

BECOMING PAN-EUROPEAN?

Transnational Media and the European Public Sphere

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Abstract / Research about the European public sphere has so far mainly focused on the analysis of national media, neglecting a dimension of transnational communication, namely transnational media. These media could serve as horizontal links between the still nationally segmented public spheres and they could be platforms of a transnational European discourse. Four ideal-types of transnational media can be distinguished: (1) *national media with a transnational mission*, (2) *international media*, (3) *pan-regional media* and (4) *global media*. Within this framework the article analyses transnational media in Europe, showing that a multitude of transnational media have developed in Europe. They have acquired a small but growing and influential audience. Whether transnational media fulfil the normative demands related to the concept of a transnational public sphere remains an open question as some of these media heavily depend on government subsidies and there is a clear lack of research on the European discourses represented in these media.

Keywords / EU / European media / European integration / international communication / public sphere / transnational communication / transnational media

Introduction: Transnational Media and the European Public Sphere

Current research on the European public sphere focuses mainly on the Europeanization of national public spheres as opposed to transnational spaces of communication. This approach developed out of research proposals and projects beginning in the 1990s and early 2000s that operationalized a nation-based media analysis in order to understand the public sphere's development in the EU. The main reasoning behind this focus on the national media was twofold: first, transnational media are supposedly rare and second, transnational media do not reach broad audiences the way national media do. A further consideration that is, however, dependent on the two reasons mentioned excludes transnational media from the analysis of a European public sphere on the grounds of their assumed minimal political impact and critical weight in the European space of communication. In the eyes of many scholars, these two main characteristics make transnational media not a relevant empirical source for a transnational public sphere in Europe. This has led to a mainly nation-based approach which would only allow for a Europeanization of the national, sometimes

assuming that the national would have to retreat or make room for the emerging European. The exclusiveness of this approach is astonishing, for what if not transnational media might be analysed as a yardstick for the qualities and potentials of a European public sphere? Transnational media deserve closer scrutiny beyond the mere hint at their possible perspectives and their assumed future effect on a transnational public sphere that has become commonplace especially in relation to the Internet and satellite technology (Chalaby, 2002; Zimmermann, 2007). In this article, we show that a multitude of transnational media have evolved over the last 20 years and that they have a small, but significant and growing audience. Furthermore, we develop a framework that allows mapping different types of transnational media. Our framework contributes to the development of research from a cosmopolitan rather than a national perspective. Finally, we integrate our findings and our typology into an outlook on the relevance of transnational media in a European public sphere.

Research on the public sphere in Europe was sparked in the 1990s by the motivation to find answers for the distance between the institutions of the European Union and European citizens (e.g. Gerhards, 1993; Grimm, 1995; von Kienmannsegg, 1994). The European Commission has even developed an information and communication policy aimed at promoting the emergence of a European public sphere (Brüggemann, 2005, 2008). A European public sphere has been conceived first of all as a vision of an open forum of exchange among citizens and political elites on matters of common concern that transcend the borders of the European nation-states. Following Jürgen Habermas (1998 [1992]), the European public sphere is not one big forum of discussion but a network of forums. The public sphere is constituted by different interconnected arenas of public communication (also see the conception of Ferree et al., 2002; Hilgartner and Bosk, 1988; Neidhardt, 1994). Different forums might be distinguished by their size: public encounters on the street can be considered as the smallest unit of analysis while the mass media are the only forums which reach out to the broader public. This is the reason why studies of the mass media are highly relevant for the empirical study of public spheres, which again may be distinguished by their degree of institutionalization. Eriksen (2004) distinguishes between weak and strong publics. The Parliament, for example, is regarded as a strong public sphere: its deliberations might immediately result in new laws. The term 'weak public sphere', also used by Nancy Fraser (1992, 1995) but very differently to Eriksen, for forums with a lower degree of institutionalization, is, to our mind, slightly misleading, however, and we would argue for an understanding of what may be termed 'soft public spheres'. Soft refers to the degree of institutionalization, not to the absence of power. Soft public spheres have discursive powers. The media or even protests on the street might be very powerful in influencing political decisions. Soft communicative structures may play the important role of subversive public spheres, of counter-publics and a generally critical and alternative spectrum of public exchange among citizens either against, or deliberately avoiding, or simply ignoring an institutionalized power centre. Therefore, we would prefer the term soft publics for the less institutionalized forums of deliberation about politics and refer to strong public spheres as the institutionally organized deliberation and decision-making structures of polities (Schulz-Forberg, 2005, 2008). It is decisive for

the development of a democratic society that the soft and the strong public sphere are in continuous dialogue. Both spheres are entangled and mutually constitutive in bottom-up critique and top-down absorption of critique and social tension.

When approaching the public sphere, non-empirical expectations and essentializations are often projected onto a European level, maybe best illustrated by the opposite argumentations of Dieter Grimm, on the one hand, and Habermas, on the other – the one assuming that an identity must precede a public sphere and the other the exact opposite (Grimm, 1995; Habermas, 1990, 2001).

