

Preface

Jönköping, Lugano, Wrocław, Copenhagen, Luxembourg, Hamburg, Braga and Moscow – these were the stops of the Euromedia Research Group on its way to the creation of this book. In all these cities generous hosts enabled the group to discuss the book's concept, the structure of the chapters and indeed the content of each chapter. This opportunity is unique. Group members constantly offer their advice to their fellow authors. This way, the latest developments in scholarly research and in the media industry all over Europe can be incorporated. Irritating or disturbing facts can be put into perspective with the assistance of fellow group members. Over time, the book gained coherence.

The Euromedia Research Group is indeed unique as its members define their own mission and objectives without the presence of external pressures. This high degree of independence allows for flexible ways of working and timely responses.

But the main advantage of working within this network of social science scholars and experts from some twenty European countries is the opportunity to collectively reflect upon changes and developments in the media and communications field. All group members are ready and willing to contribute their specific competencies to the Euromedia Research Group's deliberations.

It is this rich stock of knowledge that allows the group to produce books on the development of European mass media. What unites the group members is their interest in media policy, the changes in the media landscape and their dedication to theorizing on public communication.

Starting from these shared scientific interests, the group decided to write a book for students and scholars in the field of mass communications research. This book builds on the work published in four previous volumes by the group over its 25 years of existence: *New Media Politics: Comparative Perspectives in Western Europe* (1986), *Dynamics of Media Politics: Broadcast and Electronic Media in Western Europe* (1992), *Media Policy: Convergence, Concentration & Commerce* (1998) and *Performance & Politics: Media Policy in Europe* (2007). Over time, some issues have changed – such as the notion of new media – while others have remained on the agenda through all these years, such as the struggle for legitimacy of public service broadcasting.

The latest book in this series consists of two parts. The first section concentrates on the development of different mass media in Europe. It starts out with the complex task of comparing media systems in Europe, contributing to the scholarly debate of the three media models developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004). The following chapters discuss the development of different media according to the chronology of their emergence: newspapers, radio, television and online media. Questions raised in these chapters concern what determines the success and failure of these media in the light of political, social, cultural and technological change.

The second section of the book explores a range of contemporary issues around public communication which are especially relevant for the development of European media. These include changes in the structure of public spheres; the constantly redefined relationship between media and democracy; developments in media governance and media policy; trends in media industries; the changing position of public service media; the roles and performance of journalism; the relationship between ethnic minorities and the media; and finally, the position of Europe's media in the global context.

The number of chapters corresponds by and large with the number of teaching weeks in the academic year and should provide a comprehensive – but in no way exhaustive – selection of topics for scholarly debate.

This book is written by members of the Euromedia Research Group. Each chapter has its own authors, but the book is a collective effort of the whole group as every chapter has been peer reviewed by two other members of the group. Therefore, the editor of this volume is the group itself. Its members are documented online at www.euromediagroup.org

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