

Journalisms in Europe.

Comparing reporting styles and levels of Europeanization in Eastern and Western Europe

Abstract

This paper presents a systematic comparison of online newspaper coverage comprising both Eastern and Western European countries (Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom). Countries were sampled according to the classification developed by Hallin and Mancini (liberal, democratic-corporatist, polarized-pluralist countries) as well as according to membership status in the European Union (6 old members, 2 members that have joined in 2004, and 2 members joining in 2007). Analysis focuses on three dimensions: similarity in reporting styles (i.e. factualness of new reports), vertical Europeanization of news (focus on EU matters and “domestication” of EU issues) as well as horizontal Europeanization (intensity and patterns of mutual observation between countries). Correlational, regression and cluster analyses are employed in studying the data. Results show that there are no systematic country differences in reporting styles, thus lending support to the homogenization thesis. Levels of both vertical and horizontal Europeanization in news can be explained by EU membership status, with different patterns emerging for the two dimensions of Europeanization. In mutual observation between EU member countries, Western European countries get the bulk of attention but this can be explained by their bigger size, not by a particular neglect of the East or by the duration of EU membership. In conclusion, more theory-driven explanatory research on country differences in news reporting is advocated.

1. Introduction

How similar or different are journalism cultures in Europe today? Are we witnessing the emergence of a homogeneous Western style of journalism following an Anglo-American model? Or are national traditions of journalism persisting? Can we identify groups of countries in Europe with similar journalism styles? Or do we find a dispersed pattern of national peculiarities? And how does the democratization of Eastern European countries – and their recent accession to the European Union - change the face of journalism in Europe? How do Eastern and Western European countries relate to the EU and to each other in their coverage of political matters?

All of these questions call for comprehensive comparative analysis. We address them by means of a comparative content analysis that systematically includes both Western and Eastern European countries. The study covers national and international political coverage in 30 online newspapers (both quality and tabloid) from ten countries – Austria, France, Germany, Ireland, Spain and the United Kingdom in the West and Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland and Romania in the East (for details on country and newspaper sampling, see section 2 below). We set out to describe differences and similarities in reporting styles as well as levels and patterns of Europeanization in the content of these online newspapers. And we aim at explaining these by systematically considering a range of explanatory factors.

The questions mentioned in the beginning relate to two different strands of theorizing. On the one hand, they impinge on the debate about the degree of international homogenization in journalism cultures, or as some have claimed, their Americanization. On the other hand, these questions address the discussion about the emergence of a European public sphere or more broadly, the Europeanization of national public spheres. We will briefly review both strands before describing our empirical study.

1.1. Homogenization of journalism cultures?

In their seminal study “Comparing Media Systems”, Hallin and Mancini (2004) group the national media systems of Western Europe and North America in three models: the Democratic-corporatist, the Polarized-pluralist and the Liberal model. The authors examine the historical, political and social developments of each country and suggest four dimensions according to which they can be differentiated: 1) the degree and shape of the development of media markets, with an emphasis on the newspaper press; 2) political parallelism – the degree to which the media system reflects the major political currents in society; 3) the development of journalistic professionalism; and 4) the degree and nature of state intervention in the media system.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) define as Liberal those countries in which press freedom and mass-circulation press have developed early but nowadays newspaper circulation is moderate. Liberal countries are also characterized by low political parallelism, dominant internal pluralism in the media, strong professionalization of journalists, and a limited role for the state. Commercial pressures rather than political instrumentalization are the forces that are more likely to limit journalistic autonomy. The U.S, Canada, Ireland and – with some qualification - Britain are grouped under the Liberal label.

The Democratic-corporatist model includes countries with an early development of press freedom, high newspaper circulation, and strong journalistic professionalization. Although diminishing, the historically strong political parallelism in the media has left a legacy of some external pluralism and commentary-oriented journalism that has been mixed with an increasing emphasis on information and neutral professionalism, according to Hallin and Mancini. State intervention is aimed mainly at protecting press freedom and therefore promotes rather than restricts the development of the press. Democratic-corporatist countries are those located in Central and Northern Europe (Scandinavia, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Benelux countries).

The Polarized-pluralist countries feature an elite-oriented press with limited overall circulation while the media market is dominated by television. Press freedom has developed relatively late here. Newspapers are focused on politics to a large extent and are distinguished by relatively strong external pluralism and a commentary- or advocacy-oriented style. Political parallelism in the media is comparatively strong, the political instrumentalization of media is not uncommon, professionalization and autonomy of journalists are more limited. Hallin and Mancini classify Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy and – to some degree also – France as Polarized-pluralist countries.

While this classification takes up the bulk of Hallin and Mancini's argument, they also suggest that as a result of the processes of globalization, commercialization and secularization, media systems in Western Europe and North America have homogenized over the past decades (2004: 251-295): The differences between the three groups of countries have diminished over time and all media systems have developed towards the Liberal model. In particular, commercialization has led to a remarkable decline of the party press in favor of commercial newspapers and to a shift in styles of journalism from a focus on political issues to an emphasis on personal and popularized subjects. This factor, along with the process of secularization has changed the social function of journalism. Its aim is no longer to propagate ideologies and create social consensus, but to inform and entertain individual consumers. The ties between the media and the political order have become loose and the media systems have started functioning according to their own logic instead of following the logic of party

politics, according to Hallin and Mancini.

While Hallin and Mancini do collect empirical evidence for both the existence of distinct models of journalism and the process of homogenization the relative importance of the two is still somewhat uncertain. We will address one aspect of this uncertainty in this. Since one of the main ideas of journalism in the Liberal model concerns neutral professionalism and the separation of news from commentary, we will compare the factualness of news reports in quality online newspapers between countries from the three models. We expect that if the three models of media systems are still distinct, the countries will be divided in the following way: Elements of opinion and interpretation in news reports will be highest in Polarized-pluralist countries because the press there is more likely to involve policy advocacy or political judgments in its reporting. Opinion and interpretation will be less frequently found in newspapers from Democratic-corporatist countries but because of a residual element of political parallelism and external rather than internal pluralism, they will contain more opinion and interpretation in news reports than the dailies from Liberal countries. If, however, a process of homogenization has taken and is still taking place, we expect to find no consistent pattern of reporting styles peculiar for each media system group.

