

INTRODUCTION: STRUCTURAL INHIBITION OF MEDIA FREEDOM AND PLURALITY ACROSS EUROPE

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In Europe, freedom of the press and an independent media system are often taken for granted. Conventionally, press freedom is defined as an absence of state intervention in media activities. All of the EU-member states today have implemented guarantees of press freedom in their constitutions and/or judicial systems. However, other factors such as economic influences, historic, cultural and social conditions also have a substantial impact on media independence and on the media's ability to fulfil their societal functions. Media systems in Europe vary widely with regard to such factors and display different problematic areas in which independent reporting and plurality of content are inhibited.

Concerns about interferences with media freedom have been increasingly raised everywhere in Europe. In Italy, the re-election of commercial television mogul Silvio Berlusconi as prime minister in 2008 revives fears of monopolization in the television sector, a strong dominance of political and commercial control of television in the hands of very few, and an opaque entanglement of political and economic interests in the media system. In Poland, attempts by the new government to successively abandon public television fees and to partially privatize public television has resulted in a fierce battle with the state television board which was appointed by the previous government (epd medien 2008). In Germany, recent cases have been revealed in which journalists' e-mail communication has been monitored – not only by the state secret service (Bundesnachrichtendienst), as happened in the case of a German Afghanistan correspondent, but also by private companies.¹

Economic concentration and the dominance of commercial objectives in the media systems, increasing state control due to anti terrorism efforts, and new digital technologies, pose new challenges to the European media, their autonomy and their capabilities in providing a platform

for free, pluralistic exchange. Thus, a closer look at preconditions for independence and pluralism in European media systems seems to be worthwhile.

This volume entails contributions and discussions from the ongoing research project 'Press Freedom and Pluralism in Europe' (PLUS). In this project, nineteen researchers from twelve countries explore and compare media systems in Europe regarding their capabilities of providing independent, pluralistic media. The book discusses definitions of the concepts of freedom of the press, media pluralism and participation in the media in Europe. It addresses the difficulties of measuring press freedom, the paradigms in defining media pluralism, as well as the possible role of training processes and approaches to self-regulation.

The case studies included illustrate chances and concerns with regard to press freedom and media plurality in Europe. The examples from EU member states in Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland, Romania), from Western Europe (Austria, France, Germany, Great Britain), Northern Europe (Finland) and Southern Europe (Italy, Spain) form a basis for future comparative research. Concerns and developments of interferences with press freedom which have been observed to be trends across Europe are structured along different realms of society: legal provisions, economic structures, political framework, historical development, social and cultural influences, traditions, and religion. Some observations:

- Media freedom in Europe may increasingly be impeded by economic factors, such as increasing financial dependency on mass markets. Also, concentration of ownership increases dependency on fewer, more powerful media conglomerates. The tension between regulation (in order to ensure plurality and participation) and de-regulation (in order to enable an independent development of media) is discussed further on in this book.
- Security policies, especially with regard to the prevention of terrorism, have a growing impact on media freedom (for example surveillance, data protection issues).
- With EU-enlargement, challenges to the development of free media in post-communist states have to be addressed (for example small markets and monopolies; traditionally strong political control of the media).
- Internet and digital media pose new opportunities, but also new challenges for media freedom. How, for example, can privacy rights be protected while free speech is guaranteed?

In its current 'White Paper on a European Communication Policy' (see Commission of the European Communities 2006), the EU-Commission demands more press freedom, plurality and citizens' participation in public communication. But how free are the media in Europe? And what are the consequences of the different economic, political and social preconditions in the European states, regarding the diversity of informational content and opportunities for citizens' participation in public discourse?

