

CHAPTER TEN

NOT EUROPEANISED AFTER ALL?
EUROPEAN JOURNALISM
AND ITS DIFFERENCES
WITHIN THE EU MEMBER STATES

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Introduction

If, like this book, you think about “Public Communication in the European Union”, a question one might very quickly ask is if this communication has been Europeanised after all these “united” years. The author of this chapter would be quite sceptical about this issue. As the following discussion will show, when it comes to European journalism, one still cannot really speak of a true Europeanisation — even more if one associates this concept with a uniform process of communicative integration, namely a system whereby receivers interpret and glean the information intended by the sender. The chapter will return to this point in its final section. Before that, however, the aim of this chapter is to discuss journalism practices in Europe and their impact on media coverage of the European Union (EU), its institutions and different political discourses. In order to explain journalism practices I will refer as a theoretical framework to the conceptualisation proposed by Weischenberg of a model of journalism based on a social system. I will support my discussion with findings of different studies undertaken between 1996 and 2008, particularly an extensive treatment of the subject by the author (Sievert, 1998), which has been updated and is now used for drawing a historical comparison.

According to many experts, then and now, the EU is moving towards a realisation of its vision, a kind of sociological unification, at least at two different speeds, the economic and political one and the European public one.

While the process of economic and political integration has made great strides, the development of a European public is lagging far behind¹ (Gerhards, 1993b: 96).

As Mattéart observed, “the homogenisation of societies is inherent to the unification of the economic field” (1996: 4). The same year, the German weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* put it even more bluntly: “Europe has no public opinion. Opinions in and about Europe, yes, but they are always shaped by a national perspective” (Schmid, 1996: 51). Gramberger also writes of a “history of neglected dialogue” (1997: 1), and Kopper even talks of “sand in the gearbox” (1997: 10), although, at the same time, unity insists that “the information necessity about the European Union is growing” (Friedrich, 1998: 23).

The majority of studies clearly indicate the existence of two speeds of integration (various articles in Bach’s 2000 volume); though alongside this direction some other scholars postulated the idea of an “issue-specific communications community” (Eder, 2000: 167) — what Eder refers to here is a communicative society, whereby the type and level of communication is entirely dependent on the issue at hand. Admittedly Risse observes a low level of attention for European topics, but also, however, “a topic-specific communications community with divided structures of significance across national borders” (2002: 22), again directing a great focus towards the ascertaining of a form of communication appropriate to the issue discussed.

This gives rise to the question “can political journalism exist at [the] EU level?” (Baisnée, 2002: 108). This question, however, is still answered in a mostly negative fashion. “[T]here is, so far, simply no European journalism to be found in Europe,” as Ruß-Mohl (2003: 205) rather provocatively summarises. Media Tenor, an organisation that provides corporations, governments and financial institutions with analytics and strategies, speaks rightly of the “minor matter of Europe” (2004: 18). The problem that arises from this is increasingly described as a democracy deficit and a (too-)large influence of PR and lobbyism, that, in contrast to journalism, increasingly pursue an “integrated European strategy” (Dagger & Lianos, 2004: 16). For Burton and Drake,

the idea of a “European media landscape” is in itself a misnomer: they remark that “nothing much links the sensationalism of Albania to a British broadsheet or a long French analytical feature” (2004: 15).

¹ The quotations in this paper are from various authors, originally in various European languages. For purpose of better universal understanding, the author has translated all quotations into English.

Differences between countries can also be observed on a greater scale than just media or journalism. According to Delanty and Rumford,

the European public sphere differs from conventional public spheres, whether national or transnational, in that it is poly-vocal, articulated in different languages and through different cultural models and repertoires of justifications, and occurs in very different institutional contexts (2005: 104).

It is clear that the European media landscape is, at the moment, fragmented and varied. There also seems to be little hope for a more homogenous situation in the future. Barth (2005: 31) presents an argument in which a seemingly negative and unconstructive future for European cross-border communication is brought to the fore, a viewpoint supported by Gauland (2005: 15), as is clear from the title of his work: *Europe Disintegrates*. Prinzing explains this disintegration further, concluding that:

the political culture of a nation state continues to provide the framework for journalistic work, and thus shapes the face of the journalistic culture (2006: 11).

Seifert also talks of the “unfulfilled longing for Europe”, and complains that “the national perspective continues to dominate media coverage” (2007: 31). These negative assessments of the Europeanisation of communication are further supported by a survey conducted by EACD and MCM Institute among communication professionals in Europe, which shows that less than 8 percent fully (and less than 20 percent partly) agree that “a European public sphere will develop a new forum for communication on transnational issues” (EACD, 2008: 68).

Theoretical framework for the analysis

In order to analyse and understand “European journalism”, one first needs an adequately differentiated heuristic working model which will enable us to look at various theories of journalism and useful methodologies. Different propositions for this analysis have been made (for an overview, Esser, 2004), including the author’s own writings (Sievert, 1998, 2005). Here the author has again chosen his model that reflects system-related theoretical considerations within the German-speaking world (Sievert, 1999). These considerations permit a comparison of journalistic systems, bearing their national, regional and

traditional structures and institutions. The model stands on the idea of a territorially differentiated social system called “journalism”. The function of this system involves the “self-observation of society” based on the code “currently worth publishing/currently not worth publishing.” The relevant medium is described by the dual term “public/publishing sector.” Intra-systemic relationships, that is the way in which systems and roles work and exist together, have been described, following Weischenberg (1992), in the sense of a multi-perspective theoretical approach using four interrelated contexts.