1.2. The emergence of a European public sphere

While the question of homogenization is concerned with differences and similarities between countries, a second recent strand of theorizing about journalism has concerned its transnationalization, or more specifically its Europeanization (Risse 2002; Trenz 2004; Pfetsch 2004; Koopmans and Erbe 2004; Machill, Beiler and Fischer 2006; Sifft et al. 2007). In an attempt to systematize existing research, Wessler et al. (2007) have distinguished four dimensions of the Europeanization of national media content and have presented data on those dimensions. First, national media coverage can Europeanize by what is called *monitoring EU governance*, i.e. by reporting on EU policies and institutions, or by making the EU the main topic of news items. Secondly, Europeanization can also mean that national media agendas and frames become more similar over time (see, for example, Medrano 2003; Trenz 2000). Such *convergence of discourse* can lead to more similar perspectives on similar topics, maybe even to more similar cleavage structures in national debates. But contrary to what some authors insinuate (e.g. Trenz 2004), it does not in itself constitute the emergence of Europe-wide media debate. For this to happen, national media coverage must Europeanize on a third dimension: *discursive integration*. This entails that a) national media observe developments in other European countries (mutual observation) and b) that they integrate

statements and contributions by actors from other European countries in their own national media debates (discursive integration). Forthly, Wessler et al. (2007) argue that Europeanization also involves some degree of *collective identification* with Europe publicly displayed in media coverage.

Research on the Europeanization of national media coverage or on the emergence of a European public sphere (EPS) must be understood in the context of the normative debate about what has been called the European Union's democratic deficit. Many authors agree with Jürgen Habermas' thesis that "the democratic deficit can only be resolved if a European public sphere emerges in which the democratic process is embedded" (Habermas 2001, 7). Thus the emergence of a European public sphere is considered by most authors to be a normative precondition for the democratic legitimacy of the EU's institutions and decisions. We cannot and need not dwell on this question here for the purposes of this paper. Suffice it to say that the EU's need for additional democratic legitimation is somewhat contested (see Moravcsik 2002; Majone 1998) and that the normative standards should therefore be qualified to some degree (see Wessler et al. 2007).

In this paper we will focus on an empirical assessment – and explanation - of the Europeanization of national media coverage. While a number of studies have addressed one or several of the dimensions mentioned above, to our knowledge no study has compared a systematic sample of Western and Eastern European countries. In our analysis, we are focusing on (indicators of) the two most prominent dimensions: monitoring governance, also called "vertical Europeanization", and mutual observation, also called "horizontal Europeanization" (for a similar approach, see Koopmans and Erbe 2004; Pfetsch 2004). Vertical Europeanization occurs between the national and the European level with the media of member states observing events and affairs on the European level. Not less important is the mutual observation of developments in different member states since in an interdependent community like the EU policies in one country may affect the situation in others. We will examine these two dimensions of Europeanization in Western and Eastern European online newspapers (for details of case selection, see section 2.1. below) and we will test possible explanations for the patterns found on both dimensions. It is difficult at this relatively early stage of *explanatory* research into the European public sphere to specify definite hypotheses. Considerations of plausibility do suggest, however, that the Hallin and Mancini classification of countries will not be a good predictor of levels of Europeanization, but that EU membership status will offer better explanations: We expect countries that have joined the EU a long time ago (called old members here) to show different levels and patterns of Europeanization than countries that have just joined the EU (new members 2004) or are going to join it in the near future (new members 2007).

For *vertical Europeanization* it seems that old member states may have had more time to grow accustomed to the importance of EU politics and to appreciate the interconnections between domestic reality and EU policymaking. Media and audiences in those countries may have gradually changed their habits and perceptions over the years and may have become used to reporting and learning about the EU regularly. This would lead to higher levels of vertical Europeanization in old member states. On the other hand, there may also be a reverse argument. Since changes in the domestic situation will be most dramatic for those countries just joining the EU or close to joining it in the future, media attention to the EU may also be expected to be stronger in new member states, thus leading to higher levels of vertical Europeanization around accession time.

For *horizontal Europeanization* (i.e. mutual observation) we can also specify plausible, if contradictory expectations. On the one hand, the European Union, not only through its economic unification but also its decision-making mechanisms, dramatically increases the degree of interdependencies between the member states. Events in one country gain significance over the domestic reality of another country. It hence appears reasonable to assume that news items from those countries who have had a comparatively long experience of these interdependencies are most likely to feature references to other European countries. Also, EU membership may alter the identity constructions prevalent in any member country, possibly converging – albeit slowly – towards a more Europeanized identity, a process that may further increase the perceived relevance of events in other European countries. On the other hand, however, the need for new member states to adapt and integrate may cause newspapers from those states to include ample references to other countries, possibly in order to compare domestic reality with that of other – existing or new – members. Also, the fact that the “Iron Curtain” had isolated most of Central and Eastern Europe from the rest of the continent for so long may give rise to a certain “catch-up” phenomenon and thus to higher levels of mutual observation in new member states. We will look into the validity of these contradictory explanations.

In addition, in the context of horizontal Europeanization it is interesting to also ask which countries *attract* most observation from others (rather than which countries observe others more). EU membership of the observed country may play a role here as well: There may be a built-in propensity to look at those countries that have been in the EU for a longer time, possibly in order to profit from their experience, thus giving Western European countries a lead in being observed. Alternatively, it is also conceivable that EU membership may not play a role for attracting observation from other countries, but that country-specific characteristics such as the size or the power of a country determine observation irrespective of the duration of membership or the location in the East or the West.

We will test all of these competing claims for both vertical and horizontal Europeanization in this paper. The analysis of the horizontal dimension, somewhat neglected in previous studies, as well as the systematic inclusion of Eastern Europe into the analysis constitute two important contributions of this paper to the research on a European public sphere.

2. Study design

2.1. Countries and newspapers under study

To fully account for the changing face of the EU with ten new members mostly from Eastern Europe that have joined in 2004 and two additional Eastern European countries joining in early 2007, we aimed for a country sample that represents the old, new and future member states roughly by proportion. Within the older member states it was important to also represent the three models differentiated by Hallin and Mancini (2004) – Liberal, Democratic-corporatist and Polarized-pluralist systems – in order to be able to assess the homogenization thesis. The result was a sampling grid with five categories of countries (see table 1). In order to avoid possible biases from individual countries we decided to select two countries per category. In the case of Liberal media systems there were only two possibilities in Europe: Ireland and Britain. The same applied for the countries joining in 2007, Bulgaria and Romania. The sampling of countries for the remaining three groups was based on the aim to select the biggest country in each of these groups (Germany, France and Poland, respectively) as well as on the language skills of the available coders (leading to the selection of Spain, Austria and Lithuania).