Furthermore, a long discussion deals with the issue of how to empirically operationalize the concept of transnational public spheres. We follow the approach of analysing the transnationalization of public spheres as a gradual and multidimensional process (Brüggemann et al. 2008; Wessler et al. 2008). Following an idea of Bernhard Peters (2002), the establishment of transnational media could be regarded as one dimension of a transnational public sphere. This dimension, however, has been largely neglected in the research directed towards the emergence of a European public sphere. Following a suggestion by Gerhards (1993), research has quickly focused on the Europeanization of national media. This line of research focused on content analysis of national quality media and has generated fruitful results: for example, Wessler et al. (2008) show how national discourses in different European newspapers open up vertically by focusing on EU policies and mentioning EU institutions more often than 20 years ago. But there are limits as to what may be concluded from the mentioning of institutions in media and the relation of this to the public sphere, its contents, deliberation processes and dominant discourses. One finding in Europeanization research shows that an increase of horizontal communication between national actors from different countries through the media and of integrating foreign speakers into public debates cannot be confirmed. Therefore, the authors describe the media processes of the last two decades as segmented Europeanization (also see Brüggemann, et al., 2008; Sifft et al., 2007).

By taking transnational infrastructures of communication into the analysis, the focus on transnational media allows us to go beyond approaches that are limited to the Europeanization of national public spheres. We contribute to both the debate on the European public sphere and the role of transnational media by making the latter the central object of study, mapping out the development of the last decades and by reflecting on their role as an amplifier in a European public sphere.

Research on transnational media is still underdeveloped. Mainly, this lacuna stems from the still prevalent so-called methodological nationalism that is inherent in some of the research on communication and on the European public sphere. It is not simply a methodological nationalism, though. Behind the national character of methodology lies a conceptual nationalism that charts national audiences as communicative blocs assuming that nations speak to each other as interlocutors in a European setting. Going beyond both conceptual and methodological nationalism, research on communication in the EU faces challenges of terminology, research organization and a need for a transnational rationale and typology. We hope to contribute to an emerging terminology by proposing a typology of transnational media. We show the use of our framework by applying it to the case of transnational media

within Europe, but it could well be adapted for further research on other arenas of communication beyond the nation.

We understand transnational media as media that address audiences beyond and across national borders. We develop a typology of four different types of transnational media: (1) *national media with a transnational mission*, (2) *inter-national media*, (3) *pan-regional media* and (4) *global media*. For each ideal-type, examples of transnational media outlets are discussed as case studies.

We follow and elaborate the approach of Chalaby (2002, 2005), who has stressed the need for a cosmopolitan perspective when analysing transnational television stations. Cosmopolitan perspectives entail, when talking about media and communication, an implementation of one of the main elements of current cosmopolitan thinking that basically constitutes the framework for a counter-concept to nationalism. The latter is perceived as exclusive, the former as universal and thus inclusive. Today's usage of the term is mainly a theoretical one, expressing an effort at phrasing a positive and inclusive sociopolitical model beyond the nation-state. It has not yet seen extensive research implementation.¹

When we talk about a cosmopolitan perspective in communication and media studies we refer to a polycentric space in which not one closed system of complex communications and power relations exists, but many. We use cosmopolitanism as a perspective guiding empirical research and not as a political and normative concept. Furthermore, our analysis focuses on a European cosmopolitan space as opposed to a global perspective. When thus looking at Europe and the EU, media are not divided by nationality but by transnational characteristics and the audiences they address. Our framework draws on Chalaby's typology of transnational TV but it also goes beyond the focus on a certain technical platform such as TV or print. Chalaby (2002, 2005) analyses TV stations only. He identifies ethnic channels which cater for expatriates abroad, multi-territory channels which set up separate platforms in different countries, pan-European channels with a unique feed for all countries and pan-European networks with a unique brand and concept adapted to different national settings.

In an era in which every print or broadcasting outlet has its digital counterpart on the Internet, and where web editions are much more than just an appendix to offline media, the focus on specific publishing platforms appears to be too narrow. Transnational media exist on different technological platforms and the different types of transnational media that we present in the following section are in no way bound to one platform only.

Transnational Media in Europe

Looking back in history, we find that transnational communication in Europe is by no means a new phenomenon (Kleinstauber, 2004; Requate and Schulze Wessel, 2002). In the 18th century, a European publication network was established, making international newspapers available in salons and cafes across the continent (Darnton, 1995). The 19th and early 20th centuries saw a thriving publication exchange in Europe, for example in relation to novels, travel writing and information (Schulze-

Forberg, 2006). The emerging nation-states and the national centralization of power and administration of the 19th century led to the dissolution of the European public sphere into a plethora of national spheres. The notion of a democratic public sphere functioning as a control and legitimacy mechanism in European nation-states was widely introduced only after the Second World War and mainly in Western Europe (which excluded Spain, Portugal and Greece, however, due to the military regimes in place until the 1970s). Simultaneously, transnational media have proliferated since the Second World War as a form of mass media intended to bridge national frontiers (Kaelble, 2002). The breakthrough for transnational media, however, was in the 1980s.