On a European level, it is widely accepted that press freedom, pluralism and participation are considered pillars of democracy and have to be protected and supported. What varies widely is how exactly these pillars should be formed and implemented: On one hand, different European institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, Council of the European Union, Council of Europe) set different priorities (for example economic liberalism vs. cultural diversity as a normative goal). On the other hand, the EU member states have developed quite different conditions in historical, cultural, economic and legal terms that are also based

on differing views. The main questions are: Who 'owns' press freedom – each citizen, the journalists or the publishers? Is press freedom predominantly a right of citizens to be protected from interference by the state or does it also include an active right to information? Should press freedom include protection from other actors such as the economy? Should press freedom and plurality merely be granted or should they also be actively encouraged (for example through financial support or legal regulation which could mean involvement of the state)?

There can be no definite answers to these questions; rather, the contributions to this volume illustrate a broad spectrum of opinions and conditions in order to highlight the commonalities and differences on a European level. The team's research so far has shown that – despite all differences – there could be indeed something like a 'European consensus', for instance in embracing a rather 'positive' approach to press freedom and pluralism. As opposed to the US-American market liberal approach ('freedom from...') there seems to be wider support in Europe for a model that actively supports and regulates press freedom and media pluralism ('freedom to...') in order to ensure the representation of checks and balances, of critique and controversy, and of minority opinions and interests in a changing media world.

Theoretical background

Combining theories of political and media studies with empirical observations, Hallin and Mancini (2004) have classified media systems in western democracies into three categories: the North Atlantic liberal, the North/Central European democratic corporatist and the Mediterranean polarized pluralist model. While their approach is a very useful starting point, its shortcomings have also been widely discussed, namely the exclusion of Central and Eastern European states or, for example, the limited validity of attributing some countries to a certain model. The British media system for example, with its dominant public broadcasting, differs greatly from the North Atlantic liberal model. In other words, the inclusiveness of the approach is also its problem, given the very heterogeneous European media landscape.

In distinction to Hallin and Mancini, our approach focuses on the desired performance of media systems, and it places a stronger emphasis on the determining influence of the economic system. Our approach is based on the normative assumption that media in democratic systems serve functions such as:

- Enabling communication within and between subsystems in a complex society (system theory perspective).
- Reflecting the plurality of voices, views and values in society (critical theory perspective).
- Providing access to relevant information to all citizens.

Our project also goes beyond Hallin and Mancini's approach by including Central and Eastern European states in the study, represented here by Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland and Romania.

Press freedom is usually considered a basic element of democratic societies, which should enable citizens to take part in the democratic process and to form an opinion on the basis of being informed about political, social and cultural events and developments. This is only possible if media offer a pluralistic choice of topics, views and voices, and access is universally granted. Pluralistic media content requires participation of a broad range of social groups including minorities.

However, press freedom, pluralism and participation are by no means concepts clearly defined and universally agreed upon. In fact, while there is a broad consensus on their importance in the democratic process, the ideas of what exactly they should entail and how they should be implemented vary widely. Thus, this book begins with a discussion of the major concepts involved: How can press freedom be defined and measured? (Markus Behmer, Andrea Czepek). Which are the different (and often contradictory) interpretations of media pluralism in Europe and among different European institutions? (Beata Klimkiewicz, Lilia Raycheva). Since autonomy on the one hand and capacities on the other hand are main prerequisites for functioning media systems, the section entitled 'Concepts' then focuses on aspects which might lead to solutions in yielding free and pluralistic media, namely defining quality in journalism education (Eva Nowak), an approach to researching gender equality with regard to access, participation and representation in the media (Elisabeth Klaus), and a discussion of self- and co-regulation concepts (Vinzenc Wyss, Guido Keel).

Legal, economic, political, historical, cultural and social conditions for free media in Europe

The case studies in this book examine the structural pre-conditions for free and pluralistic media coverage by analysing secondary data. We have developed a scheme of factors which can be defined as determinants of media systems. Rather than attempting to generalize models, we try to identify specific determinants and compare the different variations of factors in the respective states. The purpose is not merely to describe media systems but to focus on such variables that potentially influence media autonomy and pluralism.