Table 1: Selection of countries

Liberal	Old member states		New member states 2004	New member states 2007
	Democratic-corporatist	Polarized-pluralist		
United Kingdom	Germany	France	Poland	Romania
Ireland	Austria	Spain	Lithuania	Bulgaria

For each of the ten countries, we then selected three online-based national dailies: ideally the top-two broadsheets in terms of (offline) circulation (one more to the left and one more to the right of the political spectrum) and the most widely read tabloid newspaper (table 2)¹. The classification of newspapers as broadsheets or tabloids was based on an inspection of the layout as well as previous publications (Pfetsch 2004; Curry 2003; Gross 2003; Jakubowicz

¹ We are using the traditional labels 'broadsheet' and 'tabloid' interchangeably with 'quality' and 'popular' press even though we do not mean physical broadsheets or tabloids since we are dealing with online versions of the newspapers.

2004; Lukosiunas 2003; as well as the entries on the European Journalism Centre's "European Media Landscape" website). Median article length was then used to confirm the classification, and indeed articles from newspapers classified as tabloid were clearly the shortest as compared to those classified as broadsheets in the respective country. The ideal sampling scheme was, however, satisfied only in half of the countries analyzed (Austria, Germany, Poland, Romania and Britain). For the remaining countries pragmatic solutions had to be found.

The first special case was the Bulgarian press, where there is no clear distinction between broadsheets and tabloids and a mixture between the two is prevalent. Hence, next to one broadsheet we have selected the two 'broadloids', which are the two most widely read newspapers in the country. The term broadloid is used for those quality newspapers that borrow style from tabloids (Franklin 1997: 10) and are a functional equivalent of those. A lack of tabloids - or lack of a clear distinction between tabloids and broadsheets - was also encountered in the Spanish and French newspaper landscape. In Spain we have selected an additional quality newspaper instead. In the case of France, the third quality newspaper chosen (*Ouest-france*) is more regional, but it does have the largest circulation in the country. For the same reason, a Lithuanian regional newspaper *Kauno Diena* was selected in lieu of a quality national newspaper. Finally, Irish tabloids do not seem to invest in online versions much and since British tabloids are abundant and widely read in Ireland, we have exceptionally selected one of them for Ireland.

Table 2: Selection of newspapers

Country	Title	Median article length	Country	Title	Median article length
Austria	Die Presse	273	Lithuania	Lietuvos Rytas	180
	Der Standard	275		Kauno Diena (regional)	424
	<i>Neue Kronenzeitung*</i>	241		<i>Lietuvos Zinios</i>	96
Bulgaria	Trud**	147	Poland	Gazeta Wyborcza	344
	24 Chasa**	144		Rzeczpospolita	293
	Monitor	261		<i>Super Express</i>	176
France	Le Monde	620	Romania	Evenimentul Zilei	221
	Le Figaro	598		Adevarul	163
	Ouest-france (regional)	485		<i>Libertatea</i>	125
Germany	Frankfurter Allgemeine	616	Spain	El Pais	593
	Süddeutsche Zeitung	452		El Mundo	553
	<i>Bild</i>	334		ABC	514
Ireland	The Irish Times	459	UK	The Times	605
	The Irish Independent	362		The Guardian	630
	<i>The Mirror (UK)</i>	422		<i>The Sun</i>	184

* Tabloid newspapers are printed in italics

** Broadloid newspapers

The use of online newspapers for the investigation of the European press landscape commands special attention to the fact that newspapers' online editions differ greatly in terms of their style of presentation, connection to the paper edition, and maintenance efforts devoted to them. As a consequence, online newspapers do not constitute a homogeneous type of medium but are a 'mixed bag' of websites featuring different formats and production technicalities. It is important to keep this diversity in mind when interpreting the results of our study. A prime dividing line in the field of online newspapers is located between 1) those websites that simply mirror the respective paper edition's content but do not possess additional editorial resources and 2) some newspapers' semi-independent online branches, which often seem to be produced by separate editorial teams and only partially rely on the paper edition's content.² While websites of the first type are usually updated only once a day (usually at night, when the paper issue goes to print) and can be seen as an electronic archive of the paper issues, websites of the second type are regularly updated and constitute flexible news services, many of which also offer breaking news bulletins via email or interactive features. But even among those semi-independent online branches the differences are still great: While some of these news sites are almost entirely based on reports and pictures by news agencies like Reuters or Deutsche Presse Agentur (dpa), other websites of the second type generally feature pieces written by their own online editors.

2.2. Coding procedures and indicators used

The study focuses on news items referring to either EU politics, national politics of the home country of the newspaper or politics in other European countries. The respective articles were downloaded from the newspaper websites during the period of November 9-15, 2005. To create a sufficient degree of comparability we used the same nightly sampling time for all downloads. In retrospect it can be said this was a fairly average week with only one major European event that drew attention to one country at the expense of others: the riots in the French *banlieues*. It is obvious that this event will privilege France in the analysis of horizontal Europeanization, a fact that should be kept in mind when interpreting results in that dimension.³

² We assume that even if online newspapers are not editorially linked to their respective paper edition, they still adhere to similar editorial strategies and political orientations. According to this reasoning, a newspaper's semi-independent online branch can still be used as an indicator of the paper edition's content characteristics and priorities.

³ Choosing a natural week is common in internationally comparative content analyses. Sampling of constructed weeks, while generally preferable, was not possible in this study for organizational reasons.

After intensive and repeated coder training, the material was coded by a group of 23 student coders. Most of the material was coded by native speakers. In parallel with the coder training, successive inter-coder reliability tests were conducted on selections of English-language material coded by all coders until satisfactory results were reached for all indicators used.⁴ The coding protocol was partly revised several times in order to enhance inter-coder reliability, primarily by making indicators as simple and straightforward as possible and reducing coding ambiguities through detailed instructions and anchor examples.

Our study includes five dependent variables on three dimensions derived from our theoretical considerations outlined above (for an overview, see table 3). First, the *similarity of reporting styles* is measured by the factualness of news reports in quality newspapers (tabloids were excluded here as were commentary and opinion pieces). Following a method previously used by Benson and Hallin (2005) each paragraph of a news report was coded with respect to its main function: did the paragraph primarily provide information (either facts or reported statements), did it convey an interpretation of a given fact or statement or did it primarily offer opinion, i.e. evaluations of factual elements?

Secondly, two aspects of *vertical Europeanization* were measured. For one, the extent to which an article focuses on the EU was assessed on a four-point scale⁵. An EU focus was coded when the European Union or any of its institutions (including the Euro as a common currency and “Brussels” as a shorthand for EU institutions) were mentioned in the headline or the first paragraph. For all items containing such an EU focus a second measure was applied, namely the extent to which the coverage of the EU in the item was “domesticated”, i.e. the extent to which the EU was put into a national context or supplemented by national aspects. Two indicators were used for domestication: a) the mentioning of a domestic actor (from the country in which the newspaper appears) in the headline or first paragraph along the mentioning of an EU institution; and b) the number of paragraphs focusing on domestic rather than European aspects.

