

## **Comparative European Journalism: The State of Current Research**

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### **Introduction**

Research on different aspects of European journalism is a growth area. The study of media and journalism from a particular 'European' angle (e.g. studying EU reporting and news flows across Europe; comparing European media policies; examining the nature and character of a 'European public sphere') began to coalesce as a field in the 1990s (e.g. Machill, 1998; Morgan, 1995; Ostergaard, 1993; Schlesinger, 1999; Venturelli, 1993) – particularly the study of media policy across Europe (e.g. Collins, 1994; Dyson & Humphreys, 1990; Humphreys, 1996). Earlier studies of Europe and the media exist (e.g. Blumler & Fox, 1983; Kuhn, 1985; McQuail & Siune, 1986), but in general academic interest seems to have begun in earnest in the 1990s and exploded in the 2000s (e.g. Baisnée, 2002; Baisnée, 2007; Chalaby, 2002, 2005; Downey & Koenig, 2006; Gleissner & de Vreese, 2005; Groothues, 2004; Hagen, 2004; Koopmans & Pfetsch, 2004; Machill, Beiler, & Fischer, 2006; Russ-Mohl, 2003; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Trenz, 2004).

The 2000s has seen a particular surge of academic interest in European journalism, reporting on Europe and the EU, the possible emergence of a 'European' public sphere and the role of news and journalism in that emergence. This surge has been influenced both by a parallel increase in interest for comparative studies of journalism in general (Deuze, 2002; Hanitzsch, 2007, 2008; Weaver & Löffelholz, 2008) as well as increased interest from the EU institutions themselves (the European Commission in particular) in the role of mediated communication – an interest made manifest in the 2006 White Paper on a European Communications Policy and related publications (European Commission, 2006, 2007).

The proliferation of Europe-wide comparative research projects on various aspects of news and journalism represents tangible evidence of this interest: in the short space since the beginning of the new millennium, researchers working in large-scale comparative projects have produced a considerable body of work on journalism in Europe (e.g. AIM Research Consortium, 2006, 2007a, 2007b; EURONAT, 2005; Heikkilä & Kunelius, 2006; Holtz-Bacha, Mancini, Negrine, & Papathanassopoulos, 2007; Kaye, 2008; Kopper, Leppik, & Golding, 2006; Krzyzanowski & Wodak, 2006; Pfetsch, 2004; Preston, 2006; Statham, 2004, 2007; Triandafyllidou, 2007).

The Axess Programme in European Journalism is part of this emerging field of research. The first stage of the Programme has been to conduct a thorough review of existing research in the area of European journalism, specifically based on the three main aims of the Axess Programme:

- To produce a comparative analysis of the main journalistic cultures of Europe,
- To investigate the emergence of a "European" journalism,
- To inquire into the existence of a dominant model of journalism, and its effect on the development of differing national cultures.

These aims are broad, and it is necessary to further define them in order to arrive at workable, fruitful research questions. The research review is part of this process of definition; in order to explain and then operationalise the aims, we need to study previous research to see how key concepts fit and are used within existing research on European journalism. The review is therefore structured around these three aims: what is the state of relevant research related to each of these aims?

## Comparative analysis of the main journalistic cultures of Europe

If we want to investigate the main journalistic cultures of Europe, then which *are* the 'main journalistic cultures' of Europe? Indeed, what is a 'journalistic culture' in this context? As Raymond Williams reminds us, "Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (Williams, 1983, p. 87).

Consider, for example, this statement from David Weaver, a scholar with extensive experience of comparative studies of journalism and journalists (the quote comes from a comparative study of how journalists in different countries view their professional role, hence the references to 'roles'):

...political system similarities and differences are far more important than cultural similarities and differences, organizational constraints or individual characteristics in predicting the variance in perceptions of three roles (timely information, interpretation, and entertainment) by journalists in these countries. (Weaver, 1996, p. 87)

That is to say, culture does not have as much explanatory value as other factors. There are differences between journalisms in different countries, but to what extent are these differences down to 'culture'? Similar points have been raised by Deuze: can differences that are ascribed to 'culture' not be equally well or better be explained by other, structural differences, for example the educational systems in the countries studied, newsroom hiring practices, or differences in labour organization (Deuze, 2002, p. 144)?