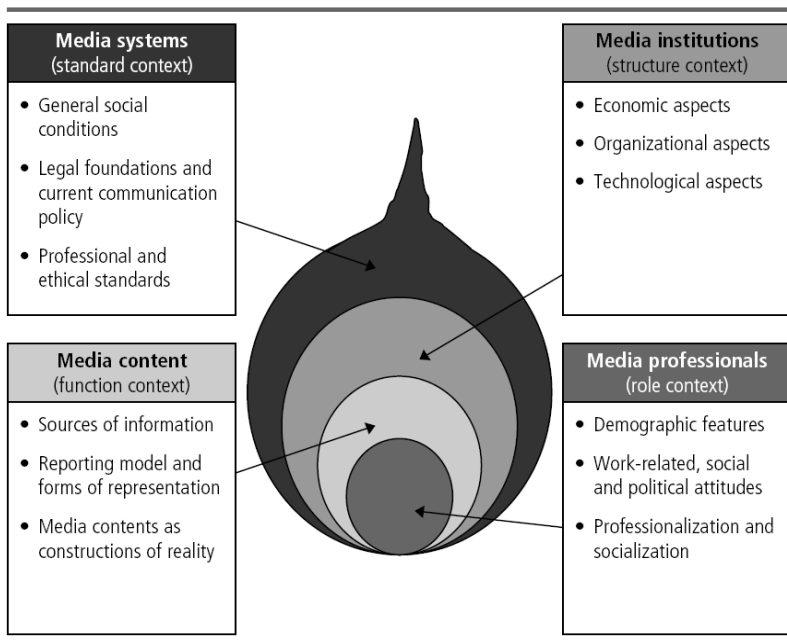


Figure 10.1. Weischenberg’s Model of Journalism as a Social System

Source: Sievert, based on Weischenberg (1992)

In his article, Weischenberg differentiates forms of journalistic setup according to journalism’s normative, structural, functional and role-related contexts, which relate to the media’s systems, institutions, messages and actors (Weischenberg, 1992: 67–70, 1994: 431–432). He describes these contexts as an “onion” in order to highlight the areas of interdependence and the reciprocal effects they have on one another. The external framework of the journalism system (or the outer “peel” of the

onion) is the standard context. This involves the recognised standards of a media system, including general social conditions, historical and legal foundations, influences from communication policy, as well as professional and ethical standards. The structural context develops within this standard context. The structural context encompasses the economic, political, organisational and technological imperatives facing media institutions. The system and institutions in turn affect the media message, which Weischenberg assigns to the functional context. The functional context involves issues of information sources and reference groups, patterns of reporting and presentation, effects and repercussions — in short, the concrete ways in which the media construct reality. Media actors, who are observed in the context of their roles, find themselves confronted with all of these contexts. The same contexts also affect their specific and ultimately subject-dependent professional actions. In studying journalism it is relevant to consider demographic characteristics of these actors, their social, professional and political attitudes and their conventional training as well as their lives as a whole, as Weischenberg does in his model.

In the following pages, I shall analyse the respective international synchronicity within the framework described above. The term “international synchronicity”, referring to the extent to which communications are compatible with one another, is used broadly, referring to all four contexts that were examined. The chapter analyses the presence of simultaneous media content in various aspects of journalism practices within the nation state and its reciprocal effects, in particular by examining reports on the EU. In addition, it addresses the issue of synchronicity of media systems², institutions and actors, i.e. the structures in this area that can be observed at the present time (“synchronically”), and hence ultimately the issue of similarity among these contexts during the 1990s. Given a systemic understanding of

² The term “system” is overused in German social science, but it cannot be avoided in the present chapter, for reasons of linguistic aesthetics and readability as well as in order to conform to existing terminology. However, the author would like to point out explicitly that when “media systems” or “press systems” are referred to, not to mention “decoder systems” or “reception systems”, he is referring to existing general academic discourse and is not using these terms in the sense of a “system” in system theory. The social systems “journalism”, “politics”, “business”, “culture” and “science” should be distinguished from these undifferentiated systems. The former will always be referred to in the singular as “social system” or as a “journalistic” or “political system”.

journalism, in which journalistic messages are not produced in a vacuum, this examination appears to be absolutely essential.

Formally, one can distinguish between two types of international synchronicity, which are here termed formal synchronicity and content synchronicity. A given feature is formally synchronous if it is found in all countries analysed, but is fundamentally different in its substance. One example would be the fact that the media in all countries report primarily on their own countries, but that country is a different one in each case. A feature can be said to exhibit content synchronicity if it is found in the same concrete form in each analysed country. For example, all EU countries report with particular frequency on the three largest EU countries, Germany, France and the UK. Formal and content synchronicities together converge into another feature which the author calls general synchronicity. This feature reflects the fact that it is often impossible in practice to make a clear distinction between the two first types of synchronicity, and it is not necessary to do so for the general comparison at issue here. Note that a feature with a high degree of formal synchronicity but little content synchronicity by no means guarantees a high likelihood of successful communication, but rather an average likelihood.

In concrete terms, the aim is to determine the degree of international synchronicity for the standard context, structure context, role context and function context. In addition, since this chapter is only dealing with EU countries, I aim to define the resulting degree of Europeanisation of individual aspects of those four contexts. It is clear that the term Europeanisation is somewhat limited here, since this study is limited to countries within the EU, thus ignoring non-members of the EU. In *Standard and structure contexts* (p. 245 below), the focus is on EU 15; *Function context* (p. 247) refers to press in Austria, Germany, Holland and Italy, alongside a study into television coverage in the UK and in Germany. Then, *Role context* (p. 255) looks closely at eight European countries: Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Spain and the UK. It is equally important at this point for the author to highlight the fact that international and European synchronicities are two separate phenomena, if one sees “European” as reflecting a certain quality. Initially, however, the term is used primarily in a geographical sense, which nonetheless ultimately has substantive implications. If all EU countries exhibit similar functional structures in a specific aspect of the differentiation of their journalistic practices, this increases the probability of successful communication among them, almost regardless of whether that feature is specifically European or not. Thus the issue of the

international synchronicity of the journalistic practices in the EU ultimately also involves the issue of their European synchronicity. Accordingly, I shall not distinguish below between these other forms of synchronicity.

The study that follows does not distinguish between general international and specifically European synchronicity, but rather focuses on two other interrelated dimensions. The first lies in studying the subjects of journalism practices, such as general social conditions, legal foundations or the professionalisation of media actors. These are very specific and individual phenomena that need to be given proper examination and consideration. The second is the analysis of an empirical study that compares different journalists' practices in EU news coverage in different EU countries. In cases where this equivalence is not necessarily apparent, particularly with respect to empirical studies and statistics (Hofmann, 1992: 105f.), further methodological consideration is needed to ensure the desired degree of international comparability, whereby the analysis is extended beyond what might be considered as a simple approach to comparing international similarities and differences.