Finally, *horizontal Europeanization*, i.e. mutual observation, was measured by references made in a newspaper to other European countries (other than the home country of the newspaper). As mentioned earlier, both directions of mutual observation were measured here: The intensity of engaging in observation of other countries is measured by whether an article features one or more country references (and to how many different countries) while the intensity of being observed was measured by the number of references that a particular

⁴ Holsti's coefficient of reliability was for: text genre 0.90; total number of paragraphs 0.98; number of factual paragraphs 0.90; number of interpretive paragraphs 0.81; number of opinion paragraphs 0.93; EU focus 0.98, EU role (side topic, reference to EU) 0.82; domestic actor in lead/intro 0.76; number of domestic paragraphs 0.92; references to individual European countries: between 0.80 and 0.97.

⁵ For this indicator, two initially separate variables were combined: EU focus (yes/no) and EU role (comprising no reference to the EU, short reference to the EU and EU as a side topic).

country can attract in the newspapers of the other countries.

Table 3: Overview of dimensions, variables and indicators used in the study

Dimensions	Dependent variables	Indicators
Similarity of reporting styles	Factualness of news reports	Share of factual paragraphs as compared to paragraphs containing interpretation and opinion
Vertical Europeanization	Focus on the European Union	Degree of EU focus in an article 0 = no mentioning of EU 1 = short reference to the EU 2 = EU is a side topic 3 = article focuses on the EU
	Domestication of EU politics	Mentioning of a domestic actor in headline or introductory paragraph Share of paragraphs focusing on domestic matters in an article
Horizontal Europeanization	Observing other countries	Reference to other European countries in an article
	Being observed by other countries	Number of references to a country found in newspapers from other countries

As independent variables we use the Hallin and Mancini classification of countries, the EU membership status of the respective country (old member, new member 2004 and new member 2007) and the type of newspaper (broadsheet, broadloid, tabloid). For explaining levels of Europeanization, each country's general level of support for the EU as measured by the Eurobarometer survey is used as an additional variable.

3. Results

3.1. Homogenization: the similarity of reporting styles

In order to assess the degree of factualness of news reports we coded each paragraph of a news report with respect to its main function: information (either facts or reported statements), interpretation or opinion. Tabloid newspapers were excluded from this analysis because the norm of factualness does not apply to them as it applies to broadsheet (and broadloid) newspapers. It turns out that the remaining 23 online newspapers did not display big differences with respect to the share of factual paragraphs. The corridor spans from 85% (El Pais, Spain) to around 99% percent (El Mundo and ABC, both Spain; Rzeczpospolita, Poland; and Lietuvos Rytas, Lithuania). In this relatively slim margin, did newspapers systematically cluster according to the country groups derived from Hallin and Mancini or,

alternatively, according to membership status in the EU?

A cluster analysis was conducted to identify homogeneous groups of newspapers. This analysis identifies a set of groups which both minimize within-group variation and maximize between-group variation. A first cluster analysis with an automatically defined number of clusters grouped all newspapers together in one cluster because of the small range of factualness found in the newspapers. Therefore, a cluster analysis with a fixed number of three clusters was performed in order to check whether newspapers would cluster as predicted by the Hallin and Mancini classification. The percentages of facts, interpretation and opinion were entered as continuous variables, and the newspaper title as a categorical variable.

In effect, the newspapers did not cluster according to the models of Hallin and Mancini (2004) (see table 4). Newspapers from the Polarized-pluralist countries were equally divided between the three clusters. The Democratic-corporatist newspapers were allocated to the clusters with lowest and highest percentage of factual paragraphs, and those from Liberal countries were found in the clusters with lowest and medium percentage of factual paragraphs. In addition, EU membership status or the East/West divide also did not predict newspaper groupings: Of the Eastern European newspapers six were allocated in the group with the highest factualness, two in the group with medium factualness and one in the group with lowest factualness. Finally, the clusters did not even show strict country differences. Only three out of the ten countries had their newspapers grouped in the same cluster.⁶

⁶ In order to further corroborate these results, an additional cluster analysis with two clusters was performed but did not support the expected country groupings either. Newspapers from Democratic-corporatist as well the Polarized-pluralist countries were divided between the two clusters. All Liberal newspapers clustered in the group with lower percentage of factual paragraphs and higher percentage of interpretation and opinion paragraphs. The Eastern European newspapers were also divided between the two clusters.

Table 4: Newspaper clusters according to factualness of news reports (Cluster analysis with 3 clusters)

Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3
Mean values: Fact: 97.8% Interpretation: 0.7% Opinion: 0.5%	Mean values: Fact: 94.6% Interpretation: 2.6% Opinion: 2.7%	Mean values: Fact: 89.3% Interpretation: 8.8% Opinion: 1.7%
ABC (Spain) El Mundo (Spain) Der Standard (Austria) Die Presse (Austria) Monitor (Bulgaria) Trud (Bulgaria) Kauno Diena (Lithuania) Lietuvos Rytas (Lithuania) Rzeczpospolita (Poland) Adevarul (Romania)	24 Hours (Bulgaria) Le Monde (France) Ouest France (France) The Guardian (UK) The Irish Independent (Ireland) Gazeta Wyborcza (Poland)	El Pais (Spain) Evenimentul Zilei (Romania) Frankfurter Allgemeine (Germany) Sueddeutsche Zeitung (Germany) Le Figaro (France) The Irish Times (Ireland) The Times (UK)
Kruskal-Wallis H Tests		
Fact: $\text{Chi}^2 = 17.323$, $\text{df} = 2$, $p < 0.001$		
Interpretation: $\text{Chi}^2 = 16.093$, $\text{df} = 2$, $p < 0.001$		
Opinion: $\text{Chi}^2 = 15.077$, $\text{df} = 2$, $p < 0.01$		

