

# AUDIENCES AS A SOURCE OF AGENCY IN MEDIA SYSTEMS: POST-SOCIALIST EUROPE IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

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## ABSTRACT

*All the most important theoretical models developed for comparing media systems stress the importance of the structural aspect in defining the main dimensions that shape the media field. In this text we focus on audience behaviour in media systems as an aspect of agency, understood in sociological terms as part of the structuration process, and we expand the boundaries of media systems theory by including phenomena related to media use. We apply a cluster analysis to structural variables of media systems and to audience practices in terms of media use in order to find out how similar or different are media structures and practices in different European countries, in relation to Hallin and Mancini's (2004) theoretical model of media systems. The study finds that European audience practices show a clear North/South, rather than the expected East/West, differentiation. The expectation that all post-socialist European countries belong to the same model is also not supported in relation to structural media variables; some post-socialist countries are more similar to countries in the other two models of media systems in their structural aspects. The study interestingly re-groups European countries into three distinctive structural models which differ somewhat from the original Hallin and Mancini (2004) classification.*

## KEY WORDS

*media system – media audience – media use – structure and agency – post-socialist Europe – cluster analysis*

## 1. Introduction

Twenty years of research into media reform and democratization in post-socialist Europe focused to a large extent on developments in several related dimensions of media systems – media policy, the media market and technological development, journalistic professionalism, media and its relations with politics. The change of the regime in 1989/90 obviously had a tremendous impact on media systems that changed in every dimension since the socialist times. The transformation from state controlled, predominantly centralized media systems started with the opening of the market in the beginning of the nineties, with the abolition of censorship and the implementation of new media regulation.

The focus of research and evaluation throughout was on the structural aspects of the media system and its effects on freedom of expression and media independence from the state (Paletz, Jakubowicz and Novosel 1995; Paletz and Jakubowicz 2003; Sparks 1998; Petković 2004; Sukosd and Bajomi-Lazar 2003; Klimkiewicz 2010; Peruško et al. 2011; Peruško 2011). Only recently has research in this part of the world started to turn towards those in whose name the reforms were implemented: the audiences.

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Our main proposition in this text is that our understanding of media systems will change when we take into account the practices of media audiences. The media system or media field is a complexity of media organizations and institutions in a given territory, standing in certain relationships to each other and dynamically defined by their internal relationships as well as by the relationship of the media field to the adjacent fields of politics and the economy, among others. The audience as a separate variable in defining media systems has not been previously analysed in a systematic fashion. In this text we contribute to filling this lacuna in media systems research by examining audience behaviour as one possible locus of agency in the formation and development of media systems.

This text also contributes to extending the boundaries of media systems theory by linking it to audience research, integrating the micro level understanding of audience practice into the macro level view of media systems. In order to construct our argument, we first need to conceptualize audiences in terms of agency in relation to media systems, and then test the concept in the empirical context of post-socialist Europe. The third step is the integration of the audience agency dimension into a wider media systems theory. To this end, we use the most comprehensive model available, Hallin and Mancini's (2004) model of media systems, which is a theory about the formation of media systems with a set of related propositions about related relationships among the variables or dimensions. In its focus on the relationship between informational media and politics, this model can perhaps be compared to other theoretical concepts that attempt to explain the "media's governing logic" (Hackett 2006: 3), like the Herman and Chomsky propaganda model of the political economy of communication, or the Shoemaker and Reese hierarchy of influence model, which also examines structural influences on news production and content in a hierarchy from the macro to the micro level (as cited in Hackett 2006: 4-5).

The basic dimensions for the analysis of media systems used by Hallin and Mancini are:

- 1) media market structure, in which the moment in history and strength of development of the mass press is of particular importance for model construction;
- 2) political parallelism, which they define (following Seymour-Ure, in Blumler and Gurevitch 1995) as the level and type of connections between the media and political parties, and the extent to which media reflect the main social divisions;
- 3) development of journalistic professionalism; and
- 4) nature and manner of state intervention or control of the media (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 22-45).

The fifth dimension is the political system, which is in this model/theory also operationalized in terms of majoritarian or consensus governance, the degree of party polarization, approach to social pluralism, and history of political volatility. With their comparative analysis covering Western Europe and the USA, Hallin and Mancini (2004) constructed three models of media systems: the liberal model (manifested in the Anglo-Saxon countries of Europe and North America), the democratic corporatist model (manifested in North and Central Europe), and the polarized pluralistic model in the south European Mediterranean countries.

This theoretical model has never previously been empirically tested with quantitative comparable data, and this article will provide a first attempt. The empirical groupings of

countries will be the results of a cluster analysis of variables describing properties of media systems in terms of structure as well as agency.