In comparing the findings, we have found that there are some structural constraints which are a concern almost everywhere in Europe, while others can be found in certain groups of countries. Interestingly, those groups or clusters do *not* correspond equally with regard to different structural factors. There are media systems which display commonalities regarding their economic structures, but not their political framework, for example, or the other way around, and, again, varying commonalities might occur in the cultural or societal realm. While media systems in Europe are the rather heterogeneous results of different legal, economic, political, historical, cultural and social conditions, some common concerns across Europe emerge as well as some clusters with similar problems regarding the different factors, as shown in Table 1. The left column summarizes developments that can be observed in most European countries, while factors in the right column are specific in certain countries or groups of countries. The allocation of countries to the factors in the right column are only examples drawn from the cases represented in this book and are not supposed to be comprehensive; certainly, other countries could be added to some of the factors.

Our research so far has shown that the interrelations between structural conditions and the development of free and pluralistic media content are much more complex than could be assumed at first sight. Examples for this complexity considering the factors mentioned are discussed in the case studies in the second section of this book, such as:

Legal provisions

Press freedom is implemented in legal frameworks all over Europe. The EU Commission, however, regards press freedom above all economically, neglecting that press freedom and

Table 1: Pan-European trends and media system clusters regarding different conditions for media freedom and plurality.

<i>Pan-European Developments</i>	<i>Media System Clusters</i>
<i>Legal provisions and judicial practice</i>	
Press freedom guaranteed by constitutions	Legislation regarding media content (France, Germany, United Kingdom)
EU-deregulations	Legislation regarding fusion control, cross-ownership and/or foreign investments (France, Germany, Romania)
Anti-terrorism efforts	Strong privacy rights (Germany, Spain) Self-regulation institutionalized (Finland, Germany, Lithuania, Switzerland, United Kingdom)
<i>Economic structures</i>	
Regulated broadcasting market; deregulated print media market	Strong public service broadcasting systems with regulation regarding content diversity in co-existence with commercial broadcasting (dual systems) (Austria, Finland, Germany, United Kingdom)
Concentration of media ownership	Public television system controlled or strongly influenced by governments in co-existence with commercial broadcasting (Bulgaria, France, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain)
Increasing dominance of commercial goals	Small market characteristics (Austria, Finland, Lithuania)
Declining resources for journalistic work	Trans-national media investments (Austria, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania) Fragmented media markets (Romania, Bulgaria)
<i>Political framework</i>	
EU-Commission policy norm: market deregulation	Statist/partisan approach to media policies (Bulgaria, France, Italy, Poland, Romania, Spain) Public-service approach to media policies (Austria, Finland, Germany, United Kingdom) Marketplace-of-ideas approach (Lithuania, other states with regard to print media)

Historical development

Re-organization of media systems after
World War II

Post-Communist transformation

(Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland, Romania)

Aftermath of a dictatorial regime in the 20th century

(Austria, Germany, Italy, Spain)

Social and cultural influences; tradition; religion

Pressure and threats on media by
fundamentalist groups

Prevailing journalistic culture: Watchdog, educator or
commentator?

Strong tradition of political taboos

(Finland, Spain)

Large ethnic minorities

*(Estonia, Latvia, Romania, Germany, Spain, United
Kingdom)*

Social cleavage structures

*(e.g. the UK's traditional social class stratification
structures or Poland's urban/rural cleavage)*

Influence of catholic church on media content

(Poland)

pluralism are not only an economic but also a cultural and democratic issue. While the European Union aims at deregulating economic structures, stronger regulation regarding anti-terrorism efforts in terms of loosening privacy and journalistic rights are being discussed or planned all over Europe.

European Union policies are increasingly influencing the shape and development of media markets throughout Europe, with considerable impact on press freedom and pluralism. The European parliament has stressed the democratic role and function of media and the importance of freedom, pluralism, participation and access to media. The European Commission in its legislation and the European Court of Justice in its jurisdiction have, however, mainly focused on the economic aspects of the media market. The EU media policies have been brought together into the *i2020 initiative* and mainly pursue three goals: 'regulating the market' (mainly meaning to liberalize the market), 'stimulating the information society' (e.g. by investing in infrastructure and 'bridging the broadband gap'), and exploiting the benefits (i.e., of new technological developments and possibilities.)

