding APEC was restricted to a narrow few. Three newspapers, the Manila Bulletin, the Philippine Star and the Philippine Daily Inquirer, along with a broadsheet devoted to business issues, Business World, provided readers with news about the process of negotiation, general economic issues, news of events at the official summit - but little focused attention on other important issues. Furthermore, these publications relied almost exclusively on what could be called the 'official viewpoint,' that is, opinion provided by government representatives or APEC officials.

A more in depth look at one paper, the Philippine Daily Inquirer, revealed that although the Indonesian government-sponsored bloodshed in East Timor once again was discussed in connection with the summit (roughly 15% of the

coverage), the potential consequences of trade liberalization on the environment, workers or culture, for example were overlooked in favour, it seems, of event-oriented articles focusing on President Estrada. And again, while governments, foreign and domestic were allowed to voice their interpretations of APEC, NGO's were relegated to a very minor role, appearing in only 4 items. Other groups representing traditionally marginalized opinions were relegated to the margins.

Due to unfortunate technical difficulties and the inconsistency in the approach taken to monitoring local radio, the findings for this portion of the study are tentative. Of the APEC related news that was examined, most avoided issues by focusing on events. The station in question seemed particularly fascinated with president Estrada and his performance at the Summit.

The violence in East Timor was also the focal point of several news items. Although the process of globalization was discussed during one question and answer period, alternative perspectives were not mentioned nor were non-mainstream sources given access to the airwaves in the monitored broadcasts.

The performance of the television news broadcast was similar to its print and radio counterparts. Most of the APEC-related news focused on East Timor, specifically, the possibility of the Philippines sending troops to East Timor. By and large, the broadcasts ignored the issues surrounding APEC, and spaces for criticism were not made