Arguing that “one cannot understand the news media without understanding the nature of the state, the system of political parties, the pattern of relations between economic and political interests, and the development of civil society, among other elements of social structures” (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 8), the authors introduce dynamism within the model, implicitly introducing an aspect of those who use media in their respective media systems. The Hallin and Mancini model includes a (oblique) foundation in audience action or agency. Probably their most important utilization of audiences is in the dimension related to the development of the mass press, where they recognize the importance of audience practices as an influencing variable in the ensuing cluster of the “media market” category. The structural context of literacy penetration and the stage of modernization together with the wider political context certainly framed and helped shape repeated media practices, choices and habits of media audiences, which in turn proceeded to figure in the relationship between the media and politics, as well as the character of emerging media institutions.

Audiences also appear in the dimension of political parallelism, “also often manifested in the *partisanship of media audiences*, with supporters of different parties or tendencies buying different newspapers or watching different TV channels” (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 28). However, they again speak of it mainly in structural terms.

The usefulness of Hallin and Mancini’s four dimensions for analysing the structure of media systems has been demonstrated in its application to different national contexts in post-socialist Europe (Balčytienė 2009; Dobek-Ostrowska 2012; Hallin and Mancini 2012; Peruško 2012). At the same time, the model has been criticized for its incapacity to explain change in media systems (Jakubowicz 2007; Roudakova 2012), a usual critique of theories of social structure.

In dealing with post-socialist media systems, it is inevitable that we should come into contact with the notion of change, rampant in this part of the world. McQuail (2005) defines media system change as part of a general process of systematic social transformation, but also emphasizes that each system is characterized “by certain organizing principles which reflect general circumstances in a given society and its view of the media.” According to McQuail, media system change, “results from changes in both these subjective and objective factors” (McQuail 2005). Roudakova (2012) introduced change as process, which she defines to include the relationship of the micro and macro aspects of media systems, as well as the structure and agency. Her main point is in highlighting process against the concept of a static media system model. In our approach, audience agency is also seen as a dynamic part of the media system and change is a possible, but not a necessary outcome of audience practices.

We focus on audience behaviour as agency, understood in sociological terms as a relationship between agency and structure. This relationship has been the focus of growing interest among social scientists since the last decades of the twentieth century, especially in European and American sociology (Ritzer 2008). The most famous attempts at integration of agency and structure in sociological theory are represented in Anthony Giddens’ structuration theory and Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice and field (Kirchberg 2007; Frere 2004; Ritzer 2008). Ritzer further highlights the notion of practice as important

for both Giddens and Bourdieu as a locus for overcoming opposition between agency and structure, subjectivism and objectivism. "Structure is both medium and outcome of social activity, both enabling and constraining ... [Structures] limit behaviour, but are also outcome of human activity, they are interwoven or intertwined into the human action" (Giddens 1984: 25, 163).

Structure, according to Giddens, refers to rules and resources, and manifests in social systems as a form of reproduced social practices. Social systems extend in time and space as consequences of social actions, sometimes as wished for products of intentional action but sometimes as unexpected consequences (Giddens 1984; Ritzer 2008: 398). Structures combine the macro level of social systems and the micro levels of individuals, manifested in their actions (Giddens 1984: 17; Ritzer 2008: 398).

In order to bypass the opposition between objective structures and subjective phenomena, Bourdieu, similarly to Giddens, focused on practice (Kirchberg 2007; Frere 2004; Ritzer 2008). By using concepts of habitus and field and their dialectic relationship, Bourdieu attempts to bridge subjectivism and objectivism (Kirchberg 2007; Frere 2004; Ritzer 2008). Practice mediates between habitus and the social world, and through practice habitus is created or shaped, but the social world is also created through practice (Bourdieu 1977; Ritzer 2008: 405).

For our purpose, these meta-theoretical approaches can be applied to explain the dynamic relationships in media systems understood as a field in Bourdieu's terms, or in Giddens' terms as a formation of reproduced social communication practices. By employing the concepts of practice (in the above terms, as socially structuring) in relation to audience activity (Postil and Bräuchler 2010; Couldry 2004, 2012) we open up the avenue for audience influence by linking the micro and macro level of media systems.

Let us, then, look more closely at the concept of agency and the ramifications of its application to media audiences before we proceed to the operationalization of both concepts of media system and audience agency.

## **2. Audience Agency**

In the framework of media systems analysis, agency, i.e. practices that form and re-form the systems' structures, can be located in several places and in relation to different actors. One obvious choice for location of agency is in the journalists, who actively engage in media making on a daily basis as part of their profession. The agency of the journalists lies in their opportunity to influence news content (Hackett 2006). The issue of journalists' agency is certainly of significance in analysing and evaluating media reforms and media system development in post-socialist Europe, both in terms of the adjustments they had to undergo in their professional codes and practices in order to adjust to democratic norms, as well as in their participation in the creation or evolution of the very professional norm they were adapting to. Hackett further finds the possibility of journalists to be social agents in Foucault's conception of power in knowledge production, but within the existing constraints of social structure. Thus the "power relations may be manifested or even constituted within everyday routines and ethos of workaday journalism" (Hackett 2006: 7).