In the 1980s, the rulings of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) have established that broadcasting is to be considered a service which would be governed by economic policy on the EU level rather than cultural policy which would be solely in the responsibility of the member states (Harcourt 2005: 37). Subsequently, the ECJ has interpreted the EU treaties and legislation predominantly with regard to liberalization. For instance, the Court interpreted the 'Television Without Frontiers'-Directives of 1989 and 1997 in several cases in such a way that broadcasting across borders should not be hindered, that regulation of a broadcaster's state of origin (not: transmission) should be applied and that restrictions on

foreign ownership be lifted. On the other hand, the 'Television Without Frontiers'-Directives also contained provisions regarding public service goals of broadcasting, which were largely ignored by the Court's rulings. As Harcourt points out, those public interest goals (such as restriction of advertising, regulation of pluralism, protection of minors) were even thwarted by the Court in some cases.

The impact of EU treaties like the 'Television Without Frontiers'-Directive and the European Court of Justice-rulings based on these directives on European media systems has been substantial. Well known and very severe was the impact of the ECJ-rulings on satellite television in the United Kingdom. The British media Act of 1990 treated domestic and non-domestic satellite providers differently. While the domestic providers had to adhere to British media regulation regarding advertising restrictions, content and ownership rules in order to get a licence, non-domestic satellite providers did not. The ECJ ruled on the basis of the 1989 'Television Without Frontiers (TVWF)'-Directive that this unequal treatment was discriminating. The UK government changed the media Act, but in such a way that domestic satellite providers now also did not have to adhere to national media regulation, even if they catered to a British audience (unlike the terrestrial broadcasters, to which the stricter rules still apply).

The effect was immense. For one, private broadcasters in Britain can circumvent media regulation by transmitting their programming via satellite. But it has also affected media systems elsewhere in Europe: some British satellite channels transmit their programming to other states without having to adhere to respective national laws, on the grounds of the TVWF-Directive demanding unhindered broadcasting across borders. In the following years, several broadcasters have relocated to the UK and transmit their programmes from there. The ECJ has upheld that (a) such satellite providers are free to transmit their programming across borders, and (b) that they have to comply only with media legislation of the state in which their headquarters and main operations are located (in this case the UK), even if, as in the UK, the media legislation in that country itself does not comply with the TVWF-directive, and even if their programming is targeted specifically at an audience in another country.²

In December 2007, the 'Television Without Frontiers'-Directive was replaced by the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD). The new directive maintains the 'country of origin'-principle for satellite broadcasters, but includes a procedure by which a consultation may take place between the state of origin of a broadcaster and the state its programming is aimed at. The resulting recommendations to the broadcaster are non-binding, but with ex-ante supervision of the EC, binding measures may be taken against a broadcaster that tries to circumvent national law. Other amendments concern advertising: the new directive generally approves of product placement, but does allow member states to enforce stricter rules; the recommendations against harmful advertising have been expanded to 'unhealthy foodstuffs'; the directive only recommends self-regulation, but it still implies some interference with media freedom, albeit regarding advertisement content.

Thus, EU media legislation and the rulings of the European Court of Justice have had an important impact on the development of media systems in Europe and are shaping the market increasingly, especially in the broadcasting sector. Mainly, by interpreting and implementing the directives, the EC and the ECJ have enhanced economic liberalization across borders, while they have paid relatively little attention to public goals such as restriction of advertising, restriction of market shares and enhancing content plurality.