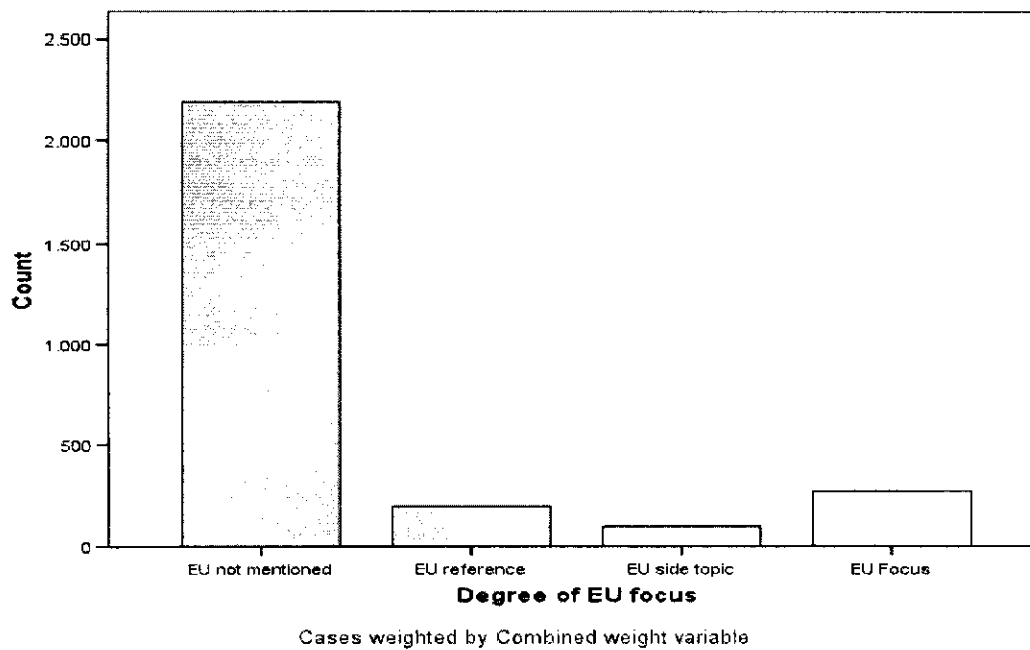
A Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to test the differences between the three groups because the distribution of the variables was not normal. The results showed that the differences between the clusters are significant at the 1% level for factual and interpretation-focused paragraphs and at the 1% level for opinion paragraphs. However, this result does not prove that there are still three separate media systems in Europe that can clearly be differentiated from each other. The three groups are significantly different but, as we have seen, they do not conform to the Hallin and Mancini (2004) models or EU membership groups, and online newspapers from one and the same country were even grouped in different clusters. Furthermore, the newspapers from Liberal countries did not show the highest percentage of factual paragraphs in their news reports, nor did newspapers in countries from the Democratic-corporatist model show consistently higher percentages of facts in comparison to the Polarized-pluralist countries. As the range within which the papers are positioned is quite small (85 to 99 % factualness), the exact placement of each paper on this dimension seems to depend on newspaper specifics rather than country or media system characteristics. This does not

preclude that the Hallin and Mancini classification may still have explanatory power on other dimensions of media content but it indicates that with respect to factualness systemic explanations do not work. Rather a convergent model of factual reporting seems to have developed to a considerable degree in online newspapers across Europe.

3.2. Explaining levels of vertical and horizontal Europeanization

If there are no consistent country differences in the factualness of news reports, what about levels of vertical and horizontal Europeanization? Let us first look at how our two measures of Europeanization – degree of EU focus and reference to other European countries, respectively - are distributed overall (figures 1 and 2).

Figure 1: Degree of EU focus in news items (N= 2.759 articles)⁷



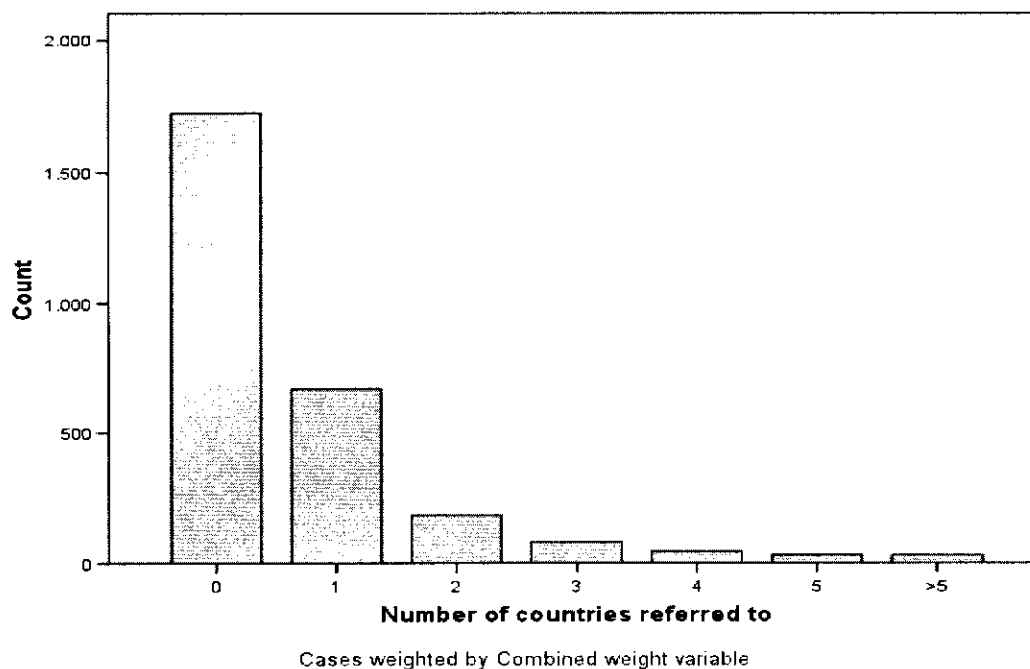
It is apparent that most news items feature neither any reference to another European country nor to an institution of the European Union.⁸ The two dependent variables are significantly correlated (Pearson's r .324 at .000 level), obviously because news items that feature references to EU institutions are almost by definition more likely to also feature references to other member states who are involved in the dealings of the EU. But the measures for vertical and horizontal Europeanization also retain some degree of independence, providing empirical

⁷ Cases were weighted so as to control for different numbers of articles per newspaper and per country. The variable for weighting articles per newspaper was computed as follows: $(1 / \text{news items per newspaper}) * (\text{news items of that country} / \text{number of newspapers per country})$. The variable for weighting articles per countries was calculated similarly as $(1 / \text{news items per country}) * (\text{total news items} / \text{number of countries})$. The product of both weighting variables was used in all analyses in this part so that news items from all countries and all newspapers will have the same influence on the results, no matter what their original frequencies were.

⁸ Both figures suggest that the dependent variables are not distributed normally. We will hence rely on non-parametric tests in the following.

support for our assumption that the two dimensions are not equivalent.