The second locus of agency is the audience, in its different identities and manifestations. The concept of agency is in mainstream communication theory mostly viewed in relation to individual agents in interpersonal relations, persuasion or organizational commu-

nication, in relation to social relations of power or autonomy of the individual (Gunn 2009:30). Audience behaviour/action can be treated as agency, and audiences as agents, whether or not they constitute their conscious behaviour in the philosophical understanding of agency in relation to the distinction of subject and object (Gunn 2009), and irrespective of whether their choices and practices are a result of true free will or performed under the existing contextual/structural constraints as conceptualized through the lens of practice theories (Postil and Bräuchler 2010; Couldry 2004, 2012).

Communication theory and research on audiences rarely relate agency and structure. This relation is sometimes made in studies of audience choice and even there it sees audience choice predominantly as a result of individual agency (Postil and Bräuchler 2010; Couldry 2004, 2012; Webster 2009: 222). In research on media systems, the relation of structure to agency is even more rare, especially if agency is defined as audience behaviour at the individual and collective social level. An important exception is Webster, who builds on Giddens' structuration theory to develop a "theory of media choice that views agency and structure as mutually constituted" (Webster 2009: 221), where he posits how the specific uses of media structure that the audiences make in exercising their choice (in the already available media context) can in turn change that context. Webster explains media choice in a highly structured media environment in which the audiences-agents perform choices (influenced also by individual psychologically defined variables of need, gratifications, or enjoyment) constrained by the existing media structures (Webster 2009: 223). Structuration theory explains the process of social change, which happens in the interaction of agents and structures (the duality of structure), where the repeated actions on the part of (aggregate) agents over time cause change in structures (Giddens 1999). Agents in terms of media use are the "most institutionally effective" when they are constituted as "markets, publics and/or audiences" (Webster 2009: 223).

Thus, there is continuous interplay between the structures of the media environment and audiences' behaviour (Yuan and Ksiazek 2011). Media choices result from the interaction of agents and structures, and thus shape or perpetuate the respective media environment. The structural features have powerful short-term effects on programme choice and viewing patterns but "over time their collective<sup>1</sup> media consumption behavior may shape the very structures within which they operate" (Webster 2009, Yuan and Ksiazek 2011). Agency and structure figure formatively in construction of the media field (system) (Calhoun et al. 2012; c.f. Bourdieu 2005; Benson and Neveu 2005). Hallin and Mancini find that "fields change through a process of struggle among the agents working within them, and the direction of change is not predetermined", and also note that the relationships of the fields (i.e. media and politics, or media and economics) to each other changes as well (Hallin and Mancini 2004: 81–82). The structure of the field is "determined, at any given moment, by the relations between the positions agents occupy in the field" (Johnsons as cited in Hackett 2006: 7). The relationship between structure and agency is performed in practice (Calhoun et al. 2012).

Webster (2009) gives an example of the duality of structure in relation to the programme schedules of television and radio, where the choices made by aggregate audiences determine the continuation of individual programmes, changes in their time slot, etc. Audience choice is in a linear media environment determined first by the availability of time

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1 Structuration theory usually deals with individual agency (Giddens 1984), while some authors like Yuan and Ksiazek (2011) and Sewell (as cited in Yuan and Ksiazek 2011) argue that aggregations, in fact, have the ability to influence the structure.

for media use, choice of a medium, followed by the choice of programme content. In a non-linear environment the choice is constrained by personal time and attention, and is helped along by search and recommendation infrastructures. It is important not to forget that media choice cannot be understood if we do not take into account what is available to the audiences at a certain point of time, in addition to audiences' availability and audiences' awareness (Webster 2009).

In this text we link empirical practices of audiences (agency) operationalized as the frequency of use of newspapers, radio, television, the Internet in general, and social media sites, to the structural aspects of the media system. The structural elements of the media system, theoretically framed within the Hallin and Mancini typology, are operationalized with empirical data in the following way.

### **3. Method and data: operationalization of structure and agency and cluster analysis**

Operationalization of the media systems model of Hallin and Mancini in order to make a quantitative comparative analysis presents several challenges. The positive outcome rests on success in finding enough variables that correspond to dimensions used to describe media systems, with comparable data for a number of countries of interest to us. The availability of reliable and comparable data thus influenced our choice of variables in operationalization to an important degree.

In relation to the structural dimensions of media systems, we decided to remain with the original Hallin and Mancini set of four media system variables: role of the state, media market, political parallelism and journalistic professionalism.

