

The results once again confirmed the thesis that only events in which the members of the Muslim minority were engaged had an impact on the variety and number of press articles.

Examining the subject matter of the published materials, the author relied on the clearly designed categorial key, consisting of eight categories, namely: social, political, religious, economic, terroristic, criminal, moral, and other. Due to this approach to the material analyzed she created an accurate picture of the Muslim minority in *Le Nouvel Observateur*, *Le Point* and *L'Express*. It is worth noting that the researched body of material was also analyzed in terms of features such as the authorship of the text, the tone of the statements or the genres of the analyzed materials.

In my opinion, the clear and transparent design of the book allows the reader to explore both French media system problems and the issues related to the presence of Muslims in a European country.

A relevant advantage of the reviewed book is also the rich literature used in the writing, especially in the first and second chapter, and an extensive source texts, both in Polish and French. I would also like to emphasize the precise language and the fluency of the narrative, which makes reading a pleasure.

I think that this is an extremely valuable publication, especially for Polish readers, whose knowledge of Islam is much more limited than the average Frenchman's and who use French media much less frequently than English media.

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Tobias Eberwein, Susanne Fengler, Epp Lauk, Tanja Leppik-Bork (eds) (2011), *Mapping Media Accountability in Europe and Beyond*. Köln: Herbert von Halem Verlag, pp. 267, ISBN 978-3-86962-038-1

The need for responsible and accountable media is now more important than ever and media organizations and journalists are well aware of this. This is related to several factors. First, over the past decade the discontent on media performance has increased. In Europe we see an incident-driven picture of scandals where the press has been involved, such as the hacking scandal in the UK in July 2011, which amounted to the Leveson Inquiry and in March 2012 the bus accident in Switzerland where many Dutch and Belgian children died and various media published private pictures of the deceased children. Second, the use of the Internet has not only fuelled optimism about democratic participation and active citizenship, now that everyone can contribute to media coverage, but it has also undermined the credibility of media coverage as citizens are not too keen on keeping to journalistic ethical principles. Can we trust what we read in the newspaper, and know which websites are reliable

and which are not? How can we judge this? At the same time, citizens have many more opportunities to voice their discontent on media performance through various weblogs and discussion forums. This open criticism on media's performance has put pressure on media organizations, particularly in these difficult financial times when every lost reader is one too much. Third, not only in the media sector, but across other sectors as well, transparency, governance and accountability have become key words. However, the media sector, as rightly pointed out in this book, seems to lag behind in this development. But both structural developments and a more demanding voice from the public have led to a climate in which, in many countries, accountability is a key issue both in media policy and at a media organizational level.

This book taps into the phenomenon of media accountability by offering a thorough overview of the practice of media accountability measures in 12 Western and Eastern European countries, and in two Arab countries. Besides functioning as a handbook that can be consulted by scholars, media practitioners and media policy makers alike, the systematic comparison of 14 countries provides a better understanding of the relationship between accountability and specific journalistic cultures. What makes this research even more valuable is that experts in the field of accountability wrote each chapter, providing inside information on the instruments. Moreover, the authors did not only suffice with an analysis of documents where accountability measures are described, but also used other valuable and innovative sources such as Twitter, Facebook and weblogs.

Rightfully before addressing the accountability measures in different countries, the introductory chapter elaborates on the quite muddy concept of accountability. Over the years several scholars (Bertrand, Bardoel & d' Haenens, De Haan, McQuail, Plaisance, Pritchard) have attempted to provide a concise description of this concept. The editors of this book not only formulate a definition of the term, but place it in a specific typology in which different instruments can be plotted. This makes the assessment of accountability manageable, which consequently allows for a systematic comparison of the different instruments across countries. A distinction is made between high versus low degrees of institutionalization and between instruments anchored inside versus outside the journalistic profession. I agree that the degree of institutionalization is quite appropriate, as so far accountability has often been associated with law and regulation or more formal forms of self-regulation, such as press councils and ombudsmen. The digitalization era, however, demands a broader look into how media can be held accountable, focusing beyond formal and institutionalized instruments. Moreover, more informal ways of showing accountability fit better with the journalistic culture of autonomy and press freedom as institutionalization is often regarded as government interference. The second dimension shows to be derived from the classification of Bertrand's Media Accountability System. He also placed instruments that take place within the journalistic sector and instruments that "can be applied to the media without their acceptance" (McQuail). However, when plotting the different instruments on the scale, this dimension shows to be quite confusing. Many