It is crucial in carrying out this sort of overarching theoretical and empirical study to define a comparative measure that can be explained at least heuristically, and one that allows for a comprehensive overview of the study's results. In order to define a comparative measure that can explain heuristically the result of a study on media practices in different countries, the following Table 10.1 about the degree of Europeanisation is presented. The first step was to identify four comparative levels of general international synchronicity within the journalistic practices in Europe: none or hardly any, low, medium and high international synchronicity. I shall describe their use schematically for the purposes of argument and illustration, using existing material, but analysing it here for the first time in this form. These four categories are identified as "degrees of Europeanisation": one (none or hardly any international synchronicity) to four (high international synchronicity), and are represented by the number of asterisks in the subsequent table (Table 10.1, overleaf). At least in the case of the respective summaries, the formal distinction between functional and content synchronicity converges in the measure of general synchronicity, without any further explicit differentiation. In addition, I consider the question of whether the feature at issue contains "genuine," in particular legally and/or institutionally determined EU-wide transnational structures.

Table 10.1 Detailed definitions for Varying “Degrees of Europeanisation”

Degree of Europeanization	Symbol	Definiton
5	*****	Feature largely identifies only EU-wide transnational structures
4c	****	High international synchronicity with respect to the feature; several central aspects identify EU-wide transnational structures
4b	****	High international synchronicity with respect to the feature; individual aspects identify EU-wide transnational structures
4a	****	High international synchronicity with respect to the feature; but no or hardly any EU-wide transnational structures can be identified
3c	***	Medium international synchronicity with respect to the feature; several central aspects identify EU-wide transnational structures
3b	***	Medium international synchronicity with respect to the feature; individual aspects identify EU-wide transnational structures
3a	***	Medium international synchronicity with respect to the feature; but no or hardly any EU-wide transnational structures can be identified
2c	**	Low international synchronicity with respect to the feature; several central aspects identify EU-wide transnational structures
2b	**	Low international synchronicity with respect to the feature; individual aspects identify EU-wide transnational structures
2a	**	Low international synchronicity with respect to the feature; but no EU-wide transnational structures can be identified
1	*	No or hardly any international synchronicity with respect to the feature can be identified

Source: Sievert, 1998

This includes, for example, arrangements applying to all Member States that are based on EU guidelines. This criterion is taken into account by attaching to the degrees of Europeanisation from two to four the letter “a” (no or hardly any such structure); “b” (such structures are present in connection with individual aspects of a feature); or “c” (such structures are present in several central aspects). If the analysed feature contains only EU-wide transnational structures, it is assigned the highest degree of Europeanisation, “five”. Sources of data comprise those already made by the author and reports such as Media Tenor. Data relates to various Member States and will be specified in each specific paragraph.

Selected results concerning the degree of Europeanisation of individual journalism contexts

Let us turn now to a closer examination and analysis of the various “layers of the onion” based on the degrees of Europeanisation outlined above. Accordingly, I shall focus on media content and media actors, giving only brief consideration to the degrees of Europeanisation of media systems and institutions and focusing on results³. In the following sections, the concept of international synchronicity vis-à-vis journalism practices in different EU countries is analysed and discussed, taking into consideration its core contexts: standard, structure, function and role.

Standard and structure contexts

In the case of the general standard context of media practices and processes, one can assume a medium level of international synchronicity (Table 10.3). This applies particularly to general social conditions, which are those of a Western democracy in all of the EU Member States; however, there are substantial differences in the political and social contexts, particularly since the expansion of the EU to the south and east. This is clearly apparent in the area of media use. For example, in 1991–1992 daily newspaper circulation per 1,000 inhabitants was only thirty-nine in Portugal and eighty-three in Greece; Germany and the UK occupied a middle position with 324 and 351 respectively; and Sweden and Finland were at the top of the scale, with 490 and 512 respectively (Sievert, 1998: 74; Lemoine, 1992: 32; Dagnaud, 1994; OPOCE, 1996: 4). These differences for the most part remain large, although there have

³ For more information, see Sievert, 1998: 72–111.

been changes in the absolute numbers since that time. As the World Association of Newspapers noted in its online annual report (2002):

over the five years 1997–2001, circulation declined in ten EU countries: -4.9 percent in Belgium; -10.7 percent in Denmark; -1.12 percent in Finland; -0.7 percent in France; -6.4 percent in Germany; -11.4 percent in Greece; -11.5 percent in Luxembourg; -7.9 percent in the Netherlands; -4.9 percent in Sweden; and -8.7 percent in the United Kingdom. Four countries increased circulation over the five-year period: Austria (+2.4 percent); Ireland (+8.1 percent); Italy (+3.7 percent); and Spain (+2.9 percent).

Similarly, large national differences can be observed in other media, such as magazines and television viewing habits. According to Hallin and Macini (2004: 64), the difference between newspaper and television use (with the latter lower in Scandinavia and German-speaking countries and higher in southern Europe) reflects the rate of literacy at the end of the nineteenth century. If a differentiation is made between print media on the one hand and audiovisual (AV) media on the other, then the question of an international synchronisation of the standard context can be addressed in terms of legal conditions and ethical norms. While standards governing print media competition are particularly high owing to the EU's role in this area, AV media are generally still governed by a variety of national legal arrangements and thus exhibit only a low level of international synchronicity. Conversely, AV media are sometimes subject to higher and more uniform professional standards (medium degree of Europeanisation), while there is a great deal of difference among the print media in the various EU countries in this regard.

The highest degree of international synchronicity within the “onion” is seen in the structure context of media institutions, and it is even higher for print media than for AV media. In both cases this is due not least to the effects of the EU's role in regulating economic affairs. In fact, this was the first and only case in this analysis in which something resembling EU-specific structures was identified in the private media industry. As a recent paper issued by the Commission of the European Union put it,

the future role of public policy is to create favourable conditions for the industry and support a posture of vigilance and innovation into the future. This will help European publishing to realise its full potential in the digital economy, by maintaining and enhancing its competitiveness. Maximizing the potential of publishing will also promote the diversity of opinion and culture that the peoples of Europe need in order to derive the richest benefits from the information society (CEC, 2005a: 5).

While synchronicity in economic, organisational and technical matters is thus equally high in the realm of print media, only a medium level of synchronicity can be observed for the latter two aspects in the AV context. This can be accounted for in part by the widely differing legal conditions governing audiovisual products in the various EU countries, a factor that was mentioned in the context of standards. At the same time, it should be noted that despite efforts and some progress in this regard, basic technical standards continue to lack uniformity within Europe.

