

## Chapter 4

### The Decline of Newspapers?

There is widespread concern that newspapers face an uncertain future, and many fear a long-term decline due to the rise of the electronic media, economic pressures based on a loss of advertising share and increasing costs of production and distribution, and falling sales. Changes in the newspaper industry are believed to have concentrated ownership, eroded news standards and narrowed the readership. To address these concerns this chapter focuses upon four interrelated issues: In the postwar era have the electronic media gradually replaced newspapers, as some fear, so that the press is heading towards the technological graveyard, rather like wind-up phonographs, vinyl long-playing records and post office telegraphs? Secondly, have sagging sales in the print sector fuelled down-market pressures towards tabloid sensationalism in the pursuit of readers and a decline of traditional journalistic standards? Thirdly, has greater concentration of newspaper ownership led to less choice and diversity for consumers? And lastly, does the press continue to reach all sector of society, or is readership increasingly concentrated among the more affluent, well-educated, and older population?

The belief that newspapers are in decline has triggered major alarm-bells because, as argued earlier, it is assumed that the news media can best fulfill its functions in a democracy if there is a rich and pluralistic information environment that is easily available to all citizens. There is a large body of American literature which suggests that if TV has taken over from the press as our main source of news this may limit our capacity to learn about public affairs; newspapers are believed to be far more effective than television at conveying detailed information necessary to understand complex and detailed policy issues, such as the background to conflict in Kosovo, proposals about social security reform, or negotiations over GATT<sup>1</sup>. Robinson's original videomalaise thesis blamed growing reliance upon television, not newspapers, for the deterioration of trust and confidence in government<sup>2</sup>. There is also widespread concern that if newspapers fail to reach large sections of the community, particularly younger or less educated readers, this may reinforce a growing gap among citizens between the information rich and poor. Ben Badakian, for example, argues that commercial pressures from advertisers for short-term profits mean that, despite the loss of readers, American newspapers have not tried to address the needs of a third to one half the population, especially low-income or ethnic minority groups<sup>3</sup>. Lastly, if ownership of newspapers is concentrated in the hands of a few multinational corporations, who remain unaccountable to the public, and if citizens face a more restricted range of different sources of news, this may limit the conditions for pluralistic civic debate<sup>4</sup>.

Yet many of the popular fears about the inexorable decline of the printed press are misplaced or exaggerated, and the cross-national picture is far more complex than videomalaise accounts commonly suggest. The United States is a particularly television-centric media system, representing an outlier among OECD countries. In many other societies, particularly the smaller European welfare states, newspapers retain a far stronger role. Rather than declining, the press is reaching a wider readership than in previous decades.

### Falling Newspaper Sales?

Concern about traditional standards of journalism has been fuelled by major changes in the newspaper industry during the post-war era. In the

United States the daily press has experienced dwindling readership and sales, especially among the younger generation, a loss of advertising market share to the electronic media, and growing concentration of ownership in larger multiple newspaper chains or a few multi-media conglomerates<sup>5</sup>. All these developments have had a major impact upon the profitability and economic viability of the print sector, particularly for smaller outlets. Similar trends have been noted throughout Europe<sup>6</sup>, and UNESCO suggests that most post-industrial societies have seen declining newspapers sales<sup>7</sup>. The conventional explanation for this phenomenon is the rise of alternative news sources, whether radio in the 1920s, television in the 1950s, or the Internet in the 1990s, all of which are believed to have gradually displaced the traditional role of the printed press.

[Figure 4.1 about here]

Although the demise of newspapers has been predicted for decades, we should not underestimate their continued popularity and technological adaptation to new forms of production and distribution. If we compare post-war trends in circulation, controlling for population growth, the evidence shows that sales of the daily press in most post-industrial societies has not been affected by the growing availability of electronic media. The long-term trend in newspaper sales in OECD countries, per 1000 population, is fairly stable (see Figure 4.1). Average circulation in all OECD states was 271 per 1000 in 1950, rising modestly in 1980, before subsiding slightly to 263 per 1000 in 1996. Despite the massive surge in the availability of television during the last fifty years, also shown in Figure 4.1, about one quarter of the population continues to buy a daily newspaper and readership figures are even higher. The electronic media have therefore increased the choice and diversity of news outlets and formats, but at the same time they have not killed sales of the printed press. Given growing educational levels and affluence characteristic of post-industrial societies, consumption of news has not proved a zero sum game.

[Figure 4.2 about here]

The newspaper market varies greatly by country due to such factors as long-standing historical and cultural traditions in each region; levels of social development in terms of education, literacy, and income; the news industry's organization, economics, production and distribution system; and the overall structure of public subsidies, government regulations, and national levels of democratization.

Circulation figures per 1000 population in the mid-1990s in OECD countries, compared in Figure 4.2, show that newspapers are most popular in Scandinavia and Japan, countries that have also seen the sharpest surge in sales since the 1950s. Despite intensive penetration by television, Japan includes the largest circulation papers in the world, usually sold by household subscription, including the big three: *Yomiuri Shimbun* (with regular sales of 12.4 million copies per day), *Asahi Shimbun* (12.6 million), and *Mainichi Shimbun* (6 million). The country has over 120 newspapers, ranging from local through regional to national, with average daily circulation reaching 580 per 1000 persons. Competition for readers is fierce, in part because of substantial dependence upon sales for income, but nevertheless there is little variation in the contents, format, social background of readers, or political leanings of newspapers because of their heterogeneous national audience. The press is characterized by concise, factual and impartial reporting, avoiding interpretation, sensationalism and

argumentation. The information provided in coverage of politics, society and the world has been extensive, thorough and detailed<sup>12</sup>. The Japanese press has not given a high priority to investigative journalism although once a political scandal becomes public it receives extensive coverage.

Scandinavian countries are characterized by healthy sales but, in contrast to Japan, their markets include many smaller newspapers. In Norway, for example, there are approximately 100 daily papers, mostly regional or local, and with subscription services most households take on average almost two newspapers every day<sup>13</sup>. The largest Norwegian papers are national tabloids based in Oslo including *VG (Verdens Gang)*, *Aftenposten* and *Dagbladet*, all with circulation figures of 200,000-400,000. Sweden is also characterized by high newspaper readership, again with a predominately regional and local press. One reason for high sales relates to pricing, since many Swedish papers enjoy direct public subsidies, designed to maintain consumer choice by providing more than one newspaper serving each local community<sup>14</sup>. Indirect support to the press is given in all West European states, most commonly in the form of preferential rates of Value Added Tax (VAT), lower postal rates, or tax breaks for investment, while a number of states have also subsidized the price of newsprint. These forms of financial aid are often largely indiscriminate although in states such as Italy, France and Austria benefits have been targeted towards supporting the economically weaker papers to preserve press pluralism<sup>15</sup>.

Societies with moderate circulation figures include many of the West European countries, like the UK, Germany and Austria. In Britain the eleven national weekday papers, and their Sunday counterparts, dominate the market. Since the 1890s, with the development of the mass-circulation penny press, the industry has been split between 'broadsheet' or 'quality' papers, providing extensive coverage of national and international news, public affairs and serious commentary, and the popular tabloids<sup>16</sup>. The broadsheet papers include *the Times*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian*, *the Financial Times* and the *Daily Telegraph*, with combined sales of about six million copies. The tabloid sector includes most notably *The Sun*, with sales of about 3.5 million per day and about 10 million readers, along with the *Daily Mirror* on the left and the more middle-brow *Daily Mail* on the right. Although there has been a decline in the number of provincial evening papers and local weeklies, some remain strong, notably the London *Evening Standard*. There is also a distinctive market in Scotland, led by the *Scotsman* and *Glasgow Herald*, and Scottish editions of the national papers. Although there is a segmented national market, with different papers appealing to slightly different readerships by partisanship, class, age, and gender, nevertheless competition in both sectors has been fierce. With many readers comparing headline to headline across the eleven national papers in newsagents and newsstands, a popular front-page splash such as an investigative special, can trigger a sudden surge in sales.

The German press has experienced considerable post-war growth in sales but also marked concentration in terms of the number of newspaper titles and the number of independent owners<sup>17</sup>. The number of local papers in Germany appears substantial but in fact most of these are only side editions of regional papers based in large towns, with little editorial independence. In the mid-1990s about 40 percent of Germans live in towns or cities dominated by a single local paper. The German papers with the largest national distribution include the tabloid right-wing populist *Bild*, with a circulation of 5 million a day, the highly prestigious independent weekly paper *Die Zeit* (circulation 500,000), the conservative *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (400,000), the left-liberal *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (300,000), and *Die Welt*

(200,000). Germany also has a flourishing and diverse weekly magazine and periodical sector, notably *Der Speigal* (circulation one million), the more flashy *Focus*, and the general interest *Der Stern*.