For example, one of the most well-known recent studies of national differences between journalisms, Daniel C Hallin's and Paolo Mancini's 2004 book *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*, does not foreground culture at all. Their explanations of similarity and difference are based on structure (political structure in particular) rather than culture. However, as this book presents one of the most comprehensive accounts to date of the different forms of journalism in Western Europe and North America, it is appropriate to discuss their findings at some length, despite the fact that they rarely use the word "culture"; as I hope to show, their results implicitly deal with cultural factors anyway.

### *Cultural implications of the media systems model of Hallin and Mancini*

Hallin and Mancini identify three different *media systems*, ideal-type categories that the nations of Western Europe and North America belong to: the *North/Central European or democratic corporatist model*, the *Mediterranean or polarized pluralist model*, and the *North Atlantic or liberal model*.

The North/Central, democratic corporatist media system is the dominant one in the Scandinavian states, the Low countries, and German-speaking Europe (i.e. Germany, Austria and Switzerland). Portugal, Spain, Italy, Greece and France belong to the Mediterranean or polarized pluralist media system, and the North-Atlantic, liberal system holds sway in the US, Britain, Ireland and Canada. As stated, the media systems are ideal types and as such many nations have media system characteristics that overlap two or more systems (France has extensive elements of a democratic corporatist media system, for example, see Hallin & Mancini 2004, p. 90).

How are these media systems different, then? Hallin and Mancini identify four dimensions by which media systems in Western Europe and North America can be compared:

- (1) the development of media markets, with particular emphasis on the strong or weak development of a mass circulation press;
- (2) political parallelism; that is, the

degree and nature of the links between media and political parties or, more broadly, the extent to which the media system reflects the major political divisions in society; (3) the development of journalistic professionalism; and (4) the degree and nature of state intervention in the media system. (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 21)

Two observations can immediately be made. First, Hallin & Mancini's model does not consider Eastern Europe, a point I will return to later. Second, while Hallin & Mancini's objects of study are 'media systems' rather than 'journalisms', the four comparative dimensions show the central place of journalism in their analysis. The first point highlights the link between the broader media system in a nation and the development of news media – which in turn is important for understanding the links between the emergence of a particular medium, i.e. newspapers, and the development of journalism as a profession (for studies of these linkages, see for example Brake, 1988; Chalaby, 1998; Elliott, 1978; Høyer & Pöttker, 2005; Örnebring, 2007; Schudson, 1978). The third dimension also explicitly points to the importance of journalism as a profession to the media system. The second and fourth dimension also incorporate journalism indirectly.

The differences in newspaper readership between Northern and Southern Europe are well known, and Hallin and Mancini link these differences to the emergence of a mass circulation press with a strong market position. In countries that have had a strong mass press, newspaper readership is much higher and not divided along gender lines, whereas in countries that have not had a mass circulation press, newspaper readership is significantly lower and very divided along gender lines (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 22f). These differences in history and market structure have also led to differences in culture: if there is a history of a strong mass circulation press, then this leads to a greater readiness of audiences to incorporate news and journalism into their daily routines (also see A. J. Lee, 1976; Seymour-Ure, 2000; Stephens, 1996). Journalism is viewed as 'something for everyone', whereas in Southern Europe news and journalism is something largely confined to (male) societal elites (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 95ff; see also Mancini, 1991; Mancini, 1992).

The second dimension is political parallelism, a concept developed from the earlier, more specific notion of *party-press parallelism* (Blumler & Gurevitch, 1975; Seymour-Ure, 1974). This refers both to the level of integration between the media and various political organizations, and to the general way in which the media reflect existing political divisions within the society. These differences also lead to differences in journalistic culture: in a system with high political parallelism, journalists are more likely to view spokespersonship and influencing public opinion as important professional functions, as opposed to systems with low political parallelism, where a professional outlook emphasising provision of neutral information is more likely to be held as more important:

To most continental European journalists of this period analysis and commentary were absolutely central to the function of the journalist. These kinds of differences in journalistic culture are associated with differences in writing style and other journalistic practices, with a colorful or erudite commentary favored in some systems while a telegraphic informational style is favored in others; commentary rigidly segregated from news in some countries, and mixed more freely in others. /.../ In systems where political parallelism is strong, the culture and discursive style of journalism is closely related to that of politics. (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 29)

Political parallelism thus has substantial influence on dimensions of journalistic culture such as values, practices and role perceptions – and is visible in the artefacts of journalism (i.e. the journalistic texts themselves) as well.