The author also wishes to draw attention to a 2005 press release by the EU Commission, which aimed to broaden coverage of the EU, and EU-related institutions, in national newspapers and magazines across the EU. The document *Communication Action Plan* (CEC, 2006), published in every language appropriate to its EU Member States, highlights a series of measures, in print and online, to bring more EU-related topics to light in the press. The aim of the article is summarised succinctly under its sub-header “EU Commission Action Plan for Better European Communications”. The article aimed to unify publications, thought and reporting across EU countries and organisations. Within the standard and structure contexts, this form of ultimately governmental intervention was a seemingly pacifist attempt to alter the cross-border structure of communication of the EU and its associated institutions, and thereby evening the balance of reporting across Europe. Whether this initiative was successful remains to be seen.

Function context

We shall look more closely at the next layer of the onion: the function context of media content. In carrying out the relevant content analysis, the author referred to his own 1996 study of ten print newsmagazines from five countries as well as more recent and longitudinal results from the Media Tenor research institute (regarding methodological design and its limitations, see Sievert, 1998: 159–207; Media Tenor, 2005: 87). Alongside these findings, a new update for the first half of 2008 has been included, based on a recent online analysis using the media publications database, Genios (2008). These results are limited to the German language publications used in the 1996 study. These are the German news magazines *Focus* and *Spiegel*, and the Austrian publications *News* and *Profil*. Out of a total of 8,704 articles from the above-mentioned newsmagazines, there were 204 articles that appeared during the first half of 1996 which were at least one page in length and indicated in their headings, lead texts, graphics, photographs

or photo captions that they concerned the topic of the EU or one of its institutions. In the case of Media Tenor, there were 249,876 general reports in seven German television news programmes, as well as 76,250 reports in four English TV news programmes and 49,806 reports in the German media lasting for at least five seconds or taking up five lines of print, all of them occurring between the beginning of 2003 and the autumn of 2005. Concerning the 2008 Genios analysis, there are sixty-six articles in the German language news magazines *Spiegel*, *Focus*, *News* and *Profil*, as well as 7,858 articles within the most important Austrian, German and English newspapers and magazines.

The EU is a topic to which the print newsmagazines in the various countries attached a differing level of importance. This is clear both from the absolute numbers of EU articles and from the proportion of such articles relative to the total number of articles of at least one page. Figure 10.2 shows both sets of statistics. *Focus* and *Profil* reported most often on the EU, and the Austrian magazine also reported regularly on the EU's institutions. At the other end of the table were *Cambio 16* and *HP/De Tijd*, which published less than one-fifth as many such articles as the respective leader. Overall, however, it can be concluded that there was a medium level of international synchronicity, owing to the relatively similar results for six of the magazines, which ranged from 2.2 to 3.5 percent. These results are limited to the German language publications used in the 1996 study. Looking at the first half of 2008, a study using the Genios online database showed that for the same publications, *Focus* published twenty-four articles about the EU, and *Spiegel* printed thirteen. The Austrian magazines *News* and *Profil* published sixteen and thirteen EU-related articles respectively. If compared to the results of 1996 study, it is clear that, in this sample, there are significantly fewer EU articles than in 1996.

It is interesting to note that another heuristic comparison some ten years later shows practically no difference concerning print media publications. Figure 10.3 is limited to the UK and Germany, and addresses a different medium, television, but here too it is immediately clear that there are pronounced national differences in the coverage of EU topics. Media Tenor commented that, despite the newsworthy event of Holland and France rejecting the draft EU constitution, coverage of European politics decreased notably in 2005 throughout Europe (2005: 84). The article saw this as a missed opportunity for public debate about the future of the EU constitution. The data used in 1996 refers to selected news magazines, whereas the statistics for the first half of 2008, sourced

using Genios, refer to the most important national (approximately 300) German- and English-language news and magazine publications.

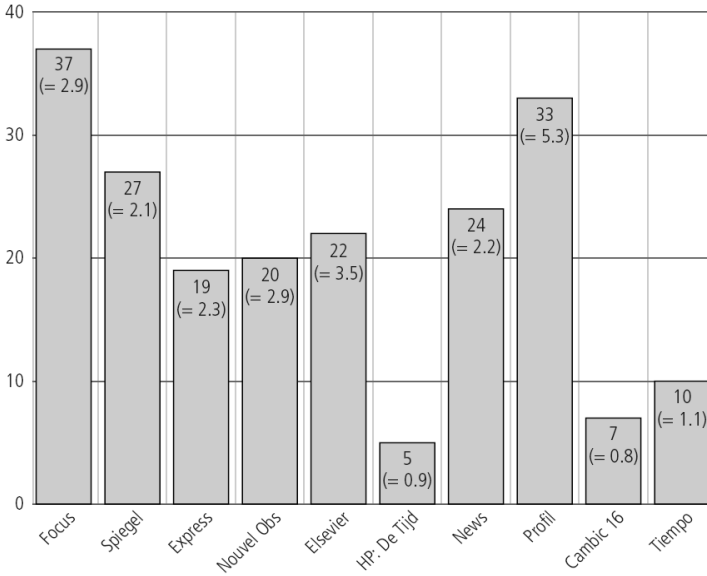


Figure 10.2. Media Coverage in the EU According to Country and Title
All data in amount and percent. Source: Sievert 1998

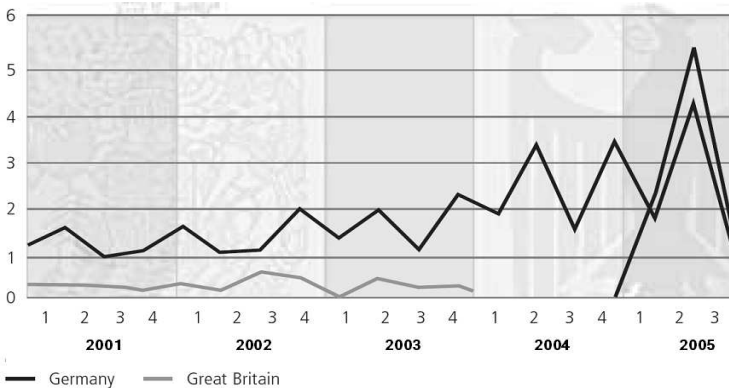


Figure 10.3. Television News EU Media Coverage in Germany and the UK.
All data in share of all stories and percent. Basis: 249,876 stories in seven German TV news; 76,250 in four UK news (no UK data 2004). Source: Media Tenor, January 1, 2003 to 30 September 2005.