In contrast, North America has relatively weak newspaper sales. The federal structure and physical size of both Canada and the United States has hindered the development of a national press widely distributed coast-to-coast. The US has many provincial and regional daily papers (1,520 in 1996), although the pool has shrunk substantially in recent decades so that today little local competition remains: ninety-eight percent of all American cities have only one daily newspaper<sup>18</sup>. There has been increased concentration of ownership whether due to multiple ownership of different newspapers, cross-media ownership of the press along with television or radio stations, or conglomerates owning newspapers along with others types of businesses. By the mid-1990s 80 percent of America's daily papers were controlled by regional or national chains such as Thomson Newspapers, Gannett or Knight Ridder<sup>19</sup>. The only American papers with legitimate claims to a national readership are the *Wall Street Journal* (1.8 million), *USA Today* (1.7 million), the *New York Times* (with a circulation of about 1.1 million), the *Los Angeles Times* (1.1 million), and the *Washington Post* (0.8 million), although others like the *Chicago Tribune*, the *Boston Globe* and *Miami Herald* dominate their regional media markets<sup>20</sup>. Only the weekly news magazines have a large national readership, including *Time* (4.3 million), *Newsweek* (3.2 million) and *US News and World Report* (2.2 million). In 1950-98 average readership of a weekday paper plummeted from 78% to 59% of the adult population<sup>21</sup>.

Lastly, Southern Europe also typically has low newspaper readership. Many factors may have contributed towards this pattern including levels of education and literacy in these societies, the slower transition to democracy in Spain, Portugal, and Greece, and also problems of an effective distribution and transportation network outside of the major cities and low subscription sales<sup>22</sup>. Greece, for example, has 16 national dailies printed in Athens, along with four national financial and five national sports newspapers. But in a country of ten million citizens the combined sales of all dailies in the mid-1990s was just over half a million, and circulation has been declining during the last decade. The press is traditionally highly partisan, favouring PASOK or the New Democracy, and the government has strong links with newspapers through 40 million of ECUs per annum of subsidies<sup>23</sup>. Southern Mediterranean countries also lacked a popular tabloid sector; in Italy, for example, the attempt to launch *Telegiornale* in 1995, a paper modeled after the *Sun* and *Bild*, failed within weeks. The contrasts in news habits between EU regions are striking; according to the 1996 Eurobarometer survey about a quarter of all citizens in Southern Europe read a paper every day, compared with half of all those in West Europe, and two-thirds of those in Northern Europe.

#### **Growing Tabloidization?**

Where countries have experienced a decline in circulation, what are the consequences? One of the greatest concerns lies in potential threats to traditional standard of journalism. Many fear that fierce competition for readers and profits in the news industry has fuelled a down-market slide towards the popular tabloid market<sup>24</sup>. If the bottom-line has come to dominate the decisions of newsroom executives, and profitability is the only criteria of corporate success, this may erode older standards of news journalism. 'Tabloidization' is a murky and often confused phrase, often bandied about for anything people disapprove of in the news media<sup>25</sup>, which shares three distinct meanings.

The term 'tabloid' can refer most simply to the production **format** of the newspaper, designed to be physically smaller and more manageable than broadsheet papers.

The second meaning, more relevant to this study, concerns the **style** of journalism, referring to an emphasis on simple and concrete language, light, bright and vivid writing, shorter stories, and extensive use of photographs and graphics. Front-page colorful images are accompanied by dramatic splash headlines with stories conveyed in a vivid and direct style. The length and language of news stories, and the use of photographs, can be used to gauge this sense of tabloidization. But it is not obvious why we should be concerned about a tabloid style *per se*, since, as any good politician knows, the use of pithy language, personal anecdotes, and effective humour can leaven the dry stuff of politics and make it more accessible to a popular audience. Short and tight journalism, even for complex stories, can often be preferable to lengthy and prolix writing. And since at least the time of Victorian lithographs of the Crimean War, editors have realized, to use the cliché, that a single picture can tell 1000 words.

The last meaning, which has aroused the greatest concern, refers to the distinctive **subject** matter of news stories, where the mass-circulation tabloid press is characterized above all by a focus upon the minor scandals of minor celebrities, entertainment stories, sexual shenanigans, crime, sports, and lurid 'victim' or disaster stories, as their staple fare, accompanied by give-away games. 'Exclusives' about the lives of the semi-rich and semi-famous are endemic<sup>26</sup>. The more populist press incorporates soft porn into its daily mix. This pattern of coverage is not just confined to newspapers, as many commentators have noticed similar tendencies in 'tabloid television', especially the local news and talk shows in America<sup>27</sup>. The concern about tabloidization can be concentrated either on a distinct sector of the news media, or as a general approach to news stories infecting all the mainstream news media. Typically trends are measured by comparing the number of news stories about international affairs and government and politics, with those on human interest stories and entertainment. It is widely assumed that the inclusion of tabloid stories may thereby produce a downgrading of 'traditional' news about current affairs, policy issues, the arts or foreign affairs, pushing these out of prime time or the headlines, thereby impoverishing public life.

Yet whether we should be concerned about the effects of growing tabloidization of subject-matter, as some suggest, remains an open question. After all, there is nothing new in this phenomenon: the staple fare of the penny press *New York Sun* (1833) and *New York Herald* (1835) was violent crime and human interest<sup>28</sup>, while one of the most notorious Sunday scandal-sheets in Britain, *The News of the World*, was established in 1843. Tabloids also have strong roots in the 'yellow press' that expanded rapidly in the 1890s. In Britain this included the creation of popular mass-circulation national newspapers such as the *People* (1881), *Daily Mail* (1896), *Daily Express* (1900) and *Daily Mirror* (1903)<sup>29</sup>. The equivalent papers in the US were James Gordon Bennett's *New York Herald*, Joseph Pulitzer's *New York World*, and William Randolph Hearst's *New York Journal* (1895)<sup>30</sup>. Fun and light-hearted human interest stories, along with bloody crimes and sexual intrigues, have always been a staple fare of the tabloids. Much of the current attack on the tabloid press echoes long-standing debates over the encroachment of popular culture on high culture, and taps deep-rooted ideological divisions between 'giving the public what it wants' versus the desire to educate, reform and improve<sup>31</sup>. Rather than an inexorable drive down-market, developments in the tabloid

sector can best be understood as a cyclical phenomenon driven by periods of intense competition.

Although the tabloid sector thrives today in some countries, notably *Bild Zeitung* in Germany, *The Sun* and *Daily Mirror* in the UK, and the *New York Post* in the US, tabloids are not widely established in every country, especially in their more graphic manifestations. In Germany the influence of *Bild Zeitung* is declining and the major quality political newspapers and magazines have been able to increase their circulation in recent years<sup>32</sup>. With a few exceptions, the mainstream daily press in the United States, Italy, France and the Netherlands, continues to lack a distinct major tabloid sector.

The jury is still out on whether there are systematic trends in the mainstream media in many countries which have changed the traditional subject of news, with increased focus on crime, sex and entertainment, as is assumed by some critics. What seems equally plausible across OECD countries is an expansion of both low-brow and high-brow news media in recent decades, representing a diversification of the market. A recent review of the comparative literature by Kees Brants concluded that the few available content analysis studies provide an ambiguous and sometimes contradictory picture of the growth of 'infotainment' news in different countries, rather than showing a uniform pattern: "*Where for the European countries as a whole we might see a slight tendency towards the popularization of news, there is little evidence that politicians and politics are dramatically personalized and sensationalized than before.*"<sup>33</sup> Brants found that the available content analysis shows a mixed picture of the growth of 'infotainment' news in different European countries, rather than a uniform trend. Moreover systematic research on long-term trends in British newspapers from 1952-97 found that the amount of political coverage in the tabloid sector had not declined over time, as many critics assume. Instead, the tabloid press in Britain has expanded its coverage of entertainment but also maintained its political news during the last half century<sup>34</sup>. In this sense, the European tabloids are far removed from the 'Men from Mars Kidnap Liz Taylor' equivalents at the US supermarket checkout counter.

If the issue of growing tabloidization is one where we lack systematic longitudinal research in most countries, we know even less about the effects of tabloid news on the public. The focus on political and social scandal may produce greater cynicism among readers; on the other hand, the characteristic style of tabloids may make politics more understandable and accessible for a less informed or educated readership<sup>35</sup>. Political coverage in the tabloid press is believed to exert an important influence upon their readers<sup>36</sup>. If the choice is between reading tabloids containing some political fare combined with news about filmstars, violent crime, and football results, or not reading any newspaper, then the former is arguably preferable.