The third dimension, journalistic professionalism, has a close relationship with journalistic culture. Many scholars have pointed out that journalism is not really like the 'traditional' professions, i.e. medicine and law – no less distinguished a social theorist than Max Weber claimed journalists belong to a 'pariah caste' within professional society (Weber, 1948). However, even more scholars agree that journalism in many ways can be characterised as a profession, despite the lack of applicable criteria commonly associated with the 'traditional' professions (Bagdikian, 1974; Elliott, 1978; Høyer & Lorentzen, 1977; Kepplinger & Koecher, 1990; Kimball, 1965; King & Plunkett, 2005; Tumber & Prentoulis, 2005; Tunstall, 1971, 1996). The three dimensions of professionalism suggested by Hallin and Mancini: autonomy (i.e. the degree to which the profession is autonomous from state, political and market constraints), professional norms (i.e. the formal and informal norms that guide journalistic practice) and public service orientation (i.e. the degree to which journalists view themselves as public servants) (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 34ff) are clearly linked to cultural dimensions such as values, norms and practices.

The fourth and final dimension of media systems is the role of the state and the character of the relationship between the state and the media. Hallin and Mancini identify the presence and nature of public service broadcasting as the key influence here, but they consider other regulatory aspects as well, such as libel laws, hate speech laws, professional secrecy laws for journalists, laws regulating access to governmental information, ownership regulation, laws on political communication, and licensing laws associated with broadcasting (Ibid, p. 43f). The legal framework of a nation will have an impact on journalistic culture. For example, if the limits of what you can write about are regulated by law, then mechanisms of self-censorship and justification will occur – as well as professional strategies for transgression. These are all aspects of the practice dimension of culture. The overall nature of the state-media relationship might affect journalistic culture as well. Where state intervention in the media system is justified by safeguarding certain cultural values (such as diversity, tolerance etc), as in most welfare state democracies in Europe, such intervention would be difficult to implement if these values were not to some extent shared by the journalists in the nation in question. Note, for example, the difficulty in implementing formal press regulation in the UK due to the exceptionally strong resistance of media and professional organizations (Humphreys, 1996, p. 61f).

We can thus see that despite the fact that Hallin and Mancini does not discuss 'journalistic culture' per se, the differentiating factors they discuss are often directly related to facets one would normally associate with 'culture': norms, values, practices, and so on. Trying to separate 'culture' from other aspects in the media systems model would be a task as Herculean as it would be meaningless. The media systems model is comprehensive enough to include culture; for the purposes of this project, it is more appropriate to simply treat 'media system' as synonymous with 'journalistic culture': the original question posed in this section was 'Which are the main journalistic cultures in Europe?', and Hallin and Mancini provide a theoretically motivated answer.

#### *Journalistic cultures in Europe – the place of Eastern Europe*

Hallin and Mancini thus provide a template for the main journalistic cultures of Europe: a Northern European culture, a Southern European culture, and an Anglo-Saxon culture. However, as mentioned earlier, Eastern Europe (by which I primarily mean the post-Communist nations of Central and Eastern Europe) is not included in the model.

An analysis of media systems and journalism culture in Central and Eastern Europe using Hallin and Mancini's four points of comparison initially seems straightforward. The development of media markets followed patterns similar to

Southern Europe, i.e. a late development of the press and newspapers for a political/literary elite rather than a mass-circulation press. The development of commercial media was then halted with the spread of Communism – though a ‘mass circulation’ press still appeared, though not until the post-War era: the press was central to the ideological project of communism and thus made cheaply and easily available throughout the Communist nations (Wolfe, 2005). The issues of state intervention and political parallelism also have obvious answers: news media were directly controlled by the state, and they were party organs in the most obvious sense of the word. And with a system based on direct state control (rather than merely state intervention), it stands to reason that journalistic professionalism in the Western sense never had much chance of developing.