Three developments paved the way for the evolution of a significant number of transnational media in Europe. The first development was the introduction of private TV stations, which also boosted the development of transnational TV programming. Second, the political will of the EU and its member states facilitated the opening of the European market for transnational media ownership, production and consumption with a view to promoting the emergence of a European media market with European players who can compete on a global scale. Media corporations and the EU are pursuing a common interest, namely the creation of a common European media market (Baisnée and Marchetti, 2004: 34). Apart from economic interests, this policy was intended to promote a European public sphere constituted by a diversity of European media in order to generate a general civic identification with the EU (Council of Europe, 2005; European Commission and Joan i Mari, 2005). The logic underlying this policy, that identity and civic participation would automatically follow the market, has been discredited by recent European history, however. A third development concerns technological innovations. Here, the first quantum leap came with the introduction of satellite broadcasting: the launch of CNN International in 1985 inaugurated a new era of transnational communication. This technological innovation was complemented by the rise of the World Wide Web in the 1990s.² The most recent technological development relevant to our topic is digital broadcasting, which eliminates the limitations in the number of frequencies, most of which are already occupied by national media. Thanks to web publishing and digital broadcasting facilities, the costs of creating media products for a global audience have dropped dramatically.

Transnationalization processes affect media ownership, media content and media audiences in different ways and at different paces. The one thing that has clearly transnationalized, but is not the focus of our analysis, is media ownership. Media corporations have become transnational or global enterprises offering national as well as transnational media products. Transnational ownership facilitates the establishment of transnational or even global media, as this requires resources such as personnel and technical equipment for deployment in different countries. Most well-known transnational media belong to large, well-resourced media corporations who own media in different countries: CNN, for example, belongs to Time Warner and Sky News is part of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation.

From the beginning of the 1990s, transnational television channels developed steadily, their numbers growing from 15 in 1991 to more than 120 in 2003 (Vissol,

2006: 53).³ Most of them are not carriers of transnational political debates, however, as they focus on special interests such as sports (Eurosport), music (MTV) or children's entertainment (Cartoon Network). Nevertheless, nine stations have a significant audience in Europe and are dedicated to general political content: BBC World, CNN International, Euronews, Sky News, CNBC-Europe, Deutsche Welle TV, TV 5 and the two newcomers France 24 and Al Jazeera English, for which audience figures are not yet available. The outreach of some of these stations is impressive: taking together the different services under the CNN brand, this network reaches a billion people worldwide (Vissol, 2006: 58). The full-time distribution in Europe of nearly all of the transnational TV stations mentioned above has doubled since 1997 (Vissol, 2006: 53).

Of course, access should not be mistaken as actual usage: transnational television channels in Europe have so far acquired no more than 2 percent of the cumulated audience share in national markets. Euronews, for example, reaches 3.5 million viewers in Europe per day, which is more than CNN International and BBC World combined (Euronews, 2007). So even the biggest transnational media audiences remain small in absolute terms, but they are growing – in contrast to the audience of general interest channels.

More generally speaking, the media public sphere is increasingly fragmented: large, general interest media outlets are losing audience shares. Along with many other special interest media products, transnational media benefit from this trend. The net reach (the exposure of a household to transnational TV in Europe in the course of the day) of transnational TV stations grew from 18 percent in 1996 to nearly 30 percent in 2003 (Vissol, 2006: 15). The transnational audience is located at the top end of the socioeconomic scale – no wonder that the advertising revenue of transnational television channels soared from €31 million in 1988 to €628 million in 2002. This 20-fold increase compares well with the 2.5-fold increase in total television advertising revenue during the same period (Vissol, 2006: 53).

Existing data on transnational media consumption show that Europeans relate to them in different ways. In large countries that boast a highly integrated national media market, for example in the UK, they have less than 1 percent audience share, whereas in smaller countries transnational media score a higher share of transnational TV consumption. Luxembourg even has an audience share of 84 percent for transnational TV channels, and Ireland still scores an impressive 46 percent (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2004: 1). These numbers correspond to recent findings in transnational public sphere research underpinning that newspapers in smaller countries have higher levels of horizontal Europeanization than the press in bigger member states (Brüggemann and Kleinen-von Königslöw, 2009).

Four Types of Transnational Media

Following our perspective developed in the earlier section, four types of transnational media can be distinguished: (1) *national media with a transnational mission*, (2) *international*, (3) *pan-regional* and (4) *global media*.⁴ We set our benchmarks for defining a transnational medium by looking at the audience the medium strives to reach. Although national media might also have some degree of transnational outreach, all transnational media have transnational audiences as their primary target audience.

Thus, a national newspaper is a national newspaper not because you can only buy it in a specific country, but because it addresses a national audience. For example, being able to buy *The Guardian* outside Britain does not turn the paper into a transnational one. Certainly, this reasoning might be challenged – *The Guardian* deliberately distributes throughout Europe and even beyond the confines of the continent. But, while everybody is invited to read the paper, it is written and produced with the domestic British audience in mind, or at least an audience with pronounced interest in British affairs. The four types of transnational media below, by contrast, deliberately cater for an audience beyond national border:

1. *National media with a transnational mission.* The first category of transnational media basically tries to reach audiences beyond the national territory with some kind of political mission that is defined by national governments.⁵

Governments may decide to finance a public TV or radio channel to communicate with expatriates or it might decide that the programme should represent the nation and its values to other audiences abroad. Thus, a politically defined mission characterizes this kind of media. Democracies as well as authoritarian states may sponsor media for their purposes, which might range from enhancing multi-cultural dialogue to propaganda, allowing journalists a greater or lesser degree of independence.

2. *Inter-national media.* Inter-national media are all those media characterized by some form of cooperation between media organizations from two or more countries. Often, inter-national media merge or cooperate for the sake of promoting mutual understanding between the participating countries. The term inter-national is hyphenated here in order to stress that it should be understood literally: *inter-national media* are designed for and produced by media organizations in two or more nations working together. Inter-national media formats are deliberately designed for two (or more) national audiences.⁶

Types 1 and 2, therefore, are still preoccupied with the idea of the nation – unlike the two following types, where the target audience is not imagined as emerging from nations. Furthermore, their content production and organizational structure does not emanate from cooperation between individual countries.