#### **Growing Concentration of Newspaper Ownership?**

Therefore across all post-industrial societies newspaper circulation levels have remained largely stable during the post-war era, yet at the same time the range of papers published in OECD states has contracted. The number of daily newspapers published in OECD nations fell on average by 15% during the postwar era, from 160 per country in 1960 to 130 in 1996, producing greater concentration of readership in fewer outlets. Many countries have introduced measures to maintain press diversity, on the assumption that we need diverse outlets for an effective civic forum. Anti-trust regulations have attempted to insure competition in the ownership of the press, for example limiting the proportion of cross-media ownership by a single company,

administered by fair trade bodies like the British Monopolies and Merger Commission or the German Federal Cartel Office. As mentioned earlier, other societies like Sweden and Norway have used press subsidies as a policy instrument to protect the financial viability of the more vulnerable sectors of the press<sup>37</sup>. Countries with provincial and localized newspaper markets like the United States and Germany proved particularly prone to media mergers and acquisitions, reducing pluralism and competition in many cities (see Figure 4.3). Papers in smaller countries like Austria and Belgium also often experienced takeovers or closure because of a limited domestic market and imports from neighbouring states with a shared common language.

Concentration of ownership in the hands of a few multinational corporations with multimedia empires has become increasingly common, notably Rupert Murdoch's News International, and the vast holdings of Bertelsmann in Germany, or Fininvest in Italy<sup>38</sup>. Hence Rupert Murdoch, who started with two small Australian newspapers, built an empire in News Corp. that includes 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox films, the Fox TV network, a number of US stations, 50% ownership of Sky TV, a majority interest in the STAR Asian satellite, ownership of *The Sun* and *The Times* in Britain, additional television stations in Latin America, and the book publisher HarperCollins, as well as investments in internet companies. In the United States, Time Warner's purchase of Turner Broadcasting Systems Inc (including CNN) in 1996 created the largest media firm in the world with strong print, cable, and programming divisions. Walt Disney Company's acquisition of Capital Cities/ABC Inc for \$19 billion in 1995 created the second largest media conglomerate with movie, television, cable and internet interests, although the purchase proved costly since ABC's profitability moved sharply into the red four years after acquisition. Conrad Black's acquisition of Southam in Canada in 1996 gave his company, Hollinger Inc, control of two-thirds of the newspapers in that country. Many commentators like Ben Badakian fear that media mergers have concentrated excessive control in the hands of a few multinational corporations, who remain unaccountable to the public, and that only greater economic competition can change this situation<sup>39</sup>. Recognition of this problem has arisen from the understanding that economic controls can constrain the media just as significantly as political controls. There is nothing new about this concern, which was often expressed during the interwar era of the press barons when proprietors like Beaverbrook and Rothermere actively intervened to further their political ambitions.

Yet other commentators like Robert Picard remain more sanguine about recent developments, arguing that we need to distinguish between concentration defined by considering the number of media outlets held by dominant firms and concentration defined by dominance in a clear geographical market<sup>40</sup>. It is the latter, -- which can harm consumers by producing fewer choices, poorer services, and higher prices, -- which is important for the availability of alternative sources of political information in a democracy. Monopolies in the local market for ideas can be harmful for pluralism. Nevertheless it must be recognized that we need to look beyond any single media sector to establish the harmful political effects of concentration, since consumers use and have access to multiple sources of news and information, from newspapers to radio, television and the Internet. Moreover the trends towards greater concentration are not universal, as some OECD countries have seen a significant expansion in the circulation and range of daily newspapers being published in the post-war era, particularly states like Mexico and Greece where educational and literacy rates have been rising sharply, as well as more modest growth evident in newer democracies like Hungary, the Czech Republic and South Korea (see Figures 4.3 and 4.4).

[Figures 4.3 and 4.4 about here]

Many are concerned that greater concentration of ownership may restrain freedom of the press, for example if the owners and advertisers intervene to actively constrain reporters<sup>41</sup>. Yet a comparison by Freedom House suggests that levels of press freedom remain fairly healthy in most OECD nations. Freedom of the press is measured by Freedom House according to the degree of independence of journalists from government laws, political influence, economic influence, and actual incidents violating press autonomy. The 1997 survey compared 187 nations worldwide and estimated that two-third of the nations had a free or partly free press, while one third remained not free<sup>42</sup>. In total, 24 out of 29 post-industrial societies under comparison in this book were given a high press freedom ranking in 1997, according to this measure (see Table 4.1). The exceptions were France, Greece, Hungary, and the UK, which were classified by Freedom House as 'partly free', while Mexico and Turkey were categorized as 'not free' due to serious restrictions of free speech, and government pressures on journalists. We can conclude that in most OECD states the structure of the newspaper industry has experienced greater concentration of ownership and a reduction in the range of independent local and regional outlets, but nevertheless during the post-war era overall sales figures remain fairly stable, and most OECD countries maintain a relatively high level of press freedom.

#### **Concentration of Newspaper Readership?**

As discussed earlier, considerable concern has been expressed that falling sales in the United States may have led to greater *concentration of readership* among the more educated and affluent sections of society, with a particularly marked hemorrhage of readers among the younger generation. If this pattern is evident across post-industrial societies this may produce a long-term generational slide in newspaper use and also reinforce the gap between the information-rich, who are most likely to participate in politics, and the information-poor who tune out. Poorer sections of the community may also be excluded because of the need to target consumers to attract advertising revenue.

We can examine the typical demographic profile of newspaper readers using the 1999 Eurobarometer survey for the fifteen EU member states and the 1998 National Election Study in the US. Newspaper readership was measured using the five-item scale "*About how often do you read the news in daily papers? Everyday, several times a week, once or twice a week, less often, or never?*" 'Regular' readers are defined as those who read a paper everyday<sup>43</sup>. It should be noted that this subjective indicator of reported media use in the Eurobarometer correlated strongly at national-level with the independent record of official per capita newspaper sales ( $R=0.86$  sig.  $p.01$ ), increasing confidence in the reliability of the survey measure. The comparison shows that overall almost half of all Europeans said they read a daily paper everyday, in contrast to only a third of Americans. As expected readership proved to be strongly associated with regional cultures: compared with Southern Europe, there were about twice as many readers in Western Europe, and almost three times as many readers in Northern Europe. Confirming our earlier observations the lowest daily readership proved to be in Portugal (17%) while the highest was in Sweden (75%). In comparison, use of television news tended to be far more uniform across post-industrial societies; the lowest viewing was found in France and the United States<sup>44</sup>, where just a bare majority watched TV news, and the highest audience was in Italy and Finland.

[Table 4.2 about here]

Regression models were used to predict how often people read a newspaper based on a range of demographic factors, including their education, gender, age, left-right self-placement, urban residency, harmonized income scale, and socio-economic status<sup>45</sup>. Nationality was also included, to see whether this remained significant after controlling at individual-level for social background. The pattern in 1999 shows that all the demographic indicators proved significant predictors of newspaper use, in the expected direction; readership was higher among men, and the better-educated, older, middle class and more affluent sectors of society (see Table 4.3). Readership was also higher among those who regularly tuned into television and radio news. The fact that nationality continued to prove significant even after social controls were introduced, with lower than average use in the Mediterranean countries, suggests that cultural and historical legacies continue to influence the news market in each country, even after controlling for differences in socioeconomic development.

[Table 4.3 about here]

To see whether the social biases in readership had strengthened over time, as some fear, the models were run again in 1970, 1980 and 1999 in Italy, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and Italy, where we had comparable time-series data. In fact the results in Table 4.4 show the contrary pattern: compared with 1970, readership of newspapers in the late-1990s was less strongly predicted by education, gender, and ideology, although the influence of age, class and income remained stable. The decline of the gender gap in readership has been dramatic in the last twenty-five years, probably reflecting changing life-styles and the way that newspapers have been more successful at widening their market to women. Readership of newspapers has always been strongly associated with other media habits, like regular use of television and radio news. Compared with the European average, the national differences slightly increased over time, confirming the pattern we have already noted at aggregate level. The overall lesson from this analysis is that social background continues to be an important predictor of who does, and does not, regularly read the press although educational and gender differences have diminished gradually over time.

[Table 4.4 about here]

Overall the size of the audience for news has substantially expanded in Europe. If we analyze attention to the news media in the EU-5, where we have comparable figures, the results in Table 4.5 show that since the 1970s use of newspapers and television news has risen sharply. The proportion of Europeans who read a paper 'every day' almost doubled during the last three decades, to almost half the population. In the same period, those who watch TV news every day rose from half to almost three-quarters of all citizens. If anything, these figures may provide an underestimate of the picture across Europe since the number of regular viewers and readers in all EU-15 member states were even higher. The only media where regular use has been stable is radio news.