However, some scholars point out that the media systems in the Communist nations of Eastern Europe never were as monolithic as they have been made out. These authors do not deny that the media were part of an authoritarian regime, but also point to the opportunities for criticism and resistance within the media system, and that government control over journalism was weaker in some periods and stronger in others (Curry, 1990; Downing, 1996; Høyer, Lauk, & Vihalemm, 1993; Lauk, 1997; Löhmus, 2002; Wolfe, 2005) Curry and Wolfe in particular argue that there was a clear sense of professionalism among journalists in Communist Eastern Europe, albeit based on very different values than ‘Western’ professionalism. And as there was never a single unified model of Communism, the post-Communist experience has been different in different Eastern European nations – the traditional Stalinist media systems model persisted for quite some time in Romania (Gross, 1996), while Poland’s media system was relatively heterogenous even before the fall of communism (Jakubowicz, 1989; Kowalski, 1988).

The most common metaphor to describe the media systems and journalism cultures in Eastern Europe today is *transition*, i.e. transition from an authoritarian, Communist system to an open, liberal, free-market system (e.g. Aumente, 1999; Gross, 1996; Malovic & Selnow, 2001; Splichal, 1994; Vihalemm, 2002). This transition has been far from smooth and many scholars are critical of the sometimes optimistic and simplified picture of transition from (communist) authoritarianism and (capitalist) democracy (Boyle, 1994; Goban-Klas, 1994; Sparks, 1995; Sparks & Reading, 1997). More recent studies have shown the extent of political interference in the media system that still exist: studies of electoral campaigns show the degree of political manipulation of broadcast media (public service and commercial) by various ruling parties either from the right or from the left (Cwalina, Falkowski, Newman, & Verčič, 2004), and there are many other studies that clearly demonstrate the lack of independence of public media in particular (Huber, 2006; Jakubowicz, 2004, 2007; Klvana, 2004; Milton, 2000; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2003).

There are recent attempts to integrate Eastern European/post-Communist media systems into the Hallin and Mancini model, the main conclusion being that the Eastern European media have most similarities with the Southern European, polarized pluralism model (Dobek-Ostrowska & Glowacki, 2008). This conclusion follows not only Hallin and Mancini but also Splichal, who in an earlier work argued that the changes in post-Communist media systems best could be described using the concept ‘Italianization’ (Splichal, 1994) i.e. moving towards a highly opinionated, politically-driven journalism where media outlets are largely under the control of a few owners who want to use them for political/business purposes (a parallel politicization and commercialization). The dominant role of private media owners in Central and Eastern Europe has also been highlighted elsewhere (e.g. Kavrakova, 2008; Preoteasa, 2008).

The concept of ‘Italianization’ has been used and supported by other scholars (e.g. Price, Rozumilowicz, & Verhulst, 2002; Sparks & Reading, 1997) and criticised by

others (e.g. Gross, 2003). As we can see, the ‘transition’ narrative and the ‘Italianization’ narrative to a great extent are each others opposites, with the basic difference being the normative view of market liberalization. A recent account, however, points out how both narratives have weaknesses and furthermore may not necessarily be mutually exclusive (Wyka, 2008).

In short, the position of the Eastern European nations among the ‘main journalistic cultures of Europe’ is still undetermined, and multiple, sometimes seemingly contradictory trends, are at work in the region. It is entirely possible that future studies (including the research programme of which this present review is part) may find that instead of being easily categorized within the Hallin and Mancini model, Central and Eastern Europe will form its own distinct journalism culture/media system.

### **The emergence of a “European” journalism**

‘European’ in this sense refers to a journalism that covers subject matters from a European (rather than national) point of view, and that therefore also addresses its audience explicitly as European.