3. *Pan-regional media.* This category comprises transnational media that address a specific world region. Telesur, catering for the Spanish-speaking Latin American audience, is one of the most prominent pan-regional channels, producing content for the whole of South America. Al Jazeera in Arabic, for example, caters for the Arabian region. In this article, we focus on cases of transnational media in Europe. Therefore, we use the term pan-European media in the following. Because of this conscious choice, some existing non-European channels or media may not be paid full attention. This does not mean that we do not grant them equal importance.

The commitment to cater for a European audience makes *pan-European media*. Pan-European media can be distinguished from other transnational media by their scope and intention. A pan-European medium caters for a European public. It is important to remember that when defining pan-European the

geographical reference to Europe is a semantic shifter insofar as Europe's geographical borders are not clearly defined. However, all media subsumed under this category deliberately cater for a Europe as they understand it. Pan-European media are not necessarily confined to either the EU or Europe as a whole in terms of reach, however. While they may reach a global audience, they are distinguished by their deliberate European perspective.

4. *Global media*. Some media do not restrict their mission to a specific world region, but target a broad transnational audience. So while these media might have their major audience in Europe, they are not targeting a specifically European audience. Nor does the category of global media imply that the audience is as a matter of fact genuinely global. In countries in which sections of the population cannot read and have neither electricity nor Internet access, there will be no audience for global media. The distinctive feature of global media is an audience which is not territorially bound but rather defined by certain interests: people interested in the economy, pop music or international news.

Today, the language of choice for this kind of media is mostly English.⁷ For example, in order to go global, former pan-regional channel Al Jazeera – which used to cater exclusively for the Arab-speaking region and the Arabian diaspora communities worldwide – has launched an English-language channel in order to reach a potentially global audience. The dominance of English is not unchallenged however. France 24 is promoting French as an alternative language for global news. In print media, *Le Monde Diplomatique* also strives to reach a global audience and it is remarkably successful in producing a multi-language content (see later).

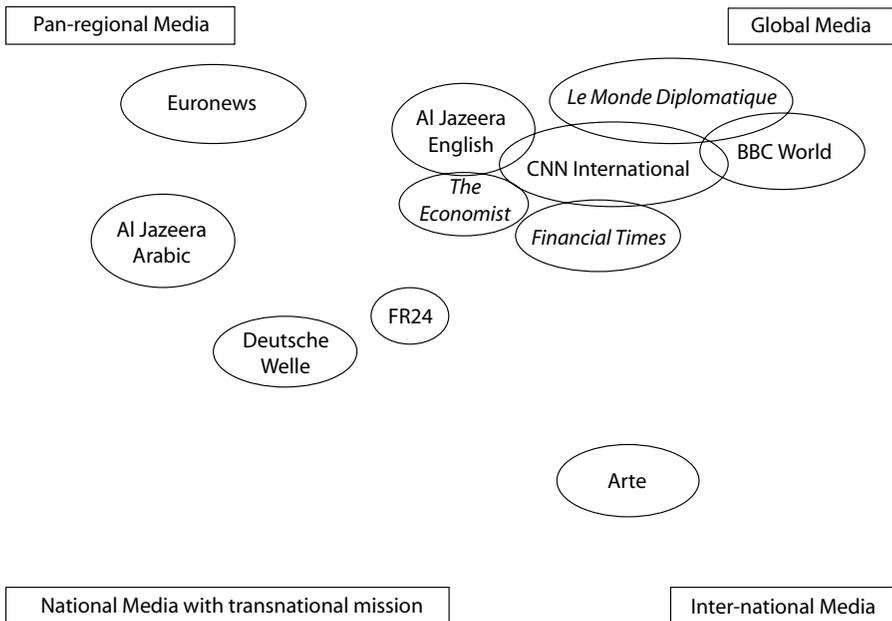
The scope covered by these four types of transnational media can be depicted in a quadrangle (see Figure 1, showing a selection of 10 media). Different media outlets, be they TV stations, newspapers or websites, can be placed in this framework in relative proximity to the type of media they most closely represent. They need not necessarily be placed in a specific corner of the framework, and they might move over time away from one ideal-type of transnational media and closer to another. In the following, we go into more detail for a selected number of transnational media which are relevant for the European transnational media sphere.

Case Studies: Transnational Media in Europe

National Media with a Transnational Mission

Many states have these kinds of media, most of which are government-funded TV and radio stations that broadcast in different languages. One interesting case in Europe is Deutsche Welle. Beginning broadcasting in 1953 in German, it sees itself today as being a tri-media organization combining a portfolio mainly in German, English and Spanish. Besides television, Deutsche Welle produces radio programmes in more than 30 languages, and a multilingual Internet site. Communicating with expatriates abroad is no longer the prime purpose of Deutsche Welle (DW). While

FIGURE 1

Typology of Transnational Media (Showing a Selection of 10 Media)

it is thus not a strict diaspora media anymore, DW still aspires to be 'Germany's media visiting card throughout the world' (Deutsche Welle, 2007). In 2005, DW-TV launched its Arabic service, which presents news in the Arabic language, anchored by Arabic speakers. Such endeavours to adapt to the target audiences and to promote cultural exchange have weakened the solely national perspective. The channel embraced a European mission in 2004, when DW described itself as a 'forum in Europe'. The channel's new positioning and self-understanding is clearly reflected in its self-descriptive slogan: 'From the Heart of Europe'. Moreover, DW today claims to serve a global dialogue of cultures.⁸ DW has thus moved from the very corner of our framework depicted in Figure 1 towards the middle, showing a tendency to develop into a global media organization funded by the German state, thus increasingly resembling BBC World. Today, DW is not controlled directly by the government, but the large number of national politicians present in the broadcasting council – seven out of 17 (Kleinsteuber, 2007) – means that its autonomy may in fact be more limited than the BBC's.