An index of the quality of public television was used to operationalize the dimension of media and state relations. Public television quality is an index variable developed in the European media systems survey.<sup>2</sup> As an indicator of the media market dimension, we used newspaper circulation per capita in the same way as Hallin and Mancini (data on newspaper circulation came from the WAN-IFRA database divided by population size, also from the World Press Trends report). Instead of concentrating only on political parallelism, which is operationalized here by the Party influence index, economic parallelism was also introduced and is indicated by the Owner influence index. Journalistic professionalism is measured by the Journalistic culture index, which encompasses journalistic professionalism and independence. Apart from the circulation data, all the indexes were constructed from the European media systems survey (Popescu, Gosselin and Pereira 2010). The sources of comparative data and the year they are relevant for are summarized in Table 1.

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2 The Public Television Quality index is comprised of these indicators: freedom of journalistic content from governmental political interference, amount of political news in comparison to private television channels, range of programming in comparison to private television channels, depth of coverage of politics and public affairs in comparison to private television channels, sensationalist style in comparison to private television channels, focus on the culture and traditions of minorities in comparison to private television channels, trustworthiness of information in comparison to private television channels.

Table 1: Empirical operationalization of the structural dimensions of media systems

Dimension of the Hallin and Mancini model (2004)	Operationalization	Source of data	Year
Role of the state	Public television quality index	European media systems survey	2010
Media market	Newspaper circulation per capita	WAN-IFRA, World Press Trends Database	2011
Political (and economic) parallelism	Party influence and policy advocacy index Owner influence index	European media systems survey	2010
Journalistic professionalism	Journalistic culture index	European media systems survey	2010

Audience agency was operationalized as media use. In our research we used the Eurobarometer<sup>3</sup> data for frequency of use of television, radio, written press, the Internet and online social networks.

Table 2: Empirical operationalization of audience agency in media systems

Frequency of media use	Source of data	Year
Television	Eurobarometer 74.2	2010
Radio	Eurobarometer 74.2	2010
Written press	Eurobarometer 74.2	2010
Internet	Eurobarometer 74.2	2010
Online social networks	Eurobarometer 74.2	2010

A cluster analysis was performed on two sets of variables, separately for the structural aspects of media systems, and separately for audience practices, with a view to comparing the clustering of countries in regard to two sets of variables/conditions.

Drawing on Saint-Arnaud and Bernard (2003) we decided to perform a hierarchical cluster analysis in order to determine how the countries cluster together in a theoretically meaningful way.<sup>4</sup> The interesting element of cluster analysis is its ability to point to those

3 Eurobarometer 74.2 (Europe 2020, Financial and Economic Crisis, and Information on European Political Matters), [http://www.gesis.org/?id=2867&tx\\_eurobarometer\\_pi1\[vol\]=2867&tx\\_eurobarometer\\_pi1\[pos1\]=280](http://www.gesis.org/?id=2867&tx_eurobarometer_pi1[vol]=2867&tx_eurobarometer_pi1[pos1]=280). Dina Vozab benefited from a research visit grant at EUROLAB, GESIS - Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences, in September 2012.

4 Cluster analysis is a method of analysis that groups cases of data based on the similarities of values on several variables, and hierarchical cluster analysis “allows grouping countries that have similar characteristics across a set of variables, thus leading to homogeneous empirical types. It is called hierarchical because it divides a set of cases (the countries) into even more numerous and specific subsets, according to the distance measured among all pairs of cases, taking into account their position across the whole set of variables under analysis” (Saint-Arnaud and Bernard 2003: 510). For this cluster analysis similarity is measured by the squared Euclidean

variables that provide most similarities within clusters, thus aiding our understanding of the impetus for categorization. Saint-Arnaud and Bernard (2003) in their analysis measured quantitatively the Esping-Andersen typology of welfare regimes, in a similar way that the Hallin and Mancini media systems typology (2004) is measured here.