common accountability instruments, such as the press council, the ombudsman and letters to the editors, are considered instruments anchored inside the journalistic profession. But, media journalism, which is plotted as internal journalism, could also be on the other side of the scale, as it means not more than that there is media coverage about the media. The “instrument” media journalism becomes even more unclear when discussed in different countries. While we can speak of a form of accountability when there is a critical coverage on the way media perform, most examples are of any type of media or journalism coverage or media trade journals, which do not automatically deal with media criticism or have the aim of holding the media to account. Other examples of instruments outside of journalism are research and NGO’s, also derived from Bertrand. What these instruments mean remains unclear in this book, which is disappointing in a rigorous attempt to concretize the concept of accountability in a clear typology.

Following the introductory chapter, the succeeding sections cover an analysis per country. Until recently academic literature on accountability often remained at a theoretical or policy level with little empirical research. This research provides a practical analysis of the concept and also extends its borders past Western European countries. This is a valuable asset to examine how journalistic culture, political system and historical background influence the type and amount of used instruments and the reason for their success or failure.

Each chapter is built up in the same systematic way, providing an introduction and overview of the country’s journalistic culture and media system after which the instruments are described, divided in established and innovative instruments. This provides interesting parallels across countries. Surprisingly, countries that have similar cultures and are geographically located close to each other, such as Germany, Switzerland and Austria, have different accountability measures. While Germany and Switzerland have an established culture of accountability, Austria just reintroduced its press council in 2010.

The different chapters show that new technologies have provided more opportunities for media to be held to account and to provide more transparency. The editor-in-chief of the public broadcaster in the Netherlands, for example, writes weblogs to justify or provide explanations for mistakes made. Also some ombudsmen in different countries have an online forum to connect with the public. The instruments do raise the question as to their innovative character. The fact that there is a new platform where accountability can take place does not mean that the accountability act itself is new. When large mistakes were made, editors-in-chief used to write a commentary in the newspaper and in the past the ombudsman connected with the public through email or by phone. What makes online accountability instruments innovative is the fact that the relationship between media and the public becomes more accessible and approachable, and this is both a prerequisite as a consequence of a good accountability system.

This book shows the advantages of large-scale comparative research. It provides a comprehensive overview of accountability, crossing borders past Western European countries. It also takes into account new developments, particularly the advent of new technologies. This research shows that the variety in media accountability instruments is very much dependent on the development of the professional culture and the role of civil society. Countries of the Democratic Corporatist model (Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland) and the Liberal model (the United Kingdom) show to be the most advanced in media accountability practices, while France and Italy from the Polarized Pluralized model have relatively little variety in instruments. The Central and Eastern European countries (Estonia, Poland, Romania) are still in the early development stage, while in the Arab states (Tunisia and Jordan) accountability does not work due to restricted media freedom.

Nevertheless, this book also shows the pitfalls of such large-scale research. The book remains at a descriptive level, providing an overview of accountability instruments. But the existence of these mentioned instruments is only half of the story. The starting point of self-regulation is that media not only introduce instruments, but actually also cooperate in using them and create a journalistic culture where transparency and self-reflection become more for the common good. In some chapters the implementation of the instruments is mentioned briefly, but most chapters remain with an overview of the existing instruments or measures.

Even though more and more instruments of accountability are present and new technologies have provided even more opportunities, if instruments are not used or journalists do not cooperate in implementing them, then the concept of accountability loses its value.

For instance, the Netherlands is a country where, as described in the book, many instruments exist and only in recent years many newsrooms have initiated new forms. However, underlying this, there is still a very defensive attitude among journalists towards opening up to the public and the profession. At this point even the future of the Press Council is not sure, as many prominent media do not feel the need to support it or financially contribute to it. As they say, media organizations believe they can handle the complaints better by themselves. Ironically, in practice this is hardly done.

This example shows that the existence of accountability instruments alone is not sufficient for a healthy media accountability environment. Further research is needed into the implementation of accountability. And this has not been untouched by the researchers of MediaAct as this book is only the first in a sequence. Following books will deal with media accountability activities online and the perception of European journalists on media accountability. Moreover, the research group will also bring out a guidebook with best practices of media accountability.

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