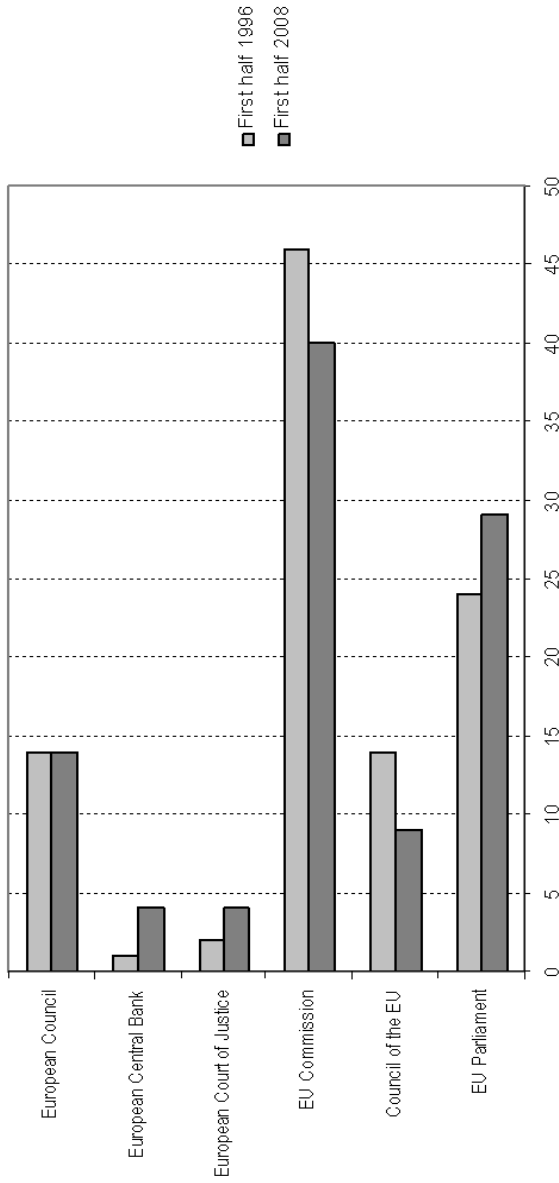


Figure 10.4. Press Coverage of Individual EU Institutions (all data in percent).
Sources: Sievert 1998 (n=153), Genos 2008 (n=215).

Source: Sievert, 1998.

National differences in the UK and Germany on the question of which EU institutions or other bodies are the specific subject of reporting are visible too⁴. The coding used was based on the most prominent instance in which the EU was mentioned, i.e. on which EU institution was first mentioned in the article. Overall, references to such institutions were identified in 75 percent of the cases analysed. Figure 10.3 shows the distribution of references to the various institutions in all of the relevant articles. As expected, the European Commission was the most frequent subject, accounting for nearly half of all articles. It is striking, however, that the second-highest number of reports, nearly one-fourth of the total, dealt not with the Council of Ministers (officially the “Council of the European Union”) or the European Council, but with the European Parliament. Thus the most immediately democratic body of the EU accounts for a higher proportion of reports than the high-level decision-making bodies at the inter-governmental level, each of which accounts for 14 percent of EU-related articles. The European Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors do not play a prominent role in such reporting. An update to this study has been integrated into Figure 10.4. The graph allows a direct comparison between the reporting of EU institutions in 1996 and twelve years later in the first half of 2008. This data correlates with the starting claim of this chapter, showing that there is nothing new in the West, as the changes in the distribution of EU institution coverage is minimal.

These results hold true for the relevant articles across the whole of Europe, but the picture is more complicated when the figures are broken down to the level of the individual countries in which those articles appeared (Figure 10.5). Here, too, there is unanimity among the five countries studied with respect to a preference for certain topics and the link to EU institutions, with the European Commission at the top of the list. Thus it can be concluded that there is a high degree of international synchronicity, although the results differ somewhat, ranging from 38 to 52 percent. However, when it comes to the second most frequent subject of journalistic reporting among the EU institutions, there are two different positions. While Austria and Germany frequently report on the European Parliament (39 and 23 percent respectively), in France and Spain it is the

⁴ The European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the European Commission, the European Court of Justice and the European Court of Auditors are institutions of the EU in a legal sense; a similar status is assigned in the literature to the European Council, i.e. the Council of the Heads of State and Government, although it is not defined as an institution in the legal sense (*Press and Information Office of the German Federal Government*, 1993: 65).

Council of Ministers that takes second place (in Spain, tied with the European Council). In the Netherlands, both institutions are approximately equal in terms of their coverage. Again, the Court of Justice and the Court of Auditors play no significant role or even none at all, when the results are examined individually by country. A positive aspect of these results is that overall, as well as in three of the five countries individually, as much or more attention is given to the European Parliament, which the media are said to scorn, than to the European Council. Still, the Commission's position as the focus of reporting remains unrivalled. If one sets aside the unusually high results in Austria, which can be explained in terms of current events⁵, the number of articles on the European Parliament is at best half the number dealing with the Commission. Bi-temporal comparisons are only possible for Austria and Germany. However, it can be seen that in these two German-speaking countries few changes have occurred. In Figure 10.5, for some countries, it is possible to compare press coverage of the various EU institutions. The data for the first half of 2006 refers to selected news magazine publications, whereas the data for the first half of 2008, researched using Genios, documents national news and magazine publications.

The Media Tenor data examined for purposes of another comparison, which unfortunately deal only with Germany, confirm our results for Germany. However, certain changes were apparent over time with respect to the question of which EU institution was the subject of particularly comprehensive coverage.

The biggest deficit in EU coverage stems from the lack of truly European parties and the ensuing deficit of communicative power for the European legislative... (Media Tenor, 2005: 86)

concluded Media Tenor in interpreting its own data. It remarked that the European Commission and European Council were covered much more often than the EU Parliament in 2004.

Based on these and other studies, it can be concluded that reports on the EU in the print media manifest only a low degree of international synchronicity. They differ among the various print newsmagazines as well as the countries in which they appear, with respect to their frequency, presentation and content. For the simple reason that audiovisual media

⁵ In Austria, the first direct elections to the European Parliament were held in October of 1996, more than three months after our analysis was concluded. However, the run-up to the elections was during the period of analysis.