Table 3: Values of indexes included in the cluster analysis

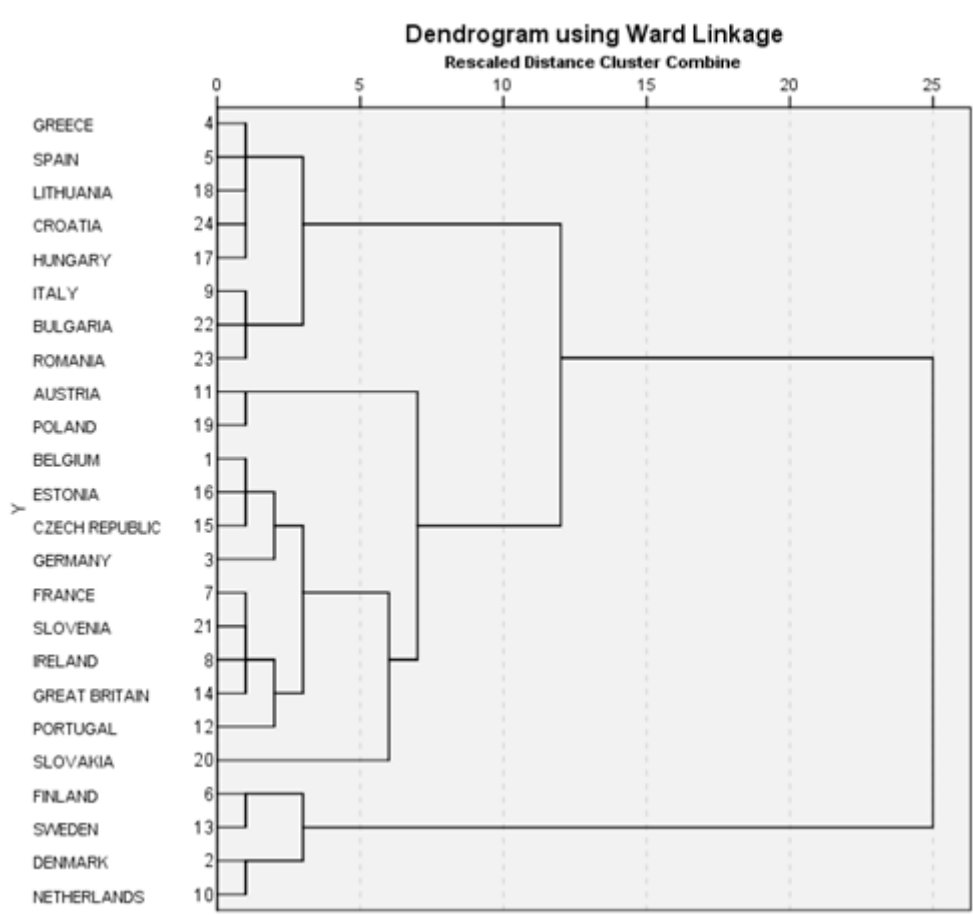
Countries	Public television quality	Newspaper circulation (per capita)	Party Influence and Policy Advocacy	Owner Influence	Journalistic culture
Austria	6,468	0,379	4,951	7,394	4,044
Belgium	6,517	0,153	3,709	4,444	5,857
Bulgaria	4,524	0,171	6,186	7,168	3,409
Croatia	6,6	0,107	4,389	7,766	4,094
Czech Republic	7,1	0,141	4,246	4,9	3,942
Denmark	7,189	0,174	2,966	2,54	7,131
Estonia	7,259	0,166	3,962	4,49	5,265
France	6,143	0,149	5,712	6,088	5,028
Finland	8,063	0,363	2,729	4,39	6,958
Germany	8,076	0,226	4,056	6,168	5,986
Greece	6,21	0,111	6,448	8,225	4,059
Hungary	6,617	0,153	5,742	6,479	3,598
Ireland	6,701	0,144	5,275	5,06	5,768
Italy	4,963	0,141	7,471	7,688	3,065
Lithuania	6,796	0,087	5,039	7,467	3,663
Netherlands	7,318	0,268	3,002	2,261	5,92
Poland	4,495	0,377	5,686	5,916	4,2
Portugal	4,563	0,07	5,058	5,778	4,989
Romania	4,718	0,042	5,907	6,869	3,074
Slovakia	3,857	0,069	2,518	3,27	4,667
Slovenia	6,067	0,18	4,568	6,051	4,917
Spain	5,97	0,074	6,242	7,745	4,038
Sweden	8,396	0,399	3,612	3,678	6,907
Great Britain	7,158	0,254	5,279	6,306	4,833

Note: Sources of data are listed in Table 1.

measure that tracks the geometric distance between cases and variables were standardized on values. Clusters were created using Ward's method, which groups cases by minimizing variance within a cluster. The decision on the number of clusters in cluster analysis is in most cases arbitrary, based on theoretical considerations, although there are some statistical methods for determining the number of clusters. The "elbow method" identifies the number of clusters by defining the marginal point at which the percentage of explained variance substantially "drops".



Graph 1: Dendrogram displaying the clusters of countries in relation to structural variables of media systems



In the cluster analysis engaging with the structural variables that describe media systems, three substantive clusters were formed. The first cluster, comprised of southern European countries and post-socialist countries, we named tentatively the South/East European model. Countries in this cluster tend to have lower scores in quality of public television, newspaper circulation per capita and journalistic culture of independence and higher scores in party and owner influence.

The second cluster is broad and more heterogeneous and consists of countries that belong to the liberal model according to the original Hallin and Mancini typology (Great Britain and Ireland), Mediterranean (France), democratic-corporatist (Germany) and also some post-socialist countries (Slovenia and Czech Republic). Countries in the second cluster are rather dispersed on the structural variables of media systems, but similarities emerge from party and owner influence and journalistic culture, where they all tend to group around middle values.