[Table 4.5 about here]

### **Comparing News Environments**

How can we compare and conceptualize these systematic differences in news environments? Following the work of Siebert, Peterson and Schramm in the

mid-1950s, a distinction has conventionally been drawn between four models of the mass media: the libertarian, social responsibility, authoritarian and Soviet Communist ideal types<sup>46</sup>. This typology is based largely on regulations governing broadcasting and the press, ranging from a free market to a symbiotic relationship. Others have adapted and modified this framework, for example McQuail also identified developmental and 'democratic-participant' models<sup>47</sup>, while Hachten added the concepts of revolutionary and developmental, and categorized 'Western' news media as a single group<sup>48</sup>.

Yet these attempts to classify macro-level government-media relations seem increasingly out-dated and inadequate in the post-Cold War era. In Central and Eastern Europe the traditional Soviet model has been transformed, and authoritarian control of television in the hands of the state is found in far fewer nations today<sup>49</sup>. Assuming a single model of the media covering 'developing' countries as diverse as Singapore, India and Nigeria seems equally inadequate. Post-industrialized societies have moved towards 'mixed' systems blending elements of public service television with an increasing number of commercial channels. The older black-and-white Cold War models do not capture these more subtle distinctions<sup>50</sup>. Yet major structural differences in national news environments, like patterns of newspaper sales and ownership, which can be expected to influence the roles and contents of the news media in each country, continue to differentiate nations.

To understand these differences more systematically, post-industrial societies can be classified into different categories based on their use of traditional media. Newspaper consumption (measured by the percentage circulation figures in each country) can be compared with the use of television (measured by average hours spent watching all types of television, mostly TV entertainment). In the 1990s OECD countries cluster into four distinct types (see Figure 4.5).

[Figure 4.5 about here]

*Newspaper-centric* societies are characterized by high use of the press and relatively low attention to TV entertainment. This category includes all the Scandinavian nations and many smaller European welfare states like Switzerland, Austria and the Netherlands, as well as the Czech Republic and South Korea. Although newspaper reading was significantly higher in the more affluent and educated societies<sup>51</sup>, the countries that cluster in this group cannot be explained simply in terms of levels of socio-economic development, access to television sets, common language skills, or even a simple Scandinavian regional culture.

*Television-centric* societies, in contrast, have intensive use of television entertainment and low newspaper circulation. This group includes the United States, Mexico, the Mediterranean cluster of Greece, Spain, Italy, and Turkey, as well as Poland and Hungary. Some Western European states like Germany and France are located roughly in the middle of the spectrum, along with Canada and Australia. Again there are few characteristics in common in the nations that cluster within the TV-centric category, which cannot be explained the product of a common regional or cultural background, or low levels of socio-economic development.

There are also some societies that do not fit this pattern, like Portugal that is low on both indicators. Japan is a also distinct outlier with by far the highest combined use of newspapers and television, while the UK is slightly higher than average on both scales.

[Figure 4.6 about here]

Yet a slightly different pattern becomes evident if we analyze cross-national differences in Europe and the United States in use of the news, rather than all types of television watching. Figure 4.6 compares the proportion watching television news everyday with the proportion reading newspapers everyday (based on Table 4.2). The highest news users are the Scandinavian countries such as Finland and Denmark, the smaller European welfare states like the Netherlands and Luxembourg, and the UK. Countries where the public is least attentive to the news are the United States, France, Portugal and Belgium. The US therefore watches a great deal of TV, but not news and current affairs per se.

The overall pattern demonstrates that there remain major differences in the use of different types of media, despite an apparent convergence of technological developments in recent decades. The United States has the highest number of television sets per capita, and the highest average viewing time (absorbing almost 4 hours per day or one quarter of all the waking hours), but compared with Europe the US proves relatively low in news consumption. In contrast, in Scandinavia newspapers continue to play a more important role, and although Scandinavians typically watch few hours of TV, they are among the most regular users of TV news.

#### **Conclusions: Diversification of the News Media**

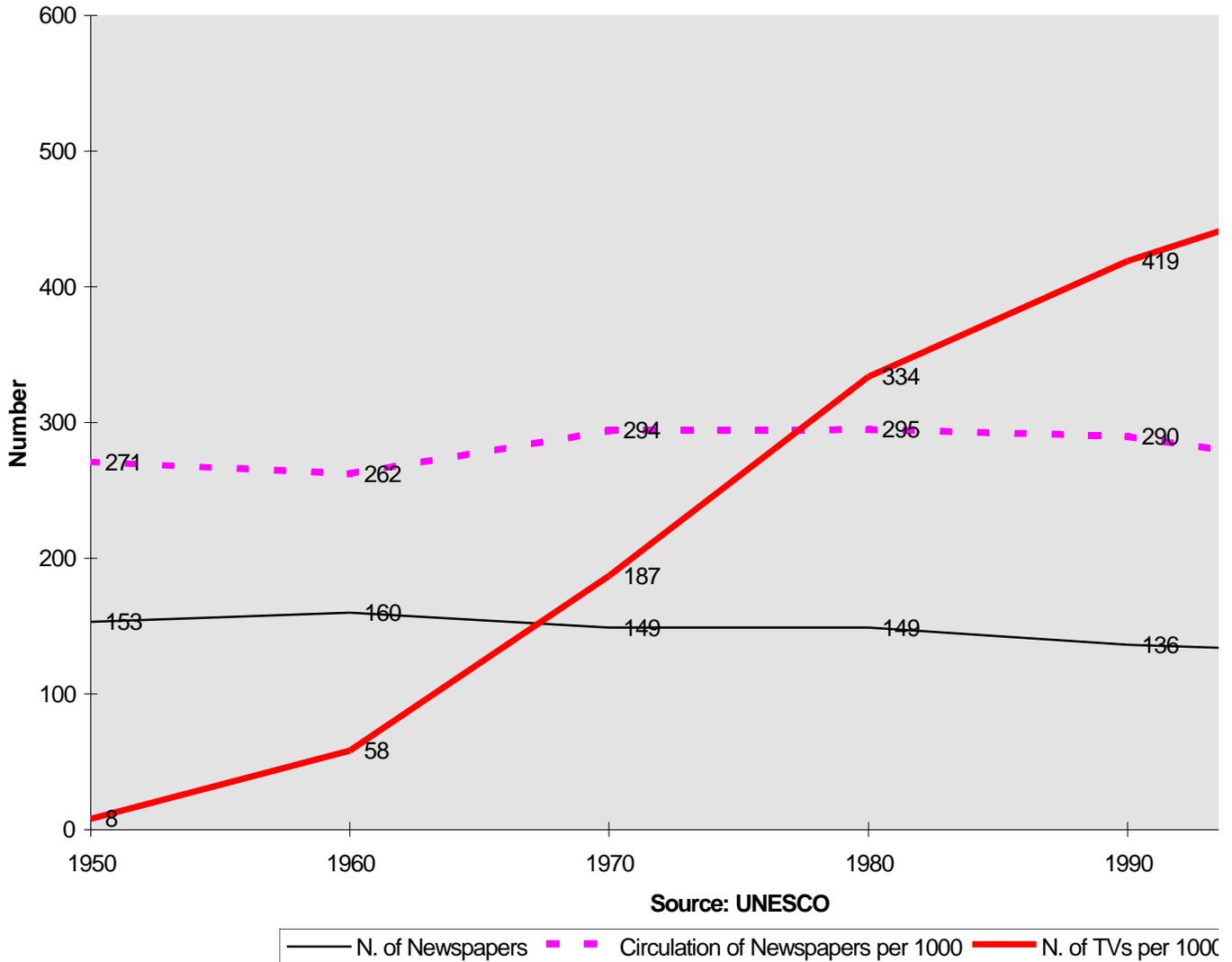
This chapter has explored four interrelated trends that are assumed to have produced a decline in the newspaper industry in recent decades: whether there has been a widespread slump in newspaper circulation and sales; whether declining revenues have fuelled down-market pressures towards tabloid sensationalism in the pursuit of readers and a decline of traditional journalistic standards; whether greater concentration of media ownership, has reduced consumer choice; and whether there has been greater concentration of readership among the more educated and affluent sections of society, with a particularly marked hemorrhage of readers among the younger generation.