Figure 2: Number of other European countries mentioned per news item (N = 2.908 country references)



Turning to vertical Europeanization first, we assumed, as was outlined above, that the relative significance of European politics and policies for news media in any given country varies with the relation of the country towards the Union. But it seemed unclear whether old member states or members close to accession time should be expected to feature higher levels of vertical Europeanization. As can be seen from table 5, news items from member states that joined the Union in 2004 (Poland and Lithuania in our case) feature the strongest EU focus (15%), followed by those from member states joining in 2007 (9,6%) and from old member states (8,1 %). If we combine the three values containing any kind of reference to the EU (EU focus plus EU as a side topic and EU reference), countries that joined in 2004 still come out first (25,7%) and ranks 2 and 3 are reversed with old members (19,3%) slightly outnumbering

members joining in 2007 (18,7%). These results suggest that closeness to accession does play an important role in explaining levels of vertical Europeanization. It seems that this increased EU focus mirrors the particular dependency of accession countries from the EU institutions and possibly a heightened debate about their decisions. Conversely, the evidence for the habitualization thesis according to which old member states should show more vertical Europeanization than new member states is inconclusive at best: Old members only come out second when all references to the EU are counted; and old members are much closer to countries joining in 2007 than to the leading group of countries joining in 2004.

Table 5: Degree of EU focus per EU membership status groups

		EU membership status group						Total	
		Old members		New members 2004		New members 2007			
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Degree of EU Focus	EU not mentioned	1336	80,7	410	74,3	449	81,3	2195	79,6
	EU reference	115	6,9	43	7,8	38	6,9	196	7,1
	EU side topic	70	4,2	16	2,9	12	2,2	98	3,6
	EU focus	134	8,1	83	15,0	53	9,6	270	9,8
Total		1655	100.0	552	100.0	552	100.0	2759	100.0
Basis: News and opinion items from 30 online newspapers in 10 European countries, November 9-15, 2005									
Chi ² =29,047; df=6; p<0.001									

As for horizontal Europeanization, we had again identified contradictory explanations. Older members may be thought to have had more time to grow accustomed to the interdependencies between EU member states and have possibly developed a more Europeanized identity. On the other hand, new members may have a greater need to compare themselves with other countries and may still want to catch up with realities in their Western counterparts. Our data suggest that by a marginal but significant difference of 3 percentage points news items from old member states are most likely to feature one or more references to other European countries, followed by those from new members joining in 2004 (37%) and, lastly, those countries joining in 2007 (32%). It appears that a shared history of interdependency is a better explanation for mutual observation in the press than closeness to

accession.⁹

Table 6: Reference to other European countries per EU membership groups

	EU membership status group		
	Old members (N=1749)	New members 2004 (N=578)	New members 2007 (N=581)
Share of articles featuring at least one reference to another European country	40%	37%	32%
Basis: References to other European countries in news and opinion items from 30 online newspapers in 10 European countries, November 9-15, 2005 (N = 2,908 country references)			
Kruskal Wallis Test: $\chi^2=11.961$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$			

As an additional possible explanation we have also tested the impact of public attitudes towards the EU on vertical and horizontal Europeanization. The attitude variable was based on the question “In general, does the European Union conjure up for you a very positive, fairly positive, neutral, fairly negative or very negative image?” from Eurobarometer Survey 62.0. (field time October/November 2004). Individual scores were aggregated to compute a countrywise mean. However, no significant relationship between attitudes towards the EU and either vertical or horizontal Europeanization was found.¹⁰

Finally, Hans-Jörg Trenz has noted that “the political landscape of Europe looks different through the windscreen of the quality press” than it does in tabloid newspapers (2004: 292). He has consequently included only quality papers in his study, suggesting that only quality newspapers contribute to the building of a European public sphere (Trenz 2004: 311). While many studies follow this lead, our study, by including tabloids, allows for a test of newspaper type as an independent variable. And indeed our data confirm that broadsheet newspapers do display a stronger EU focus and mention more European countries in their news items than do tabloids (see also Pfetsch 2004). Apart from the level of Europeanization quality and popular newspapers also differ with respect to another important aspect of how Europe is covered in the media: domestication.

A domestic perspective in the coverage of the European Union was measured with two

⁹ Note that when we treat mutual observation as a continuous variable for each news items (by measuring the number of different countries referred to), the new member states (2004) rank highest, followed by old members and new members (2007), a pattern consistent with the above findings on vertical Europeanization. However, the number of countries referred to appears to be a weaker operationalization of mutual observation than the fact of referring to another country at all.

¹⁰ Our expectation that there is no relationship between the Hallin and Mancini (2004) country groups and levels of Europeanization was also confirmed by a corresponding test.

indicators: Firstly, the variable ‘domestic actor’ tells us whether an article’s headline or introductory paragraph referred to an actor from the newspaper’s home country. We shall assume that if a domestic actor is mentioned – in addition to the EU actor measured by the variable ‘EU focus’¹¹ – the article employs a stronger national perspective than if no domestic actor is referred to. Secondly, the variable ‘number of domestic paragraphs’ shows how many of the article’s paragraphs were about domestic aspects of the topic. By calculating the ratio of ‘number of domestic paragraphs’ and ‘number of paragraphs’, we can learn about the extent of the national perspective in the article. As table 7 shows, tabloids are indeed more likely to mention a domestic actor in an article’s first lines. Almost two thirds of all pieces of EU coverage in tabloids made a domestic reference, while it was only about one third for the broadsheets. The two Bulgarian broadloids turn out to be very similar to the broadsheets in this respect.

Table 7: Domestic Actor per newspaper type

	Newspaper type						Total	
	Broadsheet		Broadloid		Tabloid		N	%
	N	%	N	%	N	%		
Domestic actor								
Yes	67	34.7	12	33.3	21	60.0	100	37.9
No	126	65.3	24	66.7	14	40.0	164	62.1
Total	193	100.0	36	100.0	35	100.0	264	100.0

Basis: News and opinion items with an EU focus in 30 online newspapers from 10 European countries, November 9-15, 2005
 Chi²=8.416; df=2; p<0.5

These findings are supported by the results shown in table 8. Here, the mean ratio of the number of domestic paragraphs is displayed for the three different newspaper types. As can be seen quite clearly, pieces of EU coverage in tabloids contain more domestic paragraphs than those in broadsheet papers. While almost every second paragraph in EU focus articles in tabloid newspapers is about domestic aspects of the topic, it is only every third paragraph in broadsheet newspapers. Surprisingly, the broadloids have the highest share here indicating that they do offer strong national framing for EU politics later in their items even though in the headline and first paragraph domestic actors are not displayed so prominently. In general, however, it becomes quite clear that tabloid newspapers indeed employ a more national, if not nationalist, perspective when reporting on EU issues.