Inter-National Media

The best example for an inter-national media format in Europe is without a doubt the Franco-German TV channel Arte. This channel, based in Strasbourg and Baden-Baden, went into service as a Franco-German cultural channel in 1991, and was thus born out of an international idea and designed as a communication platform

between France and Germany. The name Arte insinuates that the channel is solely concerned with arts and culture, which is not the case. Arte is an abbreviation for Association Relative à la Télévision Européenne.

Since the beginning, Arte has constantly broadened its reach and taken associated members from countries other than Germany and France on board.⁹ The main problems Arte faces are the broadcasting frequencies within the European national media landscape, the interests of other countries' public broadcasting services and the acceptance of Arte by the viewer. Arte has expanded its satellite distribution by using not only the satellite ASTRA 1 but also Atlantic Bird 3 and Hot Bird. Furthermore, Arte is expanding its terrestrial and cable reach on a continuous basis. As a consequence, Arte was accessible to a total audience of 190 million people by 2003, representing about 80 million households, compared to only 36 million households in 1994 (Arte, 2007).

In 2005, after well over 10 years of existence, Arte scored up to 3.8 percent of the market share in France, while it faces much tougher competition in Germany where similar channels exist – notably 3Sat, another inter-national (albeit exclusively German-language) television channel with a strong focus on culture. Arte's audience is on the rise, however. In 2006, 4.2 million viewers in Germany watched Arte at least once a week for 15 minutes continuously. In France, weekly audience figures reached 9.4 million (Arte, 2007). Even with an audience share of less than 5 percent, Arte, with its commitment to being or becoming 'the European culture channel' (Arte, 2007), is one of the flagships of the European media landscape.

The largest interregional network in Europe, which is also mainly driven by political interest and the ambition to fulfil the European motto 'united in diversity', is Circom-regional, the European Association of Regional Television. It fits the category of inter-national media through its conception of linking nations in Europe on a regional level. Circom was founded in 1973 by a small group of media professionals from public television who agreed that transnational cooperation is imperative for fostering European integration. Today, Circom is made up of 378 public service television stations in 38 countries and has produced over 250 co-productions including news magazines, transnational programmes, programmes for young people and documentaries.

The case of Arte and the development of Circom show the same tendency. Initial bilateral cooperation within the EU tends to expand into EU-wide cooperation, thus moving inter-national media in the direction of pan-European media.

Pan-European Media

Pan-European media are characterized by their specifically European focus. In most cases, this geographical reference is not confined to the EU but comes closer to the geographical scope of the Council of Europe. Some media have a deliberate EU focus, however, and understand their European audience as the audience constituted by the EU citizenry. Certain pan-European television channels and print media have been conceived with a view to identity building, for example: Euronews, *The European* and *European Voice*. While *The European*, 'Europe's first national newspaper'

as it defined itself, only existed from 1991 to 1999 and is no longer in print, Euro-news and the weekly *European Voice*, published by the Economist Group since 1995, are still alive and doing fairly well. *European Voice* claims to be the only independent newspaper reporting on European affairs: it is 'not – and never will be – tied in any way to a member state, party or point of view', as it says in its self-description. Nevertheless, *European Voice*, with a distribution of 15,600 copies every week, has only a modest outreach (*European Voice*, 2007). In the small universe of the EU administration in Brussels, however, *European Voice* is widely read and integrates the communicative microcosm of EU officials, lobbyists, Brussels correspondents and policy experts.

Euronews is the most ambitious pan-European broadcasting project. While it can be received throughout the world, it is tailor-made for a European audience. The seed for the idea of Euronews was planted by the European Commission in the mid-1980s following the disappointing turnout at the second European parliamentary elections in 1984. A common European identity, fostered by a common, multi-lingual, audiovisual image-generator was regarded as the solution to this problem (Shore, 2000). After long debates and some resistance by several member states, Euronews was finally launched on 1 January 1993, hastened by the experiences of the First Gulf War. It was not the war as such that triggered the decision, but the fact that all media companies had to order their images from CNN. Another *raison d'être* of Euronews is to foster a European identity among European citizens (Baisnée and Marchetti, 2000, 2004; Machill, 1998). It was intended to present news and European culture in order to encourage a better appreciation of Europe's uniqueness and cultural wealth. In stark contrast to these ambitions, however, Euronews merely filters images and newsreels from associated European and Mediterranean channels as well as two global agencies, dubs them in seven European languages¹⁰ and broadcasts them simultaneously in all European countries. Euronews does not produce any original material of its own (Marchetti, 2004).