In subsequent policies, the European Commission (EC) has tried to emphasize public interest goals such as securing plurality and the role of the media in the democratic process. But, as Harcourt resumes, in practice, implementation of EU policies has continued to concentrate mainly on market liberalization, also in the realm of the media. Reasons for that can be seen in a lack of democratic legitimization of EC decisions and procedures, a tendency of appointees to pursue national interests, and the EU's limited mandate with regard to policies other than economic ones. Harcourt, in her 2005 book, placed some hope in the European constitution, which was supposed to include press freedom and plurality as fundamental goals and which was intended to improve democratic participation (Harcourt 2005: 202). However, after the failure of the constitution and the failed referendum on the European Union Treaty of Lisbon in Ireland, the future of broadening the scope of the EU's mandate has currently become more uncertain.

Meanwhile, the Council of Europe has strengthened its concern with press freedom, freedom of expression and participation in its resolution 'Indicators for media in a democracy' (Council of Europe 2008), demanding a number of provisions that member states should apply in order to allow journalists to work freely and to give all political parties access to the media. The Council's resolution also states that an increasing number of court cases regarding media freedom indicate problems in this area. Beata Klimkiewicz will elaborate in her chapter on the contradicting paradigms that are guiding media policies by different European institutions, which will, in different ways, affect media freedom, plurality and participation across Europe.

At EU member state level, some states have very strong regulation of media content. In France, especially, various quotas prescribe certain content regarding French production, and proportions for certain programming such as sports and culture, not only to public but also private television and radio programming. Even the proportional allocation of airtime in public television news is regulated (about 30 per cent of news airtime is granted to the government position, the ruling party's and the opposition's perspective, respectively; it is only since 2000 that about 10 per cent of airtime is awarded to extra parliamentary views: see Thierry Vedel in this volume). In Germany, television programming is also heavily regulated, but mainly on a structural level (programme diversity is aspired to but not concretely prescribed in figures). In Romania, media ownership has to be publicly transparent, but infringements are not sanctioned, as Mihai Coman describes in his chapter. In Austria, a private initiative aiming at the transparency of representation of political party members attracts considerable attention. *ZiB Mediawatch*, published by the national newspaper *Der Standard* (2008), counts the seconds during which representatives from different political parties are shown on the main public television news, *ZiB*, on ORF public television.

In order to avoid tighter state regulation, in some countries media organizations have implemented – or have been prescribed – self-regulatory measures. An interesting case is Switzerland, where a new 'media governance' paradigm ties licensing of private broadcasters to the implementation of a quality management system (see the chapter by Vinzenz Wyss/Guido Keel). Elsewhere, self-regulatory measures seem to have failed for now – in Austria, for instance, where the press council has been virtually dysfunctional since 2002 (see Martina Thiele's chapter).

Economic structures

A characteristic of most European media systems – in contrast to North American media – is the fact that broadcasting markets are relatively heavily regulated, and public broadcasting is often strong, whereas print media in most European countries are primarily private-commercial enterprises. Regulation in the print media sector is usually relatively low and often limited to merger control mechanisms. A justification for the stricter regulation of broadcasting compared to the printed press has been the fact that the number of adequate analogue broadcasting frequencies used to be limited. This is changing with digital distribution of radio and television, terrestrial as well as via cable and satellite. Thus, the legitimization of broadcast regulation has shifted to the public service idea of broadcasting media, which in return has raised the question whether the ‘public service media’ approach should or should not be applied to other media as well, for example the Internet.

Another economic characteristic which can be found all over Europe is an increasing concentration of media ownership. Commercial goals are becoming more important at the expense of democratic societal goals. This is also relevant concerning resources for journalistic work, for example fewer journalists having to provide more content, editors being outsourced and replaced by underpaid freelancers. Consequences of such measures are decreasing time for research and fact-checking and a tendency to cover mostly mainstream topics and press-relations material.

The larger Western European countries have established a dual broadcasting system with the co-existence of public and private-commercial broadcasting. However, other organizational forms have emerged, such as the private non-commercial radio stations in Austria and in some states of Germany. In the United Kingdom, satellite and cable television have become major players which, unlike terrestrial television in Britain, are only lightly regulated (see Peter Humphreys).