¹¹ The variable ‘EU focus’ was used to isolate all pieces of EU coverage from those pertaining to other topics, such as domestic issues or global politics.

Table 8: Share of domestic paragraphs in total paragraphs per newspaper type

	Newspaper type		
	Broadsheet (N=193) mean	Broadloid (N=36) mean	Tabloid (N=35) mean
Share of domestic paragraphs in total paragraphs	0.34	0.55	0.47
Basis: News and opinion items with an EU focus in 30 online newspapers from 10 European countries, November 9-15, 2005			
Kruskal Wallis Test: $\chi^2=11.668$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$			

3.3. Horizontal Europeanization: East-West pattern of mutual observation

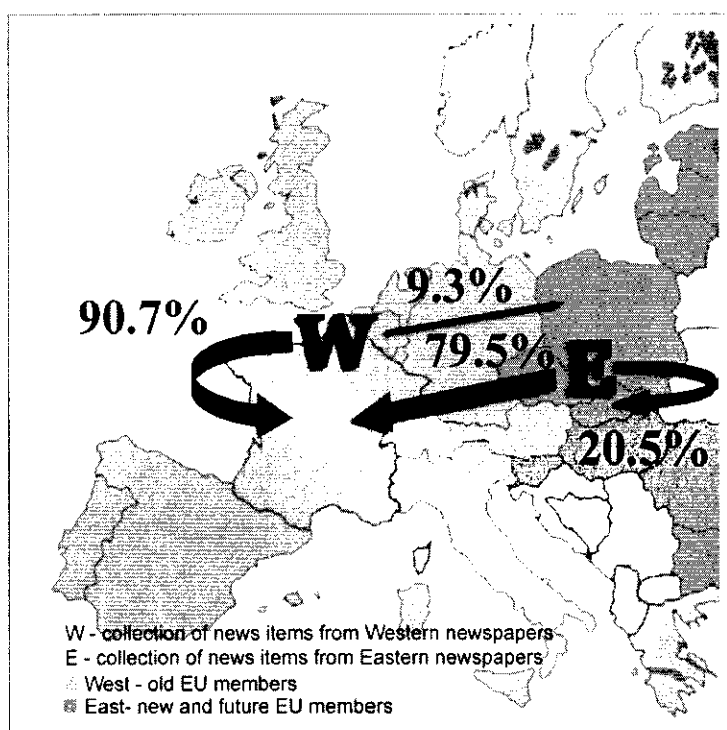
In the previous section we have seen that the intensity of mutual observation varies with EU membership status: Newspapers from old member states feature more articles that refer to other European countries than new members. Here we are going to examine the reverse question: Where are the countries located that attract most references? Which countries are the preferred objects of observation and thus of horizontal Europeanization? In this analysis we include all 27 EU member states joining until 2007 because all of them can be the object of country references (even if some of them are not studied as originators of country references here).

Table 9 shows that Western European countries attract the large majority of country references in both Eastern and Western European newspapers. This emphasis on Western European countries is even stronger in newspapers from that same region (90.7 %) than in newspapers from Eastern Europe (79,5%). But even in Eastern Europe newspapers devote four fifths of their country references to Western European countries, four times as many as to their Eastern neighbors. Figure 3 depicts these relationships graphically.

Table 9: Number of country references present in Western and Eastern press

Countries referred to are in the ...	Western press		Eastern press	
	N	%	N	%
... West	827	90.7	495	79.5
... East	85	9.3	128	20.5

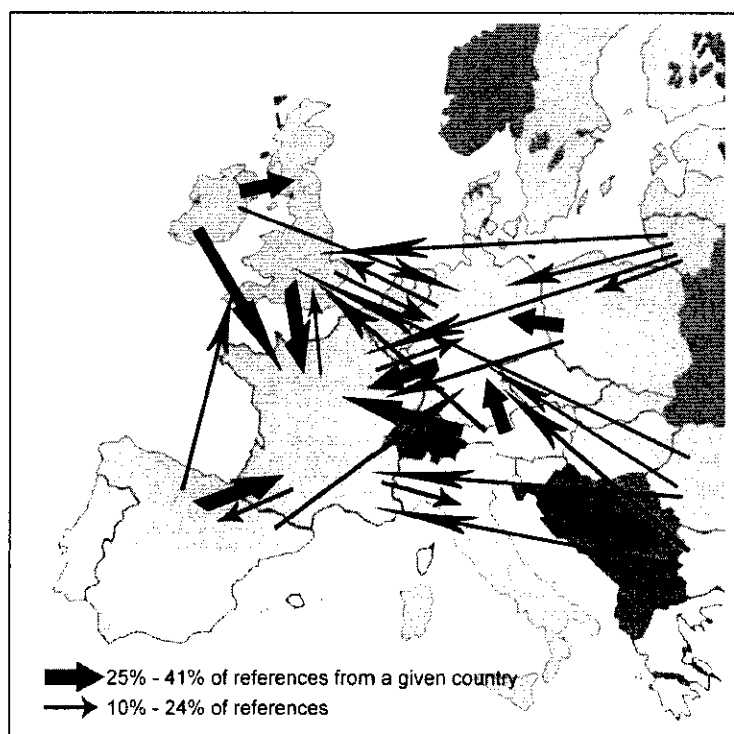
The data were compiled based on a series of crosstabulations
Cramer's V values range between 0.96 and 0.97, all results were significant at $p < 0,001$

Figure 3: Share of references to Eastern and Western European countries

To give a more precise picture we have disaggregated the data to the country level. The countries most referred to by newspapers in both Western and Eastern Europe were France, followed by Germany and the UK (400, 284 and 214 references, respectively). This

result is close to the findings by Kevin (2003: 108) who studied only Western Europe and found that the UK emerged as the country most often mentioned, followed by France and Germany.¹² Among the Eastern European countries, in our study Poland and the Czech Republic were mentioned most often in the press from both parts of the continent; in the Western press alone, Poland and Romania were referred to most often. Figure 4 presents the main communicative linkages between the European countries. Most arrows and especially the thickest ones are directed at the Big Three and none of the arrows point from a Western to an Eastern European country.¹³

Figure 4: Strength of communicative linkages between EU member states



¹² The fact that France is first in our study is probably due to the fact that during our period of investigation the riots in France were attracting particularly strong coverage all over Europe.

¹³ For reasons of transparency, linkages of less than 10% of the country references from an observing country were omitted in figure 4.