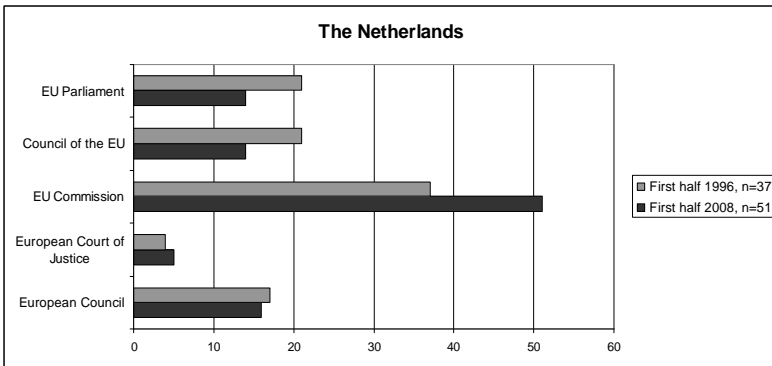
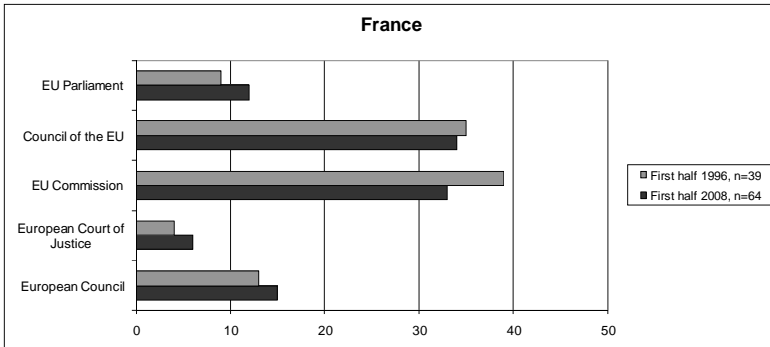
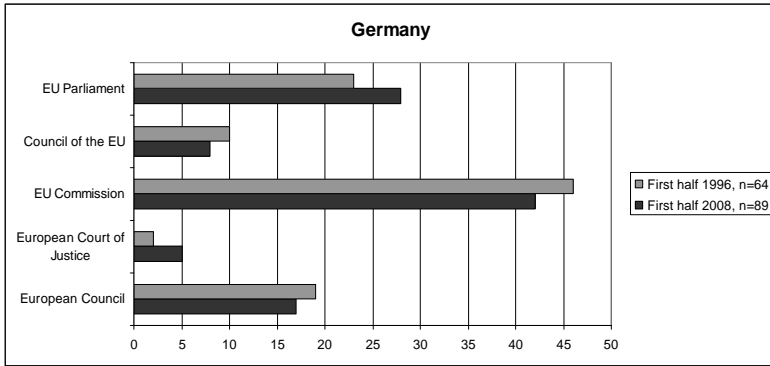


Figure 10.5. Country-by-Country Comparison of Press Coverage of EU Institutions (all data in percent). (Continued overleaf).

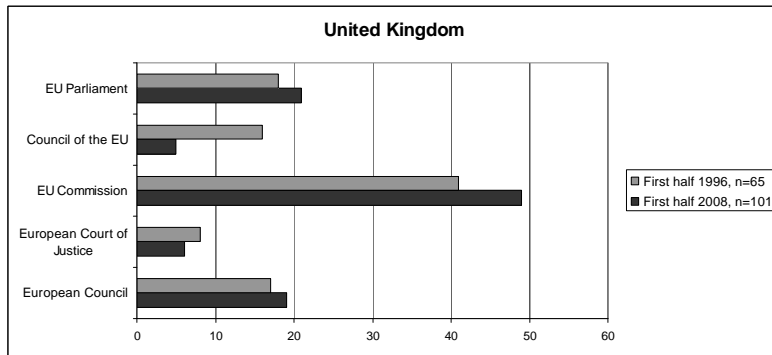
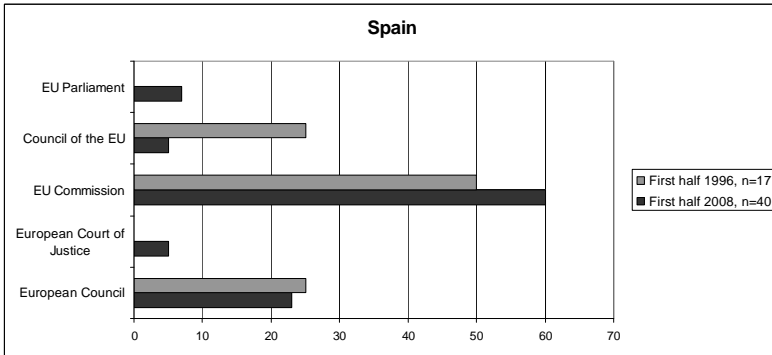
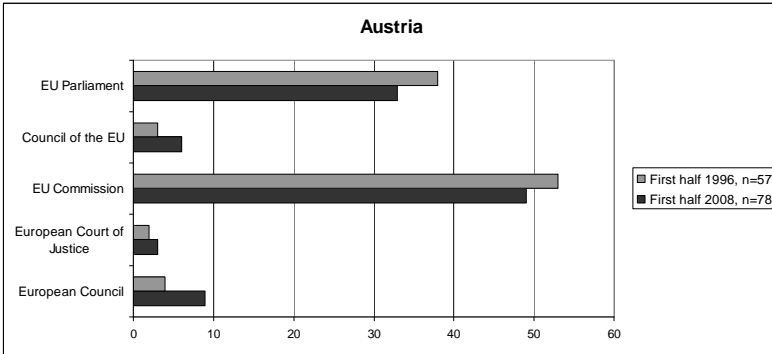


Figure 10.5. Continued. (All data in percent). Sources: Sievert 1998, Genios 2008.