A clear empirical finding of most studies of European journalism is that this ‘European’ dimension of journalism is un- or under-developed (AIM Research Consortium, 2006, 2007a; EURONAT, 2005; Firmstone, 2004; Kaye, 2008; Machill, Beiler, & Fischer, 2006; Preston, 2006). This of course begs the question of what a properly developed European journalism should look like – the thrust of the critique is that because news selection is predominantly determined by national concerns and European issues covered through a national ‘lens’ (AIM Research Consortium, 2007b; Gleissner & de Vreese, 2005; Kaye, 2008, p. 28; Kevin, 2007, p. 200; Mancini & al, 2007, p. 152; Preston, 2006, p. 65; Statham, 2004), media coverage in the main ignores ‘Europe’ as an issue area. When Europe does get news coverage, it is largely structured to fit with national concerns and national stereotypes. The same goes for audiences and media effects. “The most important finding, however, is that there is no unified European context in terms of media effects,” Peter (2007) writes in his study of how television coverage affects the attitudes of EU citizens toward European integration, and further: “The cross-national comparative perspective demonstrates that the occurrence of significant effects depends on the (country-specific) context” (Peter, 2007, p. 141).

European journalists are ‘localists’ in that they have to write for a local audience, and possibly could not write for a wider audience even if they wanted to as they lack the necessary language skills (a failing not unique to journalists), writes Russ-Mohl (Russ-Mohl, 2003, p. 205f) Regardless of whether you call it the national lens, the national frame or the national filter, all research points in the same direction: national conditions and concerns, be they political, cultural or economic, will determine the way in which Europe is reported (AIM Research Consortium, 2006; Baisnée, 2002, p. 124f; Firmstone, 2004, p. 9; Mancini & al, 2007; Pfetsch, 2004, p. 35f; Preston, 2006, p. 49f). News production still takes place within a predominantly national context: national media organizations competing on a national market for a national audience. This phenomenon is well-known and applies to foreign reporting in general (Cohen, Levy, Roeh, & Gurevitch, 1996; C.-C. Lee, Man Chan, Pan, & So, 2000; Wallis & Baran, 1990). As Hafez puts it, “Media content is distorted whenever international reporting more strongly reflects the national interests and cultural stereotypes of the reporting country than the news reality of the country being reported about” (Hafez, 2007, p. 25).

The common conclusion is that there simply is no ‘European journalism culture’. “The vast majority of journalists interviewed, irrespective of where there were based, felt that there was no European journalistic culture, but rather national journalistic cultures throughout Europe,” writes Preston (Preston, 2006, p. 49). Heikkilä and Kunelius state

that “Journalists, in general, regard the national framework of news to be historically and empirically ‘true’, or almost as the natural basis for journalism applied everywhere [...]” (Heikkilä & Kunelius, 2006, p. 69). The other reported findings on the strong role of the national frame/lens/filter all support this assessment. Thus if, as Russ-Mohl does, you are looking for a trans-European system of journalistic values and practices, you are almost bound not to find one (Russ-Mohl, 2003, p. 205f).

While this overall view of a ‘European’ dimension of journalism being virtually non-existent has overwhelming support from the existing research, there are some more narrow areas where a ‘European’ dimension of journalism does seem to be developing. The ‘European’ journalism that does exist is highly elite-oriented and thus one can assume that studying (the relatively few) pan-European quality news outlets will be a good way to gain insight into the European public sphere. As Baisnée puts it:

The socially and numerically limited audience of transnational media such as *Euronews*, the *Financial Times*, *European Voice*, etc. does not mean that they have to be neglected. Their (limited) audience might well be the real public of the EU. (Baisnée, 2007, p. 500)

Corcoran and Fahy come to a similar conclusion, and also offer a succinct analysis of why the odds are stacked against the emergence of a more general ‘European’ journalism:

With the possible exception of the *Euronews* television channel, the infrastructure for producing a unified, European media output across the continent is not in position. The construction of an embryonic, supranational political culture would require the wide dissemination of a European news agenda and public access to a common news discourse as a significant part of the everyday news-consuming habits. While there are strong indications that a European elite sphere is developing, a European public sphere shows few signs of life at this stage. (Corcoran & Fahy, 2009, forthcoming, p. 12)

So, while there is no pan-European journalism aimed at a wider audience, there is an emergent European *elite* journalism (aimed at an elite audience). It is outside the scope of this review to assess whether this represents a kind of media failure (i.e. there *should* be a ‘European’ journalism), a necessary first step towards a ‘European’ journalism for a general audience (a ‘trickle-down’ model of journalism), or a state of affairs that merely reflects the overall elite-popular polarization of the news media but on a European scale.