Trans-national investments have become an increasing trend all over Europe that does not stop at media concerns (and private equity firms) from large countries buying media business shares in smaller countries. For example, RTL bought a major share of the French private television channel M6 despite strict regulations on foreign investment in France, and the British investment group MECOM has bought newspapers not only in Germany. In general, trans-national investments are seen with some concern, regarding media freedom and plurality, because they might lead to a high level of ownership concentration, the dominance of commercial objectives (high profit margins) and uniform content. But in some cases, foreign investors are more conducive to media independence because they may be less entangled in local and regional politics and economic interests than domestic investors (see for example the conflict in Romania between the German owner *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (WAZ) on the one hand and the administrative council and editors’ board of the newspaper *Romania Libera* on the other hand, described by Mihai Coman in his chapter).

Similarly, the correlation between ownership concentration and independence might be more complicated than generally assumed. Just to give one example: in Romania, the consolidation of media ownership since EU-membership has actually facilitated a greater independence of media reporting because, before, the very fragmented media landscape depended heavily on state advertising, whereas larger media conglomerates now are economically more independent. It seems that a minimum of market consolidation is necessary in order to safeguard financial independence of media enterprises. In Austria, the Dichand group has taken over several newspapers in Eastern Europe, whereas at the same time, the German WAZ newspaper group

invested considerably in the Austrian newspaper market. The conflict and discussions in Austria following the German investment was influenced by the fear of being taken over culturally by the bigger neighbour.

Small markets face special challenges with regard to press freedom and pluralism, as Aukse Balcytiene illustrates in her chapter about the Baltic States. Because markets and populations are small, they lack both the advertisement revenues and the basis for generating sufficient public fees. One result is a high concentration of ownership and low external diversity because of the high share of fixed costs in media production. A measure to support media pluralism in such situations could be through state subsidies, which are given to print media in Finland, Romania, and Austria for example. Interestingly, while state subsidies constitute an act of state interference with the media system, they may be justified because they do not only help to maintain plurality but they may also render small media enterprises more independent from commercial pressures.

State subsidies, however, conflict with the idea of economic deregulation as the prevailing paradigm of the European Commission's economic policies. A single European media market that is highly deregulated disregards the cultural aspects of media, which the state subsidies outlined above intend to strengthen. Plurality of media decreases if media freedom is predominantly considered as commercial freedom and not as freedom of communication which would include plurality of media and plurality of voices as a public value.

The European Commission supports the idea of strong media concerns competing on the global media market. Transnational investments, not controlled by a monopolies' authority, in the long run strengthen the position of a few big media groups based in Europe. Few but strong media groups, however, weaken the plurality of views and voices within Europe and within the European countries, despite the fact that foreign investment might sometimes be a basis for journalistic independence from local political or economic leaders, as shown above in the case of Romania. A prerequisite for this positive effect of transnational media investments is that the investor promotes the idea of press freedom as a democratic goal, which might be in conflict with the goal to produce profits, at least in the short term. This is a problem with investment groups that depend on short term profits to satisfy their investors. From their point of view, media quality and public values are insignificant factors. Economic surpluses are easily produced by considerable staff reduction, as Mecom shows in Germany and the Netherlands (see Tryhorn 2008). This will lead to a decrease in quality – not least in the long run, when the investment group will probably have sold the medium.

The predominant approach of liberalizing markets within the European Union does not only affect local, regional and minorities' media in small markets which can only be produced if supported by subsidies. For some years now, state subsidies and financial support to public service radio and television have regularly been the object of the EC's efforts to deregulate the media market. The public task disappears behind the comprehensive idea of economic deregulation. However, the printed press market is obviously of minor interest to the EC. Above all, public service broadcasting is affected by EC market liberalization policies, manifested in the 'Television Without Frontiers'-directive and the telecommunications directive.

Political framework

European integration is a process which shapes and re-shapes policies in many realms and also has a substantial impact on media policies. With regard to press freedom, an obvious impact is the condition for new member states to install provisions for freedom of expression and freedom of the press as part of their democratic procedures. All new member states had to implement

such provisions and limit state involvement with the media. Media systems have changed as a result, for example in Romania, where a massive consolidation of media enterprises has taken place since joining the EU, as Mihai Coman explains in his case study about Romania.