The third cluster is a distinct Scandinavian group, including many of the countries that were part of the democratic corporatist model in the original Hallin and Mancini typology. In the third cluster countries tend to score higher on public television quality, newspaper circulation and journalistic culture and lower than average on party and owner influence.

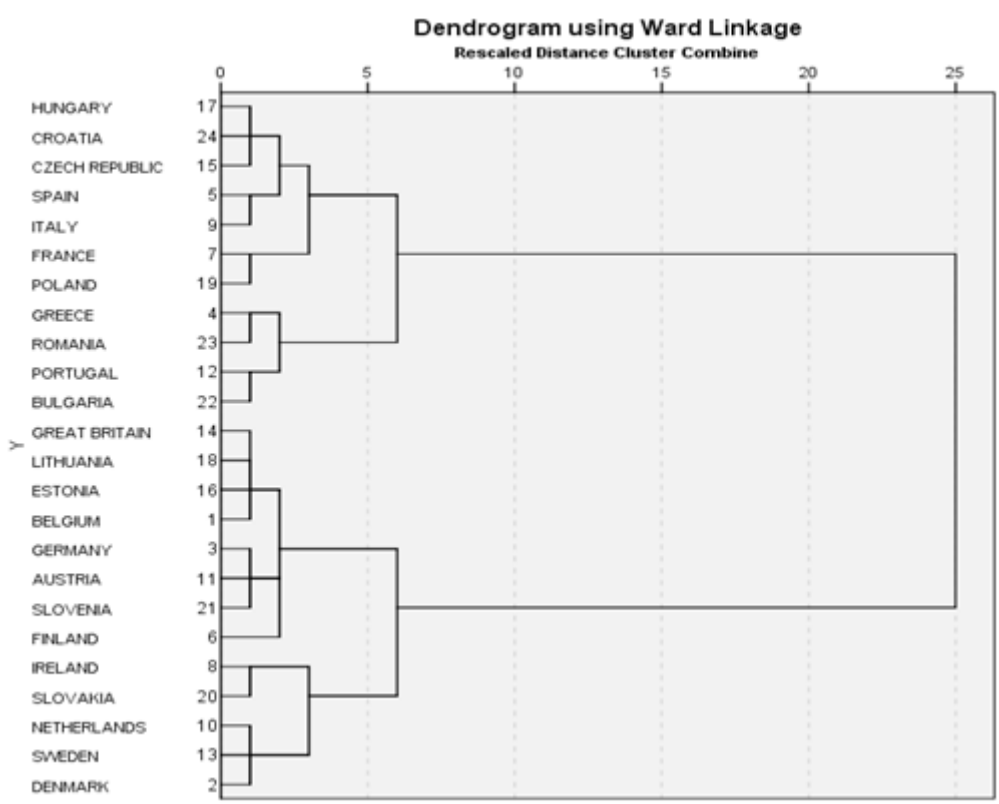
Table 4: Mean values of media use variables on the country level<sup>5</sup>

Countries	Television	Radio	Press	Internet	Social network sites
Austria	1,25	1,65	1,76	3,09	4,59
Belgium	1,34	1,88	2,78	2,94	4,53
Bulgaria	1,09	3,17	3,18	4,17	5,04
Croatia	1,2	2,22	2,82	3,93	4,73
Czech Republic	1,23	2,1	2,78	3,13	4,99
Denmark	1,17	1,67	2,12	2,03	3,93
Estonia	1,29	1,85	2,2	3,04	4,33
Finland	1,38	1,77	1,35	2,82	4,48
France	1,39	2,31	3,04	2,98	4,9
Germany	1,28	1,7	1,86	2,99	4,75
Great Britain	1,24	2,17	2,42	2,93	4,39
Greece	1,24	2,48	3,72	4,22	5,04
Hungary	1,2	2,2	2,83	4	4,56
Ireland	1,13	1,29	2	2,8	4,33
Italy	1,21	2,6	2,89	3,21	4,55
Lithuania	1,28	2,28	2,49	3,32	4,53
Netherlands	1,28	1,91	1,73	1,84	3,85
Poland	1,33	2,18	3,19	3,84	4,9
Portugal	1,15	2,75	3,37	4,45	5,11
Romania	1,26	3	3,63	4,28	5,22
Slovakia	1,17	1,7	2,51	3,13	4,4
Slovenia	1,25	1,67	2,23	3,53	4,84
Spain	1,25	2,89	3,35	3,45	4,61
Sweden	1,26	1,72	1,32	2,16	4,23

Note: Sources of data listed in Table 2.

<sup>5</sup> Frequency was measured on a seven-point scale, from 1 (everyday) to 7 (no access to this medium).