However, this lack of a common journalistic culture in Europe seems in part to be contradicted by those studies that consider *commercialization* the key reason for the non-existence of a European dimension of journalism (e.g. AIM Research Consortium, 2007a; Balcytiene, Raeymaeckers, De Bens, Vinciuniene, & Schröder, 2007; Preston, 2006). The findings of these studies could be taken to indicate that if there is a European journalism culture, it is a culture dominated by intense competitiveness and a primacy of commercial concerns. It is to this possible homogenization of journalism we now turn.

### **A dominant model of journalism, and its effect on national journalisms**

Hallin and Mancini are very clear: since the 1970s, the differences between the three media systems they analyse have diminished. In the space of one generation, media systems (and by extension national journalisms) have significantly homogenized and the have homogenized along the lines of the Liberal/Anglo-American model (Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 251ff). Many other studies agree: homogenization is Americanization

(Blanchard, 1986; Blumler & Gurevitch, 2001; Negrine & Papathanassopolous, 1996; Swanson & Mancini, 1996).

The ‘dominant model’ of the headline thus seems to be the American (or Anglo-American one). At first glance, this does not seem unreasonable. First, journalism is part of the wider media landscape and there is a tradition of research pointing to a general Americanization of media culture and media content across the globe (Hamelink, 1983; Schiller, 1969, 1976; Tunstall, 1977) – why would journalism be an exception? Second, there is ample historical evidence that American journalism (and ways of doing journalism) has been a direct inspiration for European journalists and editors, and that European news producers have looked to the US for everything from journalistic formats (A. J. Lee, 1976, p. 121; Pöttker, 2005; Schudson, 1995) to ways of organizing the newsroom (Høyer & Nonseid, 2005).

However, while there is evidence for the emergence of a kind of ‘globalized media culture’ (McQuail, 2000, p. 238), for the spread of Anglo-American news values and journalistic ideals across the world (Splichal & Sparks, 1994; Weaver & Wu, 1998), as well as for the global spread of American news design and news formats (Barnhurst & Nerone, 2001) there are studies that contradict the general Americanization thesis. For example, when characterising US journalism, particularly compared to European journalism, words like ‘sensationalism’, ‘emotionalism’, ‘personification’ are often used (Brants, 1985, 1998; also see A. J. Lee, 1976, pp. 54, 120-121 for some historical examples). This equating of a popular/tabloid journalism style with ‘American’ journalism ignores the long tradition of popular/populistic journalism in Europe, from the German-language boulevard press to the British tabloids. ‘American’ too often means simply ‘bad’.

Perhaps more significantly, more recent scholarship has pointed out that a strong ‘Americanization’ argument cannot be sustained, as it ignores local variance in how media content is appropriated and used. Furthermore, the US simply is not anymore the all-encompassingly dominant media player it was in the 1960s: many strong regional media export centres have developed (Sreberny-Mohammadi, 1996). In an example of particular relevance to this review, London is now the world hub for TV news film footage distribution, not any US city (Paterson, 1998; Tunstall & Machin, 1999).

Looking back at the previous section, it also seems like the strong evidence for a ‘national filter’ in the news would contradict the homogenization thesis (particularly in its ‘Americanization’ form). If news are preoccupied with the national, then the emerging dominance of a journalistic culture based on values and practices that are not specific to the individual nations involved seems unlikely. As was pointed out in the previous section, the global spread of news values and journalistic principles that are American in origin exists parallel with national media outlets domesticating foreign news stories (Cohen, Levy, Roeh, & Gurevitch, 1996; Gurevitch, Levy, & Roeh, 1991; C.-C. Lee, Man Chan, Pan, & So, 2000; Riegert, 1998). Americanization is largely confined to news format, not news content. For example, de Vreese (2001) notes that TV coverage of the introduction of the Euro in different countries had similar overall themes and were presented in a similar fashion, but that there were clear national angles at play in the TV news programmes studied (De Vreese, 2001). Similarly, Rössler shows that a seven-nation study (six European nations and the US) of TV news reveal similar visual formats but significant differences in issues and actors covered (Rössler, 2004).