As the current charges of corruption in Bulgaria show, however, the process is far from being completed. In Bulgaria, politicians' involvement with the media is still strong, although Bulgaria has officially adopted EU standards of freedom of the press, as Lilia Raycheva explains in her chapter about Bulgarian media.

Obviously, the dominant political paradigm determines to a large degree a country's media system and its freedom. On closer inspection, three approaches prevail in Europe, whereby in the broadcasting sector, as mentioned above, most countries have a strong public (service) system. However, there are important differences in the political approaches. A statist idea of public television is a top-down approach according to which the media (especially broadcast media) should convey government policies; an approach prevalent, for example, in France, Italy, Bulgaria and Romania. In contrast, the public service paradigm emphasizes the role of media in society and demands the diversity of society to be reflected in the media; a paradigm more prevalent in the United Kingdom, Germany and Finland. The third approach, the 'marketplace of ideas' or liberal approach, is commonly applied to print media; with regard to broadcasting, few European countries follow this approach, among them Lithuania. In Austria the societal approach to public broadcasting is broached as an issue by the audience initiative 'SOS ORF', which intends to decrease the political influence on ORF and strengthen informational content (see Martina Thiele).

Direct ownership of media organizations by politicians or political parties varies highly between European countries. In some countries, political parties or political leaders own important media organizations, most striking in this respect is Italy with Silvio Berlusconi, and also Romania, whereas in Germany, for example, there are only a few very minor shareholdings in newspapers by the German Social Democratic Party, SPD. In Spain, the influence of political parties on certain media has increased, and the big newspapers can clearly be attributed to political parties, although they are not officially owned by them.

Historical development

European media systems have been formed and reorganized after World War II. More specifically, the aftermath of a dictatorial regime plays a role in Germany, Austria, Italy and Spain, albeit with differing impact, mainly in having shaped media structures and legislation as a reaction to the totalitarian past.³

A recent groundbreaking experience that has reshaped European media systems is the post-communist transformation in Central and Eastern Europe. The political transformation process is not yet completed. The tradition of political influence on media is still real, and ethical values often do not play a role in public economic or political decisions. The fragmentation of media markets in Central and Eastern Europe leads to instable and insecure media publications (see Hadamik 2004).

Social and cultural influences, religion

A current pan-European development can be seen in threats to media by fundamentalist groups, either directly, as in the reaction of Islamist fundamentalists to the publication of Mohammed caricatures by the Danish newspaper *Jyllands Posten*, or also indirectly through stricter legal controls as a reaction of some governments to such threats. The question of how far religious

symbols should be respected or be potential subjects of satire is also a topic that concerns the Christian church in some countries. In Poland, Catholic Radio Maryja openly aspires to political influence.

Traditional taboos are not only challenged in matters of religion. In Spain, reporting about the Royal Family beyond official appearances has been a taboo. But recently, sparked by a public discussion about a caricature depicting Prince Felipe and his wife Letizia, and the subsequent strict reaction by the Socialist Spanish government (see Ingrid Schulze-Schneider), this taboo and with it, the legitimacy of monarchy in Spain altogether, have been publicly challenged. Finland has overcome its traditional post-war taboo on reporting critically on the Soviet Union to secure the country's neutrality and keep the big neighbour quiet, only to replace it with a taboo on criticizing EU policies in the first years of EU accession (see Inka Salovaara-Moring).

The representation and inclusion of ethnic minorities in the public media are another social concern. In Romania and Finland, for example, ethnic minorities have built up their own media market in minority languages within the country. In other countries, a substantial proportion of ethnic minorities use media from their or their parents' home countries while failing to take part in the public life of the countries they live in. The political and social effects are a lack of inclusion of all groups of society in the public sphere. Segregation of media audiences may also derive from a very stratified society, as Peter Humphreys describes in the case of the United Kingdom.