We can conclude that despite similar social, technological and economic trends that have affected the newspaper industry in post-industrial societies, nevertheless there continue to be significant differences in news environments; someone who moves from Portugal to Sweden, or from the United States to Germany, will experience very different types of newspaper markets. Cultural and historical legacies have left distinct imprints on each country. What are the implications of these structural differences for the process of political communications in a democracy? Many assume that in the postwar era technological and economic developments have altered the main source of news about government and public affairs. In particular, commentators suggest that there has been widespread erosion in readership of newspapers and periodicals across advanced industrial societies. The use of news is envisaged as a zero-sum game, so that given limited time and energy people turned from newspapers to radio from the 1920s onwards, then to television news from the 1950s onwards, before starting to surf Internet news from the mid-1990s. If use of newspapers has declined, it is assumed that the public is no longer exposed to detailed, analytical stories common in the printed press, such as those about international affairs and the global economy. Television news is believed to have 'dumbed down' traditional standards of journalism due to its emphasis on dramatic images over dry analysis, the simple and timely over the complex and long-term, and 'infotainment' over civic affairs and parliamentary debate.

Yet based on the evidence in this chapter we can conclude that post-industrialized societies have experienced a more complex pattern of

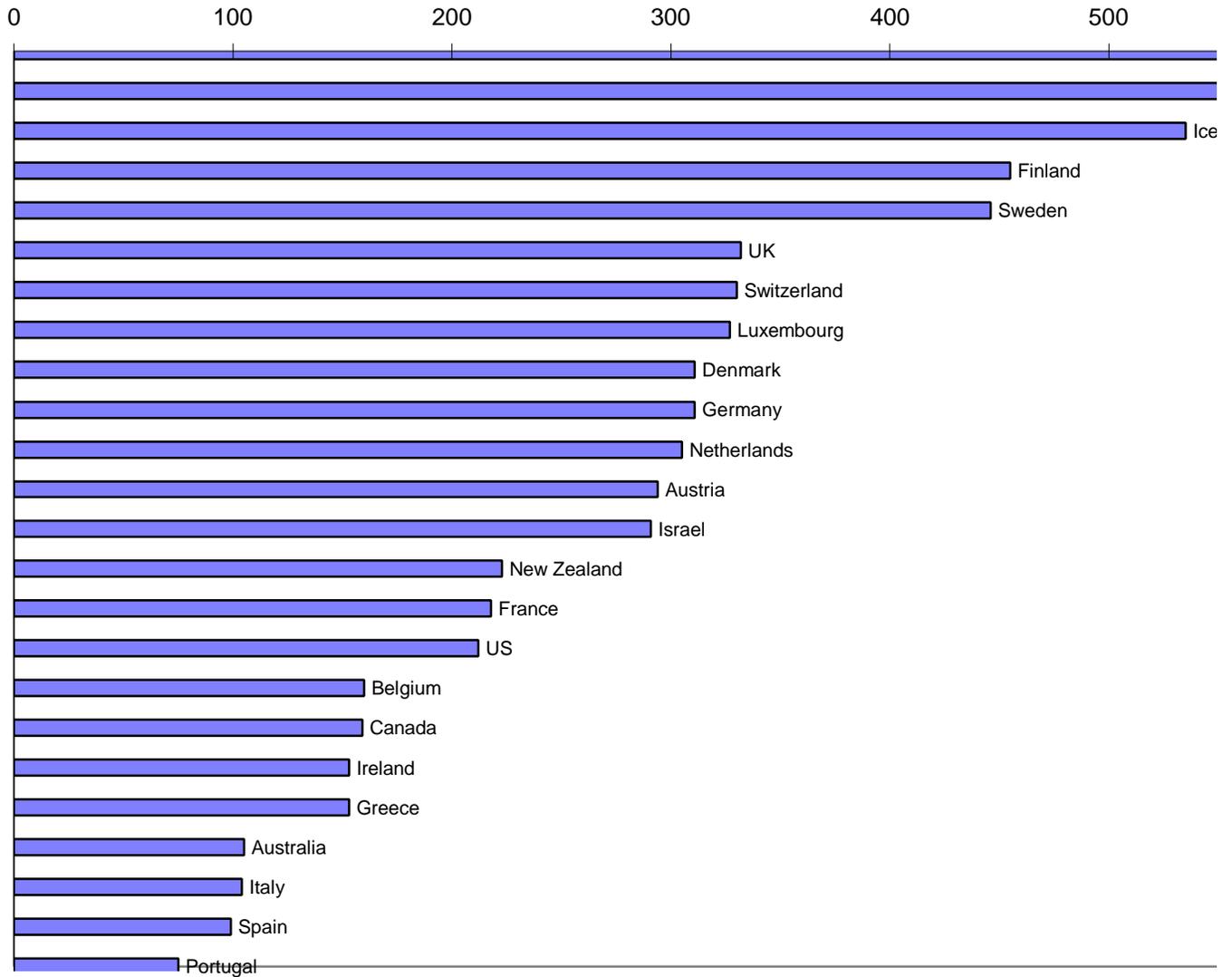
development, or the emergence of what can be termed 'post-modern communications', where the news media are characterized by diversification of outlets and levels. In most societies the electronic media have supplemented existing sources of news, not undermined the market for newspapers. The United States has proved to be something of an outlier among post-industrialized societies, and far more television-centric than any of the other countries under comparison. In contrast many smaller North and Western European states continue to have flourishing newspaper markets and far less reliance on television. To understand why this is the case, and to explore its consequences, we can go on to examine developments in the electronic media in recent decades, with the rise of broadcasting in the 1950s and the subsequent challenge of the Internet in the 1990s (in Chapters 5 and 6), and how parties have responded to these developments (in Chapters 7 and 8).

**Figure 4.1: Trends in Newspapers and Television:  
1950s to mid-1990s**



Chapter from Pippa Norris "A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies." (New York University Press, Fall 2000)

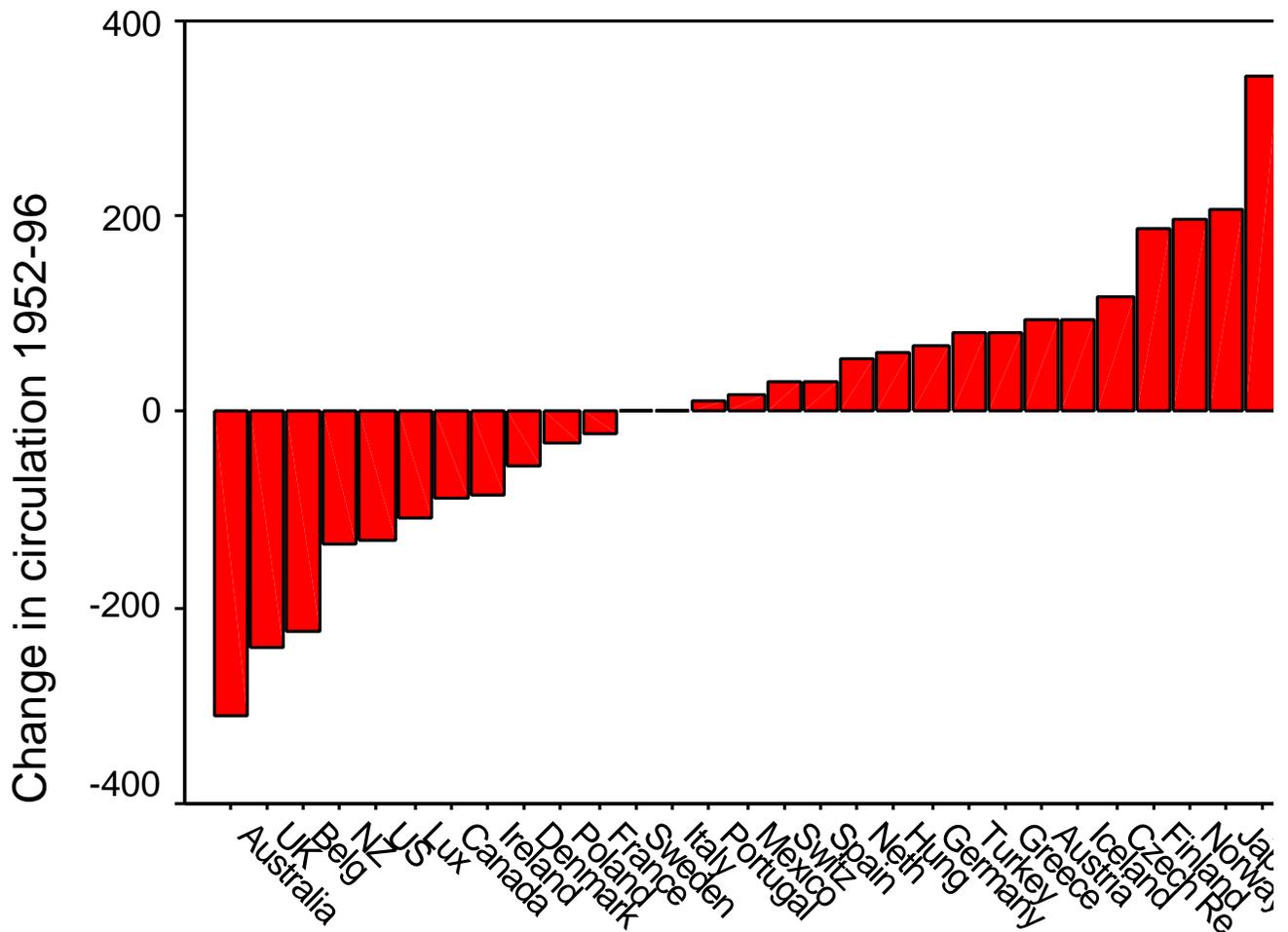
### Newspaper Circulation by Nation, 1996