Euronews has expanded continuously both in terms of audience figures and technologically as well as infrastructurally in terms of audience reach.¹¹ In the last decade, the channel's daily audience almost doubled and now stands at 3.5 million cable and satellite viewers every day plus more than 3 million viewers through broadcast windows for Euronews on other public television stations (Euronews, 2007). Thus, whether at an airport in Belgrade or in a Finnish bar, Euronews can be received and is effectively a genuine pan-European news channel. It belongs to 21 shareholders – public broadcasters from a number of European countries but also from Russia and Algeria. It should be noted that Euronews has received millions in subsidies from the European Commission in the past years. In 2004, four out of 24 hours of Euronews coverage was subsidized by the EU (European Commission, 2004).

The Internet was mentioned earlier as a technological innovation which lifted some barriers to transnational communication. It has not given rise to pan-European online mass media, however. There are of course quite a few websites that constitute forums for pan-European debate, but they are neither highly frequented nor well known. Café Babel is one example of this kind of non-commercial site designed to host the discussion of European issues.¹² Furthermore there are sites such as

Europa-digital.de (since spring 2001), EurActiv.com (since 1999) and EUPolitix.com (since 2003), whose primary aim is to explain the EU and its policies. EurActiv is well known to a small audience of EU policy experts, and Europa-digital is a popular source for students of the European integration process, who, however, do not really constitute mass audiences.

Theoretically, the web could by nature be a pan-European network, linking web pages across borders. Zimmermann's (2006) study on the possible Europeanization effects of the Internet looked at link structures and search engine results in seven European countries. The study has brought to light alarmingly unenthusiastic results in relation to the Internet's influence on the Europeanization process: Internet communication is highly language-bound, that is transnational communication and linkages take place mainly between actors of the same mother tongue. Links are mainly vertical: between national online media and the EU institutions.¹³

Global Media

Global media cater for a potentially global audience. Examples of this media type are CNN International, or the *Financial Times*. BBC World, France 24 and Al Jazeera English fall into this category, but due to varying degrees of state influence they are also somewhat close to the ideal-type of national media with a transnational mission. CNN International, BBC World, the *Financial Times* and the respective version of Al Jazeera target an English-speaking global audience. France 24 is a French news channel that was launched, after a long planning period, in December 2006 and broadcasts in English and French. France 24 and Al Jazeera English try to provide an alternative perspective to CNN International, which is perceived as reporting mainly from a US perspective. France 24, with its mission of bringing in a 'French perspective', lies somewhere between CNN and Deutsche Welle – it does not pretend to have a neutral global outlook on news. It is a public-private partnership between the private channel TV1 and the French state, which subsidizes the channel.

Global media face the challenge that the world is globalized on the surface but deeply diversified in cultural terms. Consequently, audiences in different world regions and countries expect different programmes. Due to dwindling audience ratings, CNN International and MTV have had to change their strategy from delivering a homogeneous global feed to drawing up a diversified programme schedule adapted to the various needs of national or regional audiences (Chalaby, 2002, 2005). Even within Europe 'transnational feeds are notoriously complex to schedule because lifestyles and viewing habits vary enormously' (Chalaby, 2005: 166). Thus, even global media have to cater for their audiences in regional, national and local colours if they do not want to lose them (e.g. Thussu, 2007).

Although it grew out of a national market, the *Financial Times* is nevertheless a good example of a potentially global newspaper. It is not designed for any particular national audience but for the global business elite. Other examples of global print products are the *National Geographic* and the British *Economist*. A French paper also deserves mention in this context. *Le Monde diplomatique* is a monthly magazine that can be read in Russian, Chinese, Arabic, Spanish, Portuguese, Japanese and a

considerable number of other European languages (German, Greek, English, French, Italian, Norwegian, Serbo-Croat) and even in Esperanto. With its clear left-wing political affiliation, *Le Monde diplomatique* caters for a global intellectual audience. The magazine is innovative both in its transnationalized scope and the link between the Internet edition and print version. In 2007, it accomplished over 68 international editions – including 33 web editions. *Le Monde diplomatique* has a remarkable circulation of 1.5 million each month, of which 300,000 appear in French and 250,000 are distributed in France itself while the remaining French issues are distributed in other countries. Transnational print media that cater for a global market are therefore not abundant, but most of them are well-established points of reference within the global media network. The *Financial Times*, *Le Monde diplomatique* and *The Economist* all have a larger audience outside their home countries than at home (see Table 1).

Internet should also be mentioned in this context. Enthusiasts hope that the new communication platform could become the backbone of a potentially global, truly democratic public sphere as an alternative to the traditional mass media. New features, such as blogs and wikis, allow more and more independent forms of global many-to-many communication.