Do our results point to a problematic neglect of Eastern Europe in the Western press? And how can the general pattern of mutual observation be explained? Three alternative explanations present themselves. Following the neglect thesis we could simply hypothesize that the location of a country in the East or the West will explain the frequency of its being observed. Secondly, we might again assume that older member countries are mentioned more often due to their experience and a particular ‘model’ character they might assume in the European Union. The year of accession would then explain the differences in the number of references a country can muster. A third possible explanation might be the size and power of a country with bigger and/or more powerful countries attracting more references than others. Since in the EU the size of a country’s population translates into (voting) power we have chosen to measure this factor by the countries’ population figures. A linear regression analysis was conducted including all three explanatory factors (table 10).

Table 10: Regression of influence factors on total number of references for each EU member country (“observation received”)

Influence factors	B	β	Adjusted R Square
Population size	3,529	0,847***	0,704
Country is in the west	-	-	
EU accession date	-	-	
Constant	- 5,019		
OLS-Regression ***p < 0,001 (t-test)			

The result shows that 70.4 % of variance in the total number of references to a given country can be explained by that country’s population size. The other two factors do not have any explanatory power. Hence, we can conclude, that population size is a good predictor of the number of references to a given country: the bigger the population of a country, the more references to this country are found in the political news of European online newspapers.

4. Conclusions

A summary of our analysis yields a complex, yet instructive picture. First, news reports in European online quality newspapers do not differ systematically in their degree of factualness. The average share of factual paragraphs per newspaper lies in a relatively narrow corridor of 85% to nearly 99%. While this suggests a rather strong overall commitment to factualness in news reports, the existing differences cannot be explained by a country

grouping based on journalistic traditions of more fact-centered versus more advocacy and interpretative journalism. The Hallin and Mancini (2004) typology of media systems (Liberal, Democratic-corporatist and Polarized-pluralist) does not predict the level of factualness found in online newspaper in 2005. Nor does the location of the country in either Western or Eastern Europe or the time of accession to the European Union. Across Europe a dominant style of factual reporting seems to have established itself that incorporates only variations from individual newspapers, not from countries or country groups.

Secondly, EU membership status does explain both the intensity of EU coverage (vertical Europeanization) and the strength of mutual observation (horizontal Europeanization). The patterns are different in the two dimensions, however. The vertical EU focus proves to be strongest in those countries that have entered the EU a year before our period of investigation (new members in 2004: Poland and Lithuania) while old member states and the countries entering the EU later (Bulgaria and Romania) display a weaker EU focus. In contrast, on the horizontal dimension of mentioning at least one European country in a news item it is the older member states that have the highest scores, followed by those entering the EU in 2004 and in 2007. Thus it seems that (online) newspapers focus on EU institutions most during and around the time of accession, possibly mirroring the dependency of the acceding countries from EU regulations and decisions.¹⁴ Mutual observation, however, intensifies with the duration of membership, with a more complex and decentralized view on political developments in Europe only developing over time. It seems that the integration of newly acceding countries in a horizontal network of communication in Europe will take time. We do not have long-term data yet, however, to support this claim empirically.

Thirdly, the intensity of both vertical and horizontal Europeanization also depends on the type of newspaper studied. On average, broadsheets have higher scores on both dimensions than broadloids and tabloids (see also Pfetsch 2004). Interestingly, long-term analysis shows that in broadsheet newspapers vertical Europeanization has increased since the early 1980s while mutual observation and other measures of horizontal Europeanization as well as collective identification with Europe show no change over time (Siffert et al. 2007; Wessler et al. 2007). This discrepancy points to a somewhat surprising pattern of (nationally) segmented Europeanization at least in Western European broadsheets: Newspapers look to Brussels increasingly, but they do not integrate horizontally more intensively so far. Vertical and horizontal Europeanization in tabloids has not yet been studied in the long term, however. Thus the question remains open whether tabloids will follow the broadsheet pattern of increased EU coverage or focus or whether there will be no change over time even in the

¹⁴ In a future study it would be interesting to try to confirm this result with an additional period of investigation about a year after the accession of Bulgaria and Romania, i.e. in early 2008.

vertical dimension. Our analysis also shows that tabloids are more likely to “domesticate” EU coverage by including domestic actors prominently and devoting more space to domestic aspects and ramifications of an EU issue than broadsheets. The more popular types of newspaper are thus more national, if not nationalist, in their coverage of the EU.

Finally, a more thorough look at the patterns of mutual observation in Europe shows that Western European countries predictably get the bulk of attention in European online newspapers. While Western European countries have about 80% of the European population and they accrue roughly 80% of the country references in Eastern European newspapers, their share is even higher in Western European newspapers (about 90%). Most of the media attention goes to the Big Three, Britain, France and Germany. In Eastern Europe Poland and the Czech Republic get the most attention from newspapers across the continent but their overall share is much smaller than for the big Western countries. There is a clear explanation for the pattern of mutual observation: It is the size of a country that largely determines the attention paid to it. Eastern European countries do not attract so little references because they are Eastern European or because they have joined the EU late, but because on the whole they are much smaller than the Western European countries.

What do we learn from our study in theoretical terms? Our study does lend support to the homogenisation thesis. Hallin and Mancini’s threefold typology of media systems cannot explain reporting styles in Europe. To be fair, Hallin and Mancini did not explicitly predict this relationship to hold, but it appears to logically follow from their argument. Of course, the factualness of news reports is but one indicator of journalism cultures, albeit an important one in previous scholarly discussions. There may be persisting differences between Liberal, Democratic-corporatist and Polarized-pluralist countries in other aspects but systematic comparative data on this question do not exist yet (see, however, the study by Benson and Hallin [2005] about France and the U.S. and Ferree et al. [2002] on Germany and the U.S.). So there is ample room for further research here. For the time being it seems that whatever differences in reporting styles may have existed in Europe - between the three country groups or between East and West- have given way to a more uniform pattern today.

If not historical traditions of journalism, what does explain the character of news reporting in Europe today? Our study clearly points to the necessity of more thoroughly theorizing the significance of accession to the EU and its impact on media content in general and political news in particular. We have made one first step here by showing that the EU membership status does play an important role in explaining levels of vertical and horizontal Europeanization in news. But we could only speculate about why exactly this is so, and what the causal mechanisms are that link accession to patterns of Europeanization in the media.

More generally, the research on the emergence of a European public sphere suffers from an overly descriptive focus and a lack, correspondingly, of explanatory models and research designs. We hope to have provided some important insights and additional justification for engaging in detailed and process-oriented causal analysis in the future – as well as for including Eastern Europe systematically.

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