Chapter from Pippa Norris "A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies." (N  
Press, Fall 2000)

# Change in Newspaper Circulation

1952-96

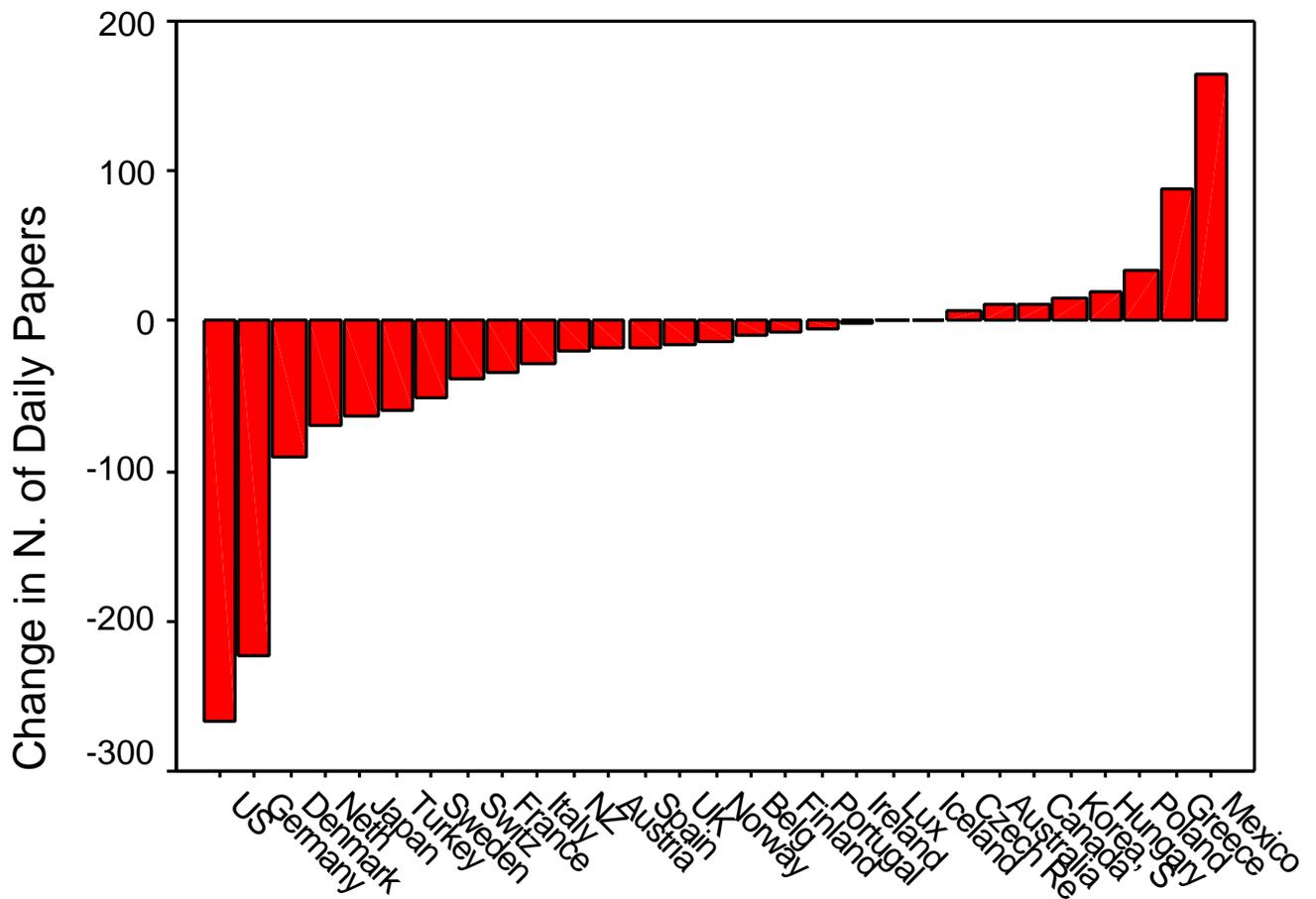


Chapter from Pippa Norris "A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies." (New York: Oxford University Press, Fall 2000)

Figure 4.4

## Change in the Number of Daily Papers

1952-96



Chapter from Pippa Norris "A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies." (New York: Norton Press, Fall 2000)

**Table 4.1: Newspaper Indicators OECD Countries, mid-1990s**

Country	Number of National Daily Newspapers 1950	Number of National Daily Newspapers 1996	Number of National Daily Newspapers Change 1950-1996	Newspaper Circulation per 1000 people, 1950	Newspaper Circulation per 1000 people, 1996	Newspaper Circulation per 1000 people, Change 1950-1996	Press Freedom Ranking, 1997	Press Freedom Classification, 1997
Australia	54	65	11	416	105	-311	90	
Austria	35	17	-18	200	294	94	88	
Belgium	39	30	-9	384	160	-224	88	
Canada	95	107	12	246	159	-87	88	
Czech Rep	13	21	8	137	256	119	82	
Denmark	127	37	-90	366	311	-55	95	
Finland	64	56	-8	269	455	186	90	
France	151	117	-34	239	218	-21	77	Partl
Germany	598	375	-223	242	311	69	90	
Greece	68	156	88	71	153	82	75	Partl
Hungary	21	40	19	128	189	61	72	Partl
Iceland	5	5	0	439	535	96	88	
Ireland	8	6	-2	237	153	-84	82	
Italy	107	78	-29	.	104	.	80	
Japan	186	122	-64	374	580	206	78	Partl
Korea, S.	45	60	15	50	394	344	72	Partl
Luxembourg	5	5	0	436	327	-109	92	
Mexico	131	295	164	.	97	.	45	Nc
Netherlands	108	38	-70	249	305	56	87	
NZ	43	23	-20	358	223	-135	93	
Norway	96	83	-13	396	593	197	93	
Poland	22	55	33	.	113	.	80	
Portugal	32	27	-5	64	75	11	87	
Spain	104	87	-17	67	99	32	87	
Sweden	145	94	-51	445	446	1	93	

Chapter from Pippa Norris "A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies." (New York: Norton, Fall 2000)

Switzerland	127	88	-39	300	330	30	92	
Turkey	.	57	-59	31	111	80	38	Not
UK	114	99	-15	573	332	-241	77	Partly
US	1786	1520	-266	342	212	-130	85	
G7	433	345	-88	336	273	-34	82	
EU15	114	81	-32	274	250	-24	85	
OECD Total	153	130	-23	271	263	-8	82	

**Notes:** Press freedom was scaled by Freedom House on the basis of press freedom of laws, political influence over media content, economic influence over media content and actual press freedom. The Freedom House score out of 60 was converted into a percentage where 100 = highest press freedom. The press freedom scale was then categorized where low thru 59 = not free, 60-79 = partly free and 80+ = free. See text for details.

**Sources:** *Number of Daily Newspapers:* UNESCO Statistical Yearbook (Paris: UNESCO) Annual  
*Circulation of Daily Newspapers:* UNESCO Statistical Yearbook (Paris: UNESCO) Annual volume  
*Press Freedom.* Derived from Leonard R. Sussman (ed). *Press Freedom 1997.* Freedom House.  
([www.freedomhouse.org/Press/Press97](http://www.freedomhouse.org/Press/Press97))

**Table 4.2: Regular Sources of News, Europe and the US, 1999**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Regular Newspaper (% 'read everyday')</i>	<i>Regular TV News (% Watch 'everyday')</i>	<i>Regular Radio News (% Listen 'everyday')</i>	<i>Online Users (% With access)</i>
Austria	54	63	67	11
Belgium	30	66	42	11
Denmark	56	76	65	44
Finland	69	82	49	39
France	26	58	37	9
Germany	63	68	56	8
Greece	17	80	19	7
Ireland	44	66	64	14
Italy	29	82	23	14
Luxembourg	53	71	60	22
Netherlands	61	76	56	32
Portugal	16	62	27	5
Spain	27	70	32	8
Sweden	58	63	47	61
UK	49	71	45	22
US	34	53	29	49
Northern Europe	60	71	57	48
Western Europe	48	70	52	17
Southern Europe	22	74	25	9
<b>EU15</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>20</b>

**Notes:** EuroBarometer measures: (see fn for NES equivalent)

*Regular newspaper readers:* Reads the news in daily papers 'everyday'.