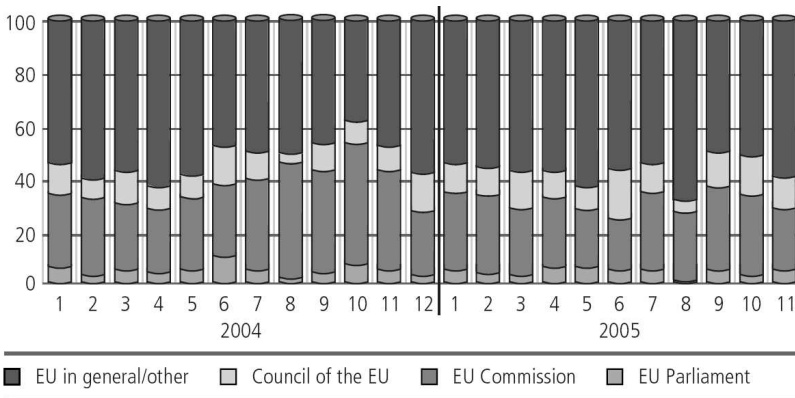


Figure 10.6. Media Visibility of EU Institutions in German Media (all data in percent; average rating -1/+1). Basis: 49,806 reports (at least 5 lines/seconds) about EU/EU institutions in 13 German media. Source: Media Tenor (01.01.2001–30.11.2005).

often use the same sources of visual materials and similar international program, there is a higher degree of synchronicity in the AV sphere.

Role context

The role context comprises demographic factors that affect journalists, such as the degree of professionalisation and socialisation of journalists, or the social or political attitudes that affect their work. At the time that the first paper — mentioned several times above — was written, there was a real dearth of research involving internationally comparable journalism surveys. It took a great deal of work to compile and analyse data on only three countries (Sievert, 1998: 132–150). Later on, the author himself, together with Weischenberg, made a modest contribution to this effort (Weischenberg & Sievert, 1998). Truly groundbreaking, however, was the anthology *The Global Journalist* by Weaver (1998a), which brought together studies from twenty-one countries and territories. Weaver's own concluding chapter in particular (Weaver, 1998b: 457–458, 466–467) made it possible to compare and contrast journalism in the European countries, as shown in Table 10.2.

It is striking to note that there is a relatively high level of congruence among the eight countries selected by the author (Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Spain and the UK) in terms of

journalists' basic demographic characteristics, but only a limited amount of agreement with respect to their role. The average age of journalists in all of the countries for which data were available is between thirty and forty, and the majority are male, although in one case the gender difference is only slight. The only sizeable demographic differences relate to their academic training. The proportion of journalists who have completed university studies ranges from a surprising low of 26 percent in Austria to 84 percent in Spain.

It gets even more interesting when one looks at journalists' professional self-concept and perceived autonomy. There is agreement that journalists should report quickly on events (from approximately 70 to just less than 90 percent). But while half of the German and English journalists feel that they should "provide entertainment," only eight percent of French journalists agreed. Only 40 percent of British journalists regard it as their professional role to report precisely, as opposed to three-quarters of the French and Germans.

These few examples, to which one might add others from the tables in this article as well as from Weaver's book, make it clear that the Europeanisation of the function context of media actors, in our onion model, is high only for demographic characteristics, while it is no more than medium for all other features. As new research shows, this is also the case if one comes directly to the question of Europeanization. Based on surveys in eighteen Member States, Kevin concludes that journalists had

mixed views on the existence of, potential for, and need for, a European public sphere, and indeed on their own individual role in the development of this (2007: 202).

Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to present a general, theoretical and empirically based conceptualisation and analysis of journalism in the countries of the EU. Particular attention was directed toward media communication regarding the EU and its institutions. The expectation expressed at the outset was confirmed: there is no single type of journalism in Europe or in the EU in terms of formal or structural uniformity, and journalism in Europe needs to be differentiated in a number of ways. Two types of differentiation appear to be of critical importance in the context discussed here, and I shall address them once more in this conclusion. These are differentiations of a very different

Table 10.2. Demographic Data and Approaches to the Work Role of Journalists across Various EU Countries. Source: Author's compilation based on Weaver and Sievert, 1998.

	Austria	Britain	Finland	France	Germany	Hungary	Poland	Spain
Average Age	-	38	40	-	35	-	-	36
Female (in percent)	26	25	49	33	41	33	-	25
Holding College Degree (in percent)	32	49	40	69	65	68	-	84
Majoring in Journalism	-	4	25	-	-	35	-	87
Perceived Autonomy on the Job (percent very satisfied)	-	10	81	-	-	45	-	-
Professional Role: "Report News Quickly" (percent very important)	-	88	-	69	73	-	-	-
Professional Role: "Provide analysis" (percent very important)	-	83	96	40	74	-	78	-
Professional Role: "Be a watchdog on government" (percent very important)	-	88	87	40	33	-	56	-
Professional Role: "Provide entertainment" (percent very important)	-	47	-	8	47	-	-	-
Professional Role: "Report accurately or objectively" (percent very important)	-	30	77	-	74	-	-	-

quality, the second being, to some extent, a product of the first⁶.

The first differentiation in practicing journalism is a territorial one, and concerns journalism as a social system. The function of this system involves society's self-observation based on the code "currently worth publishing/currently not worth publishing" within a symbolically generalised medium of communication described by the dual term "public/publishing sector." In the sense of a multi-perspective approach rooted in the parallel dualism of the structure concept, one can recognise within the system various contexts that affect standards, structures, functions and roles. Journalism is a functional system in world society that can be uniformly divided into categories according to this code, although this complex ordering does not yet exist throughout the world in a completely differentiated form. However, such differentiation as an independent system does exist at least for all of the Western democracies, and hence also for all EU member countries. At the same time, there are internal and territorial differences within this system of journalism, which is predicated on the idea of a global society. The different European journalism models put forth by Hallin and Mancini (2004)⁷ can help not only to identify differences, but also to group them in an analytical way.

⁶ These two differentiations do not entirely follow the tenets of classical system theory, nor are they intended to. Hence, "differentiated" is placed in quotes as a "description of characteristics" of the system.

⁷ Hallin and Mancini (2004) developed a total of three media and political models that rest principally on nine indicators. These aspects, labelled "characteristics" by the authors, can be illustrated in somewhat abbreviated form as pairs of opposites. Building on these nine distinctions, the authors assigned eighteen Western countries to one of three models. For countries like France, Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal, they established a polarized pluralistic model. In these more directorial political structures, newspaper print runs are low and media are closely aligned with highly polarized politics. Journalism is marked by opinion, and it is barely professionalised and easily manipulated. The state intervenes significantly in the media and subsidises the press. The UK, Ireland, Canada and the USA are assigned to the liberal model. The market plays a big role, print runs are medium-high, and there has long been a commercial, relatively neutral mass press. Journalism is highly professionalised, self regulation is institutionalised (while also weak at times), and the media distance themselves from politics and play an active investigative role. The researchers classify the media systems in Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Austria and Switzerland as democratic and corporatist. Newspapers have high print runs, the mass press developed early on, and the party-affiliated press has been significant historically, although more recently it has been overshadowed by a neutral commercial press.