Graph 2: Dendrogram displaying the clusters of countries in relation to media use variables



In relation to audience agency, which we have operationalized as media use, two large groups/cluster of countries are identified (with the aid of the elbow method, see ft. 4). According to media use variables, countries seem to group according to their geographical positions, so we can distinguish “northern” and “southern” clusters of countries. Countries were grouped on the basis of their similarities in frequency of use of radio, printed newspaper, Internet and online social networks. Television use was not a distinguishing factor in defining clusters as no consistencies could be identified.

The “southern” cluster consists of 11 countries that belong to the Mediterranean, central and southeastern circle of European countries. These countries are grouped together according to their lower mean scores on all media use variables (except television).

The “northern” cluster consists of 13 countries (the only countries that would geographically belong to the southern cluster are Slovenia and Slovakia) and these are grouped together according to their higher mean scores on all media use variables except television, which again has no explanatory power.

The conclusion is that audiences in “southern” countries use radio, printed newspaper, Internet and online social networks less frequently than audiences in “northern countries”.

If we distinguish four clusters, we could see that these two larger groups break into two subgroups, but with Internet and use of online social networks as variables that distinguish the countries the most. The Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden and Ireland are countries with the highest means in the use of Internet and social networks, while Greece, Bulgaria, Portugal and Romania are the countries with the lowest means.

#### 4. Findings and conclusions

Transformations in the political and economic fields during the democratic transition in the 1990s brought changes to the media system as well, and to the relationship of the media field to other social fields. In terms of the structural dimensions of media systems, many characteristics of the post-socialist media systems are found to be similar to the Mediterranean polarized pluralist model from the Hallin and Mancini typology (Jakubowicz 2007; Dobek-Ostrowska 2012; Peruško 2012), while some authors claim a “mixed” model (Balčytienė 2009) and many authors presume that all Central and Eastern European countries fall into the same model but don’t analyse them (Curran and Park 2000; Puppis et al. 2009; Terzis 2007; Jakubowicz 2007). Our study, based on empirical cluster analysis of media system variables from the original Hallin and Mancini model (2004), shows that a number of post-socialist European democracies indeed do cluster together with the countries grouped in the Mediterranean polarized pluralist model.

Table 5: Three models of media systems based on clusters of structural variables

Dimensions of media systems	The South & East European model	The European mainstream model	The Scandinavian model
Countries	Greece, Spain, Lithuania, Croatia, Hungary, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria	Austria, Poland, Belgium, Estonia, Czech Republic, Germany, France, Slovenia, Ireland, Great Britain, Portugal, Slovakia	Finland, Sweden, Denmark, Netherlands
The quality of public-service television (Role of the state)	Lower to medium quality of public television	Not a distinguishing factor	Higher quality of public television
Newspaper circulation per capita (Media market)	Lower newspaper circulation	Not a distinguishing factor	Higher newspaper circulation
Party influence (Political and economic parallelism)	Higher party influence	Middle values of party influence	Lower party influence
Owner influence (Political and economic parallelism)	Higher owner influence	Middle values of owner influence	Lower owner influence
Journalistic culture (Professionalization of journalism)	Lower professionalism and independence	Middle values of professionalism and independence	Higher professionalism and independence

The new South/East European model is united by the low professionalization of journalism, low newspaper circulation, low to medium quality of public service television, and high owner and political parallelism. Post-socialist countries that cluster in this model are Lithuania, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria and Romania. On the other hand, we also find support for some qualitative observations that some of the post-socialist countries' media are rapidly changing and no longer fit into the Mediterranean concept<sup>6</sup>. Thus, we find that Poland, Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovenia and Slovakia cluster with the European mainstream, the most populous model distinguished by its middling values on professionalism and political and owner parallelism. Interestingly, the media market and state relations (i.e., circulation of the press and quality of PSB) have no impact in the formation of this cluster (but they do play a role in the other two clusters). The third is the most compact cluster of Scandinavian countries, which is characterized, as in the Hallin and Mancini (2004) democratic corporatist model, with high circulation of newspapers, high quality of PSB, high journalistic professionalism, and low political and owner parallelism.