Indymedia is among the best-known independent online media with a global intention. Founded in 1999 to report on the protests against the World Trade Organization's meeting in Seattle, it has meanwhile become a global reference point for alternative political news presented in eight languages.¹⁴ It is a good example of an issue-based global medium that truly and effectively exploits Internet technology both as a means of communication and for the transnational distribution of information. While it is not a clearly defined journalistic medium, it nevertheless adheres to a minimum of journalistic standards and editorial ethics in relation to fact-finding

TABLE 1

Global Print Media

	<i>Financial Times</i> ^a (daily)	<i>The Economist</i> ^b (weekly)	<i>Le Monde diplomatique</i> ^c (monthly)
International editions	1	1	68 (35 print editions)
Languages	English	English	26
Distribution (2006)			
Home country	133,445	170,038	270,000
Europe	249,671	396,932	–
Abroad	297,024	1,027,674	1,230,001
Total	430,469	1,197,712	1,500,000

Sources: ^aPearson Annual Report (2007). In addition to the global English edition there is also the *Financial Times Deutschland* published in German, which is not a German edition of the English paper but an autonomous paper with its own editorial department. The German publishing house Gruner&Jahr owns 50 percent of the *Financial Times Deutschland*.^b *The Economist* (2007).^c *Le Monde diplomatique* (2007).

and truthful reporting: 'The Independent Media Center is a network of collectively run media outlets for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of the truth' (Indymedia, 2007). However, due to its clear protest orientation and political points of view, objectivity and journalistic balance and a plurality of opinions that allow the reader to form his or her own opinion are not available on Indymedia. To be sure, the same holds true for some EU-enthusiastic websites that promote European news without giving space to critical opinions about the EU.

TABLE 2

Different Transnational Media and Their European Audiences

	Audience in Europe (in millions)	Media type ^e and indication of movement between types
Deutsche Welle TV	5.3 per week ^a	1 → 4
BBC World	0.8 per day ^b	4
ARTE	4.9 in Germany 9.3 in France approx. 15 in Europe; (all figures per day) ^a	2 → 3
Euronews	3.6 per day ^b	3
<i>Financial Times</i>	0.2 per day ^c	National broadsheet → 4
<i>The Economist</i>	0.4 per week ^d	4
CNN International	1.6 per day ^b	4
Eurosport	22 per day ^a	3

Sources: ^aThese data were obtained by request from the respective media organization. ^bDaily reach 'people meters' Q3 2006 according to *Euronews* (2007). ^c*The Economist* (2007). ^d*Time Magazine* (2007).

^e1 = national media with a transnational mission, 2 = inter-national media, 3 = pan-regional media, 4 = global media.

Conclusions

Conclusions from this analysis are drawn on three levels: the empirical, the conceptual and the normative. Following these conclusions, we suggest an agenda for future research.

Empirically, the analysis has provided an overview of the status quo of transnational media in Europe. The recent history of transnational media shows a remarkable increase in such media with the tendency to grow on the level of transnational media content offered, on the level of household reach and on the level of actual usage. Global media (e.g. CNN and MTV) did have to adapt their content to local needs but this is no impediment to their future growth as large media corporations proved to be able to adapt their strategies. This article has shown that since the 1980s, transnational media have been growing in Europe. While some of the early enthusiasm waned after setbacks such as the failure of *The European* in 1999, the 1990s still saw the establishment and the continuous growth of a number of transnational media in Europe, be it Arte, Euronews, or *European Voice*.

Transnational media have multiplied and gained audiences in Europe for three reasons: (1) the television boom instigated by the opening up of this state-dominated domain to private channels, (2) the creation of a transnational market for media products in Europe and (3) technological innovations such as satellite broadcasting, digital publishing on the web and digital broadcasting. As legal, economic and technological opportunities for transnational communication multiplied and met with a European political will to open up national media spaces, media companies rose to the occasion.

Two caveats should not go unmentioned, however. (1) While European transnational communication space is growing and attracting influential elite audiences, the role of transnational media in reaching out to the broader European public remains very modest. Concerning political content, only Euronews can present a relatively decent audience rating (see Table 2). And this leads to the second caveat. (2) Many transnational media remain heavily dependent on government subsidies. Euronews, as well as other pan-European media, has mainly come to life with the help and support of national or EU authorities. Euronews still receives millions of euros in subsidies from the European Commission. Many transnational media projects, such as Arte, Deutsche Welle, or Euronews are driven, at least to some extent, by political interests towards developing a more integrated European space of communication. Ultimately, the reasoning behind the EU and its member states' policy decisions in relation to media revolve around the endeavour to create a common European space of communication, experience and consumption. If these political interests were to fade, the outlook for these media would be glum. The pan-European market surely cannot be said to have reached an unstoppable integrative dynamic. This finding has normative implications for the public sphere which raises questions for future research, which are discussed at the end of this section.

Having said that, a tendency to broaden and embrace a larger European space can be clearly discerned. The last 20 years have seen a transformation of the European transnational media landscape that is remarkable.

Conceptually, the article has proposed a framework of four ideal-types of transnational media: transnational media with a transnational mission, inter-national media, pan-regional media and global media. Taking a cosmopolitan, polycentric space of overlapping communication and power relations seriously, and concentrating on the European case, we believe that our typology allows for adequate access to the European transnational media sphere. The audience-based approach to our typology appeared useful since it allowed us to incorporate the media's self-understanding and to cut across media genres, thus integrating online, print, satellite and digital broadcasting as well as radio. The typology advanced here proved to be useful in the more in-depth discussion of selected transnational media in Europe. This exploration of individual cases has also shown that the placement of media within our framework should in no way be regarded as static. We have seen how some media develop from *national media with a transnational mission* into *global media* (Deutsche Welle), or from being *inter-national* to *pan-European media* (Arte) (see Table 2 for an overview of these developments).