The pressure to comply with European standards, nevertheless, is rising as European integration continues. Media coverage of grievances in other countries can sometimes function as a regulative when domestic media are failing to address problems. The Swedish journalist Arne Ruth (2008) has pointed to this opportunity in the development of a European public sphere: when media report about cases in other countries, they can exert pressure on the governments and media there to react and deal with grievances they would otherwise have tried to keep from the public. One current example is the case of Slovenia and Finland, where, in September 2008, the Finnish public television station, YLE, had reported on corruption charges against the Slovenian prime minister, Janez Jansa. The Slovenian government, in return, demanded that the Finnish government should force YLE to revoke the report (Wolff 2008). This act of trying to intervene in the press freedom in another country only enhanced the public exposition of the case, as it became discussed in media across Europe. Being a member of the European Union, the Slovenian government was now faced with European public pressure to disclose the circumstances of the case and improve press freedom in their own country. Such cases are most obvious with former Communist countries, but not limited to them. During the world soccer championship in Germany in 2006, the British BBC reporter, Andrew Jennings, produced a TV report criticizing the dubious methods of the German Fifa organizers in distributing tickets. While the report was aired in Britain during the event in June of 2006, it was only aired in Germany half a year later. The fact that German public television had withheld this report from the German audience until long after the event was widely criticized. In sum, where domestic media may not be free enough to report about relevant grievances, growing trans-European attention can improve press freedom in parts of Europe where domestic media are hindered for political, economic or cultural reasons.

In conclusion, one very interesting observation is that, with reference to Hallin and Mancini, it does not seem possible to simply add a fourth model that includes the post-Communist Central and East European states' media systems. While these countries indeed share the common experience of the post-Communist transition phase, in other realms there are also great differences between them, and, rather, they can be grouped with other countries in, for

example, the degree to which the media market is deregulated or which normative approaches to journalism have been adopted.⁴

Outlook

This book reflects analyses and findings discussed by a group of nineteen authors from twelve countries and from different fields at three workshops in 2007 and 2008. But our project will not end here. The next step will be to actually measure media system performance with regard to freedom and pluralism. With reference to the structural determinants, we will then be able to identify factors that hinder or further independent reporting, plurality of informational media content and a broad variety of reflected voices, views and values.

Acknowledgements

The editors wish to thank the ECREA book series editorial board for giving us the chance to present our work in this context. We also thank the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research) and the University of Applied Sciences Oldenburg/Ostfriesland/Wilhelmshaven for their financial support of the 'PLUS'-project. We warmly thank our project partners and authors in this volume for the wonderful co-operation and the fruitful discussions, and we are especially grateful to Jennifer Heidrich for proofreading and to Katrin Enders for formatting the manuscript. Special thanks go to Katharina Hadamik who helped to initiate the project.

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Wilhelmshaven, October 2008

Notes

1. In May 2008, allegations arose that the largest German, formerly state-owned telecommunications concern Telekom had monitored its managers' e-mail communication with journalists in order to uncover whistleblowers (Spiegel online 2008). This is especially alarming considering that Telekom has to carry out the highly contested telecommunications data retention, saving all telecommunications data for six months for the purpose of criminal investigations.
2. One case for example in 1997 dealt with the Italian publisher De Agostini, which advertised a children's magazine on a satellite channel transmitted to Sweden, although advertising geared at children is illegal by Swedish law. The ECJ rejected the complaint by the Swedish media ombudsman. (Harcourt 2005: 30)
3. In Germany for example, public service broadcasting was constructed to be controlled by non-governmental boards and financed by a fee (not taxes) in order to avoid direct influence of the government or ruling party. The legislation prohibiting Nazi-propaganda was a reaction to the Nazi past.
4. see the case studies on Bulgaria by Lilia Raycheva, on Romania by Mihai Coman and, to see the differences, about the Baltic States by Aukse Balcytiene.

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