Our analysis does not show the original liberal model. The largest number of European media systems are to be found somewhere in the middle between the highest professionalism and independence of media in the Scandinavian model and the lowest professionalism and autonomy in the South/East European model. There is, however, at least one caveat which points to a limitation of our analysis. We have analysed only the four media system dimensions, and not the fifth dimension, the political system, which plays a very significant role in the Hallin and Mancini theory. It is quite possible that the clusters would group differently with the inclusion of detailed determinants of the political system, i.e., majoritarian or consociational type of government, presidential or parliamentary system, the degree of party polarization, etc. Of course, the political system figures already in the media variables as an influencing/contributing factor, especially in relation to the quality of public service television, autonomy of the journalistic field and in political parallelism. The second limitation relates to the fact that our analysis did not include any historical data, but only one point in time in recent history (c.f. Peruško 2013). This also contradicts the original theoretical construct, which is grounded in the historical development of the media systems. Both of these limitations should be explored and corrected in future work. Also, the choice of data for operationalization of the media system variables necessarily plays an important role in the ensuing clusters; it is possible to imagine that with different data, results would not be the same. Additionally, other methods of research might give us more nuanced insight into the degree of country membership in certain clusters. Fuzzy set Qualitative Comparative Analysis might be employed to this end (c.f. Downey and Stanyer 2010), especially in order to gain more insight into the largest and most heterogeneous mainstream European model.

In respect to media use, we find that, probably not surprisingly in hindsight, but contrary to the theoretical expectation that all post-socialist countries are similar, the countries cluster along the North/South divide of wealth and development, and not along the East/West divide of old and new democracy. Within the two clusters, further differentiation appears in relation to the use of the Internet and social media. This gives some food for thought in relation to our understanding of media systems theory, as well in relation to development of European media and media audiences.

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6 Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska in a lecture on the changes in the Polish media system, University of Zagreb, 10 June 2013.

Table 6: Two models of media use in Europe

Media use	The “Southern” model of media use	The “Northern” model of media use
Countries	Hungary, Croatia, Czech Republic, Spain, Italy, France, Poland, <i>Greece, Romania, Portugal, Bulgaria</i>	Great Britain, Lithuania, Estonia, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Finland, Slovakia, <i>Ireland, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark</i>
Television	Not a distinguishing factor	Not a distinguishing factor
Radio	Lower mean score	Higher mean score
Printed newspaper	Lower mean score	Higher mean score
Internet	Lower mean score	Higher mean score
Online social networks	Lower mean score	Higher mean score

Recent research shows different adaptations of media institutions to technological change especially in terms of digital networked media, and different interfaces with media systems belonging to different models in terms of the Hallin and Mancini typology (c.f. Curran et al. 2009; Shehata 2010; Benson et al. 2012; Starr 2012). Some critics (Norris 2009) of the Hallin and Mancini models suggested that excluding the electronic media in their analysis is probably the most serious flaw in their analytical framework. Benson et al. (2012) claim that technologies influence the nature of journalism and content, and that due to the relatively lower newspaper circulation and less innovative adaptation to the Internet, Danish newspapers are no longer typical of Scandinavia. Denmark is quoted as an example of how technologies could dramatically change the nature of its media system. Benson et al. (2012) argue that online journalism brought convergence in some aspects between countries and erased some clear distinctions that put them into a media system model (although some traditions may keep and even intensify some of their characteristics in an online environment). The ongoing market liberalization and following the commercial pressures are easier to pursue in an online media environment, so media systems that lose newspaper circulation and transfer to online media could significantly change their nature.

Our research shows that the highest use of internet and social media (marked in italics in Table 6) is in Scandinavian countries and goes together with the similarities between their structural variables of media systems, just as it seems that lower internet and social media use in some of the southern countries (marked in italics in Table 6) corresponds to their membership of the South/East European model. Exceptions point to the need for further study of this aspect as well. Further to the critique by Norris (2009), we show that public service broadcasting figures as a dividing factor only in the two perimeter media system models, but not in the mainstream one. Inclusion of further structural variables (i.e. number and type of television channels) might be useful for analysis of media systems beyond the European multichannel environment. In regard to media use, in our study, television does not figure as a distinguishing factor at all.

At this point, we can tentatively state that audience practices in the digital networked media context reposition countries differently to the original Hallin and Mancini (2004) model, and we also find some differences in relation to our own empirical cluster analysis country groupings. Further analysis will need to be undertaken in order to fully explore the relationship of audience practices and media structures in digital media systems. With this in mind, new audience practice variables might be used, for instance, the choice of type of media genres or content types (information or entertainment), media practices (citizen journalism, other content creation, distribution, communication, consumption), places (types of digital places like blogs, chat rooms, online media). Many of these kinds of data are already available in big data social science, and their integration into the empirical analysis of an extended theoretical framework of media systems theory might be interesting.

In closing, we argued that the conceptualization of media systems would benefit from the inclusion of audience practices as an additional variable, which would connect the micro and the macro level of the media system, the individual and aggregate activity with the structure of the media system. Our expectation was that the inclusion of audience practice in terms of media use would provide additional depth was rewarded with the insight into the dividing lines of audience use of media in Europe. We were also able to show that the empirical analysis of original dimensions of the media systems produces today in Europe a somewhat different grouping than in the original Hallin and Mancini typology. These findings may also provide the basis for further empirical and theoretical explorations.

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