Normatively, we have put forward the perspective that soft and strong elements of public spheres should be linked. Transnational media could cater in a bottom-up

way for European citizens and bring concerns of civil society to the attention of political decision-makers. They could be the transnational watchdog for transnational policy-making. But is this effectively the case, given that some of the most important transnational media in Europe depend on financial and political support from public authorities? IndyMedia is certainly a responsive forum for the transnational anti-globalization movement. *Le Monde diplomatique* serves the same purposes for an elite audience of left-leaning intellectuals. The *Financial Times* caters for the interests of a globalized business audience. While these connections seem to be rather obvious, we are not so sure whom Euronews, Arte or Deutsche Welle serve. Certainly, we see a pronounced effort aimed at creating symbols of a transnational public sphere and fostering a European identity. However, only media that criticize political actors and circulate new ideas top-down and bottom-up will be able to advance a democratic public sphere. Are the subsidized media outlets able to do just this? Are they platforms for explaining and promoting the EU and European integration or do they also provide critical views of what is going on in the institutionalized forums of the European public sphere? There is no need to rush to conclusions as long as empirical evidence is lacking. Neither civil society driven media outlets, nor commercial media are a priori superior in fulfilling the democratic functions of media organizations. The answer to the questions raised above will depend on the degree of independence media have, on the way they follow and implement journalistic standards and on the content they produce. This leads directly to a challenging agenda for future research.

Further research is by all means necessary, as there is a profound lack of robust, comparable data on transnational media beyond theoretical speculations. Research designs that tackle the kind of questions raised above would have to take four steps. (1) They would have to analyse how media content is produced in different transnational media outlets. In-depth participatory observation is necessary and it must at the same time go beyond single case studies and be embedded in a comparative framework for analysing transnational media. (2) The actual content of transnational media has to be analysed going beyond the usual suspects of comparing CNN and Al Jazeera English. (3) Then, this media content would have to be put into context: What are the demands of civil society on a certain issue under analysis? Which tensions emerge with a European relevance? Do transnational media really cater for their audience in a way that they reflect the concerns of their audience? (4) The audiences of transnational media are rarely researched. In Europe, commercial media research such as the European Media and Marketing Survey is pre-occupied with mapping the business audience and the top-income households, and neglects the broader European audience. This audience grew immensely with the accession of 12 new member states to the EU in 2004 and 2007. The old question of the uses-and-gratifications approach should also be addressed to transnational audiences: What are people doing with transnational media?

Notes

1. Closely related are the methodological reflections stemming from a 'transcultural' perspective (e.g. Hepp, 2009). Research results following an operationalization of a cosmopolitan methodology can be found, e.g., in Couldry et al. (2009) and in Mau et al. (2008). For a reflective and critical cosmopolitan approach see Boon and Delanty (2007).
2. Following our understanding of transnational media, the web is not in itself a transnational medium but a 'media carrier' (see Brüggemann, [2002: 14] for the distinction between media and media carriers) – a technical platform for national as well as transnational media products.
3. This section draws heavily on the figures and facts collated in Vissol (2006), who has analysed an impressive amount of data in his study for the European Commission on transnational television in Europe. The data on which his report is based are mostly commercial, however, and unfortunately not readily available for research.
4. We thank Ann C. Zimmermann for her critical inspiration during the process of defining our typology.
5. Chalaby (2005) calls them 'ethnic media' – a slightly misleading label as a nation-state may well represent a multiethnic population, as in fact most nation-states do. Chalaby includes so-called diaspora media in this category. This refers to the multitude of media catering for emigrants and exile populations away from their home country. However, there might be other missions being assigned to national media with a transnational mission as we show in the case study on Deutsche Welle.
6. Infranational media are not included in this typology since they do not cut across any national borders. The term 'infranational' is used by Dominique Marchetti (2004) and refers to media reach and linkages between media within a nation, for example French regional newspapers or TV channels and their interlinkages.
7. This fact emerges from our research; we do not normatively define global media as English-language media.
8. Zöllner (2006: 160) interprets this quest for dialogue as a projection of Germany's 'national values, policies, self-image and underlying myth'.
9. RTBF in Belgium (since 1993), SRG SSR idée Suisse in Switzerland (1995), TVE in Spain (1995), TVP in Poland (1996), ORF in Austria (1998), YLE in Finland (1999), NPS in the Netherlands (2001), BBC in the UK and SVT in Sweden (both in 2002). In the last three years alone, Arte has expanded to cover Italy, Israel and Romania. Since 2002, furthermore, it can be viewed on 13 TV stations in the Balkan region, in Central Asia and in 20 French-speaking African countries (Arte, 2004–5: 13).
10. German, English, French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.
11. Over the past five years, Euronews has nearly doubled its world distribution; today it can be received in 189 million households in 121 countries throughout Europe, the Middle East, Asia, Africa and the Americas via cable, digital satellite and terrestrial channels. Among the most affluent 20 percent of households in Europe, Euronews is confirmed as a leading news channel in the five leading media markets, namely UK, Germany, France, Italy and Spain.
12. Café Babel is, however, again heavily supported by the EU.
13. Confirming Zimmermann's findings, recent research (Wessler et al., 2008) of debates in national quality newspapers finds a lack of horizontal Europeanization (quoting speakers from abroad, reporting about other European countries) as opposed to vertical Europeanization (debating the EU). There is just as much a lack of horizontal Europeanization of the Internet as of the quality newspapers.
14. The languages include only Western European languages, however. No Central or Eastern European language is represented, still less any Asian or African language.

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