*Regular television news:* Watches the news on television 'everyday'.

*Regular radio news:* Listens to the news on the radio 'everyday'.

*Northern Europe:* Denmark, Finland and Sweden

*Western Europe:* Austria, Belgium, Germany, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, and UK

*Southern Europe:* Italy, Greece, Portugal, and Spain.

Chapter from Pippa Norris "A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies." (New York: Oxford University Press, Fall 2000)

**Sources:** EuroBarometer 51.0 Spring 1999; American National Election Study, 1998.

Chapter from Pippa Norris "A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies." (N Press, Fall 2000)

**Table 4.3: Models Predicting Readership of Newspapers 1999, EU15**

	Predictors of Newspaper Readership 1999	Sig.	Operationalization	EBVa
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>				
Education	.08	**	Age finished full-time education	D8
Gender: Male	.10	**	Male (1) Female (0)	D10
Age	.11	**	In years	D11
Left-Right Ideology	-.01		10 point scale: From left (1) to right (10)	D1r
Socio-economic status	.07	**	Manual (0) or Non-Manual (1) HoH	C4
Household Income	.11	**	Harmonized income scale	D29
<b>USE OF OTHER MEDIA</b>				
TV News Use	.18	**	5-point scale	
Radio News Use	.15	**	5-point scale	
Online User	.01		No (0)/Yes (1)	
<b>NATION</b>				
Austria	.02			
Belgium	-.12	**		
Denmark	-.04	**		
Finland	.03	*		
France	-.14	**		
Germany	.03			
Greece	-.20	**		
Ireland	-.03	**		
Italy	-.09	**		
Netherlands	-.01			
Portugal	-.22	**		
Spain	-.12	**		
Sweden	.02			
UK	-.05	*		
Constant	.65			
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>.30</b>			
N.	16179			

**Notes:** The table reports the standardized beta coefficients predicting frequency of reading newspapers based on regression models. The dependent variables are the 5 point scales measuring frequency of use of newspaper and = 'everyday use' and 1 = 'never use'. Sig. P. \*\*>.01 \*>.05

The Luxembourg dummy variable is excluded as a national predictor in the models.

**Source:** EuroBarometer 51.0 Spring 1999.

Chapter from Pippa Norris "A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies." (New York: Russell Sage, Fall 2000)

**Table 4.4: Models Predicting Readership of Newspapers in 1970, 1980 and 1999, EU5**

	Predictors of Newspaper Readership 1970	Sig.	Predictors of Newspaper Readership 1980	Sig.	Predictors of Newspaper Readership 1999	Sig.	Operationalization
<b>DEMOGRAPHICS</b>							
Education	.16	**	.16	**	.04	*	Age finished full-time
Gender: Male	.25	**	.15	**	.08	**	Male (1) Female (0)
Age	.16	**	.13	**	.15	**	In years
Left-Right Ideology	-.04	**	-.04	**	.01		Scale: From left (1) to
Socio-economic status	.08	**	.04	**	.08	**	Manual (0) or Non-Manual
Household Income	.09	**	.10	**	.12	**	Harmonized income scale
Urbanization	.02		.10	**	.01		Rural (1), Small town (2),
							Town/City (3)
<b>USE OF OTHER NEWS MEDIA</b>							
TV News Use	.11	**	.19	**	.18	**	5-point scale
Radio News Use	.15	**	.12	**	.16	**	5-point scale
<b>NATION</b>							
Belgium	-.17	**	-.07	**	-.21	**	
France	-.12	**	-.25	**	-.23	**	
Italy	-.14	**	-.27	**	-.16	**	
Netherlands	-.01	**	-.01	**	-.05	*	
Constant	.56		.63		.74		
<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>.22</b>		<b>.24</b>		<b>.25</b>		
N.	8567		6521		6218		

**Notes:** The table reports the standardized beta coefficients predicting frequency of reading newspapers based on multiple regression models. The dependent variables are the 5 point scales measuring frequency of use of newspaper and newspaper use = 'everyday use' and 1 = 'never use'. Sig. P. \*\*>.01 \*>.05

The German dummy variable is excluded as a predictor in these models.

**Source:** European Community Study 1970; EuroBarometer 13.0 April 1980 weighted for EU6; EuroBarometer 50.1 March 1999 EU6.

Chapter from Pippa Norris "A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies." (New York: Norton Press, Fall 2000)

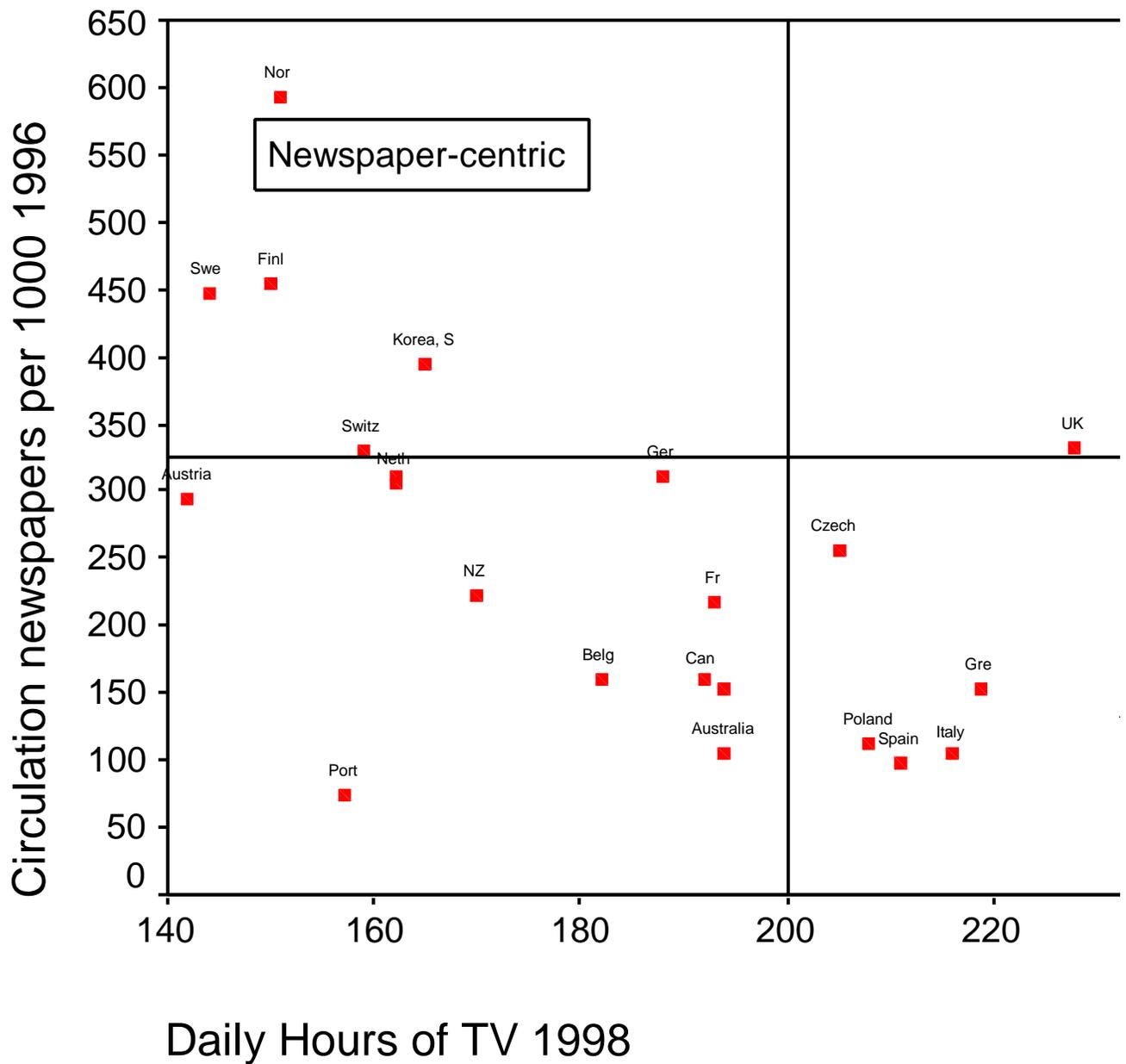
**Table 4.5: The Expansion in the Size of the News Audience, EU5 1970 -1996**