Some of these apparent contradictions are of course due to the fact that the ‘dominant journalistic culture’ has not been properly defined. If it primarily refers to the spread of journalistic values and ideals based on objectivity, separation of fact and comment, and where the journalistic professional ideal is that of a distanced observer, then evidence indicates that this culture is indeed spreading, and that its country of origin

is the US (again, see Hallin & Mancini, 2004, p. 252). If it is taken to mean the spread of tabloid news values (focus on entertainment/celebrity, personalization, emotionalization, sensationalism), then again some evidence does point to an emerging global ‘tabloid culture’ (Sparks & Tulloch, 2000) – that may or may not be ‘American’. However, these general characteristics can be considered ‘dominant’ only up to a point: many individual case studies and comparison show that national cultures and specificities are still more important than any ‘dominant journalistic culture’ (in the sense of uniform coverage/presentation of content). Finally, if a ‘dominant journalistic culture’ refers to the rise of journalism whose first priority is satisfying the marketplace and the commercial needs of owners (rather than subscribing to a public service ethos of some kind), then again the evidence for the commercialization of journalistic culture is overwhelming (just a few key references: Blumler & Gurevitch, 1995; Franklin, 1997; Humphreys, 1996; Weymouth & Lamizet, 1996).

Summing up, we can see that while the evidence points to a homogenization of *some* aspects of journalism (a homogenization that may or may not be specifically American in origin), and thereby the spread of a ‘dominant journalistic culture’, this is by all accounts a *global* trend, not a specifically European one. Furthermore, if this ‘dominant culture’ can be described as Anglo-American, then the strong position of Europe as a market player makes it likely that Europe would be better equipped than many other regions to withstand (if such a word may be used) Americanization. In another article, Mancini has discussed the possibility of talking about ‘European journalism’ as a coherent cultural counterpoint to US/Anglo-American journalism, with historical roots and cross-national similarities that are substantially different from Anglo-American journalism (Mancini, 2005).

### Summary

Comparative analysis of journalism in Europe has already come a long way. Following Hallin and Mancini, we can identify three main media systems/journalistic cultures in Europe (polarized pluralist, democratic corporatist, and liberal). It is yet to be determined where Eastern/post-Communist Europe would belong in this model (or whether it represents a distinct journalism culture in itself), so a key task for future research is to analyse and integrate Eastern Europe fully into any model of comparative European journalism.

The prognosis for the emergence of a ‘European journalism’ or pan-European journalistic culture is poor. Current evidence clearly point to the continuing importance of national concerns in news selection and presentation, and there is no indication that a ‘European journalism’ aimed at a Europe-wide audience will develop anytime soon. What does exist, however, is a small but possibly growing elite European journalism, focused geographically in Brussels, the administrative centre of the EU, and in media aimed at an elite audience (notably *Financial Times*, *Euronews* and *European Voice*).

A dominant model of journalism driven primarily by commercial concerns (rather than concerns of independent professionalism, for example) does exist and is becoming more and more important everywhere – the ‘dominant model’ is not a specific European issue but a global one. The effects of this dominant model remain under-researched, however. In particular, there is relatively little research on how this ‘dominant model’ translates into actual journalistic practice. Does it make journalists do their job differently, and if so, how? The understanding impact of the dominant model on individual national cultures is also not well developed: while some studies make broad claims about the effects of commercialization, key comparative studies demonstrate the stubbornness of the national journalisms: the ‘dominant model’ does not mean the end of the ‘national filter’.

It is in this last area that the main contribution of the Axes Programme is envisaged. Comparative analysis of journalism in different European nations can contribute to an empirical assessment of the homogenization thesis – is journalistic work becoming more similar across national borders, or are there still important national differences in journalistic practice? And while many trends affecting journalism are assumed to be global (rather than European), we still do not know much about if and how these trends impact different countries and regions differently. A comparative analysis of journalism in Europe thus could contribute both a better understanding of how processes of homogenization and processes differentiation interact in different nations, as well as within the same geopolitical region.

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