The second differentiation is related to the EU itself, and primarily concerns the function context of media messages as part of the territorially determined internal differentiation of the journalistic practice, insofar as the latter deals with the EU and its institutions, quasi-“EU journalism”, as it were. The analysis presented here in shows that the assertion of a crisis of political communication cited in the introduction can be seen in the lack of a European public/publishing sector or a general public. Yet it is inaccurate to maintain that there is too little inadequately differentiated and inadequately personalised reporting on the EU, at least in the media examined in this study. Although news articles on the EU are usually written from a national perspective, the EU is still the subject of articles in the magazines analysed more often than any other international organisation, and more often than most individual countries. All of these results, as well as others, at least point to a considerable degree of differentiation and a high journalistic quality of EU reporting.

Based on these analyses, EU journalism can be concluded to be a doubly differentiated system, first in terms of territorial and system-immanent factors, second in terms of EU content and function. The question remains as to how to view this dual differentiation with respect to the crisis of political communication within the EU, described in the introduction of this chapter.

How this analysis is viewed depends on one’s position with respect to the general process of integration within the EU, and in particular the process of communicative integration. In formal terms, two concepts can be distinguished in this context:

- If our conclusions are based on the perspective taken by those who support the concept of a uniform process of communicative integration as outlined in this chapter, one is forced to take a critical view. From this perspective, the territorial differentiation of the functional system of journalism analysed here stands in the way of a (somewhat) uniform, truly European public; moreover, a fundamental change in this situation is not in sight. Following this line of argument, the development of a journalistic practice is generally seen in the context of economic as well as political developments.
- Alternatively, the author would like to suggest the concept of a differentiated communicative process of integration as a standard for evaluating the differentiation described above. The point of departure here is the question of whether communicative integration really should compete directly with economic and political integration, or whether it should instead be seen as part of a cultural convergence with its own separate standards. In the view of the author, journalistic

practices do not require a uniform European public/publishing sector of some kind, but the competent Europeanisation of a nationally differentiated public/publishing sector while maintaining fundamental national differences.

Based on the arguments presented here, the proposed concept of differentiated communicative integration appears to be far more sensible, feasible and sustainable than trying to insist on the often schematic idea of unity too quickly and too forcefully. Table 10.3 unites what has been presented and discussed and examines two different types of media and compares their degrees of Europeanisation. The table examines contexts and contents mentioned previously.

The discussion of various models of a European public demonstrates that the Europeanisation of national publics is more in keeping with comprehensive inclusion and deliberation than the models of a pan-European public and topic-specific transnational publics...

as Eilders and Vollmer (2003: 250) put it. Europe needs to become increasingly part of a process of territorially differentiated self-observation, whereby it reflects on its own practices, but it cannot replace such observation. A uniform communicative region of Europe is not desirable, in the view of the author, but Europeanised national and regional areas of communications would be beneficial. In concrete terms, this might mean offering more European areas of competence to journalists within the territorially defined differentiations of journalistic practices.

Ruß-Mohl is quite right in observing that

on the other hand, there is some reason to be confident: the network of European initiatives and institutions serving the improvement of journalism can still become denser; we can improve the communication between researchers and practitioners; and thus we can contribute our share towards creating a more European journalism culture (2003: 214).

Brüggemann demands a “change of strategy” on the side of the official information policy of the EU Commission, and goes on to name more transparency, as well as broad press relations, as the “missing link between information policy and the public” (2008: 70).

This awareness of European diversity in the context of journalism is in turn very important for public relations theory and practice. Only if the sphere of public relations is aware of specific cultural factors involved in European communication, or — even better — in national communication

within the European countries, will it be able to analyse appropriately and enter into a helpful dialogue with its various stakeholders with a view to strategy-oriented practice. European communication management implies managing diversity within a framework of diversity.

Table 10.3. Comparison of Degrees of Europeanisation across Content and Context

	Print media	Audiovisuell media
Standard context: media systems	***	
● General social conditions	***	
● Legal foundations and current communications policy	****	***
● Professional and ethical standards	**	***
Structure context: media institutions	****	
● Economic aspects	****	****
● Organizational aspects	****	***
● Technological aspects	****	***
Function context: media statements	**	
● Sources of information	**	***
● Reporting models and forms of representation	**	***
● Media contents as constructions of reality	**	**
Role context: media players	***	
● Demographic features	****	
● Work-related, social and political attitudes	***	
● Professionalization	***	

Source: Sievert 1998.

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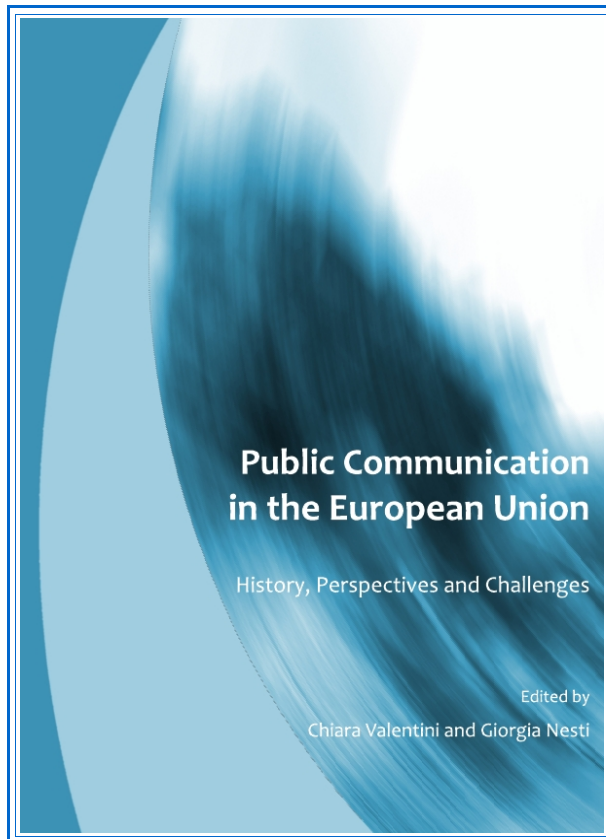
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