Country	Read Newspaper (%)		Watch TV News (%)		Listen to Radio News (%)	
	1970	1999	1970	1999	1970	1999
Every day	27	45	49	72	44	46
Several times a week	14	17	20	18	16	18
One or two days a week	13	13	11	6	10	8
Less often	17	14	8	3	13	14
Never	29	12	12	2	18	13
<b>Change in 'every day' use</b>	<b>+18</b>		<b>+23</b>		<b>+2</b>	

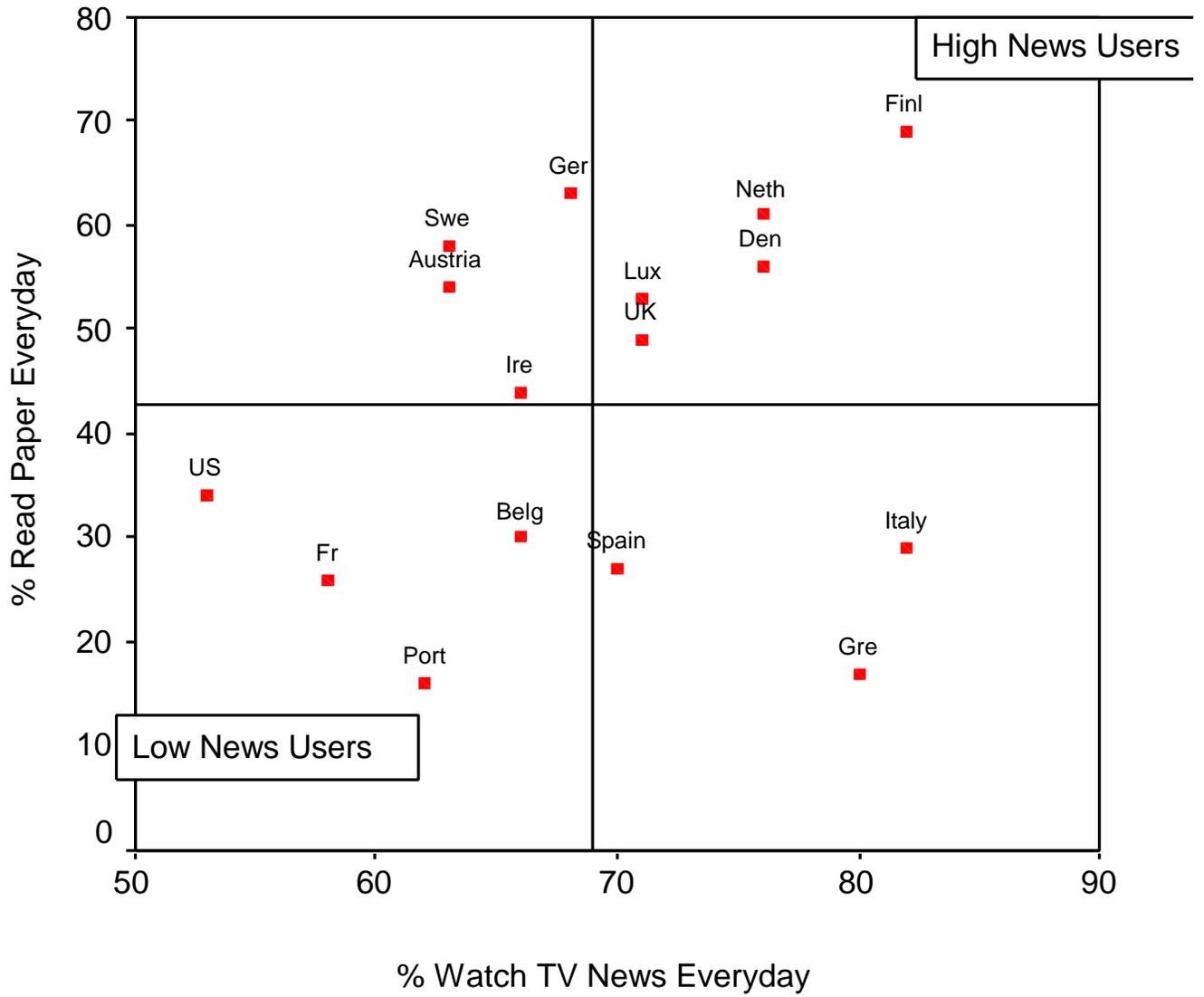
Note: For consistent comparisons over time media use is compared only in Belgium, France, Italy, the Netherlands. Media use in all the EU15 member states in 1996 was about 5-8 percentage points higher than these figures.

Source: Eurobarometers 1970, 1999.

## Typology of Media Use



### News Use, EU15+US 1999



Chapter from Pippa Norris "A Virtuous Circle: Political Communications in Post-Industrial Societies." (N  
Press, Fall 2000)

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, S. H. Chaffee, S.L. Ward and L.P. Tipton. 1970. 'Mass Communication and Political Socialization.' *Journalism Quarterly*. 47: 467-59; Thomas Patterson. 1980. *The Mass Media Election*. New York: Praeger; John Robinson and Mark Levy. 1986. *The Main Source*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage; John Robinson and Dennis K. Davis. 1990. 'Television News and the Informed Public: An Information Processing Approach.' *Journal of Communication*. 40(3): 106-19; Note, however, that others argue that the effect of newspapers on learning washes out once controls are introduced for prior cognitive skills, see W. Russell Neuman, Marion R. Just and Ann N. Crigler. 1992. *Common Knowledge: News and the Construction of Meaning*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. P.98.

<sup>2</sup> Michael J. Robinson and Margaret A. Sheehan. 1983. *Over the Wire and on TV: CBS and UPI in Campaign '80*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

<sup>3</sup> See Ben Bagdikian. 1997. *The Media Monopoly*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press. P.198.

<sup>4</sup> Leo Bogart. 1995. *Commercial Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press; William F. Baker and George Dessart. 1998. *Down the Tube*. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>5</sup> John H. McManus. 1994. *Market Driven Journalism*. London: Sage; William F. Baker and George Dessart. 1998. *Down the Tube*. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>6</sup> Els De Bens and Helge Ostbye. 'The European Newspaper Market.'. In Denis McQuail and Karen Siune (eds). *Media Policy: Convergence, Concentration and Commerce*. London: Sage.

<sup>7</sup> Alain Modoux. 1997. *World Communication Report: The New Media and the Challenge of the New Technologies*. Paris: UNESCO. P.120.

<sup>8</sup> See Jeremy Tunstall and Michael Palmer. 1991. *Media Moguls*. London: Routledge.

<sup>9</sup> Ben Bagdikian. 1997. *The Media Monopoly*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press; Leo Bogart. 1995. *Commercial Culture*.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, Jeremy Tunstall. 1996. *Newspaper Power: The New National Press in Britain*. Clarendon Press: Oxford.

<sup>11</sup> See Neil Graber. 1999. *Life the Movie*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

<sup>12</sup> Ellis S. Krauss. 2000. 'Japan'. In Richard Gunther and Anthony Mughan. *Democracy and the Media: A Comparative Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press; Jung Bock Lee. 1985. *The Political Character of the Japanese Press*. Seoul: Seoul National University Press.

<sup>13</sup> Helge Ostbye. 1997. 'Norway'. In *The Media in Western Europe* edited by Bernt Stubbe Ostergaard. London: Sage.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Erik Gustafsson and Olof Hulten. 1997. 'Sweden'. In *The Media in Western Europe* edited by Bernt Stubbe Ostergaard. London: Sage.

<sup>15</sup> Paul Murschetz. 1998. 'State support for the Daily Press in Europe: A Critical Appraisal.' *European Journal of Communication*. 13(3): 291-313; Peter J. Humphreys. 1996. *Mass Media and Media Policy in Western Europe*. Manchester: Manchester University Press. Table 3.10.

<sup>16</sup> For general accounts of the British press see Colin Seymour Ure. 1996. *The British Press and Broadcasting Since 1945*. Oxford: Blackwell 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.; Ralph

Negrine. 1994. *Politics and the Mass Media in Britain*. London: Routledge. 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.

<sup>17</sup> Hans J. Kleinsteuber. 1997. 'Federal Republic of Germany (FRG)' in *The Media in Western Europe*, edited by Bernt Stubbe Ostergaard. London: Sage; Peter J. Humphreys. 1996. *Mass Media and Media Policy in Western Europe*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

<sup>18</sup> Doris Graber. 1997. *Mass Media and American Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Ch2.

<sup>19</sup> Doris Graber. 1997. *Mass Media and American Politics*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Ch2.

<sup>20</sup> W. Russell Neuman. 1993. *The Future of the Mass Audience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>21</sup> Newspaper Association of America. [www.naa.org/Info/Facts](http://www.naa.org/Info/Facts)

<sup>22</sup> For an overview see, for example, Carlo Sartori. 1996. 'The Media in Italy' and Lorenzo Vilches. 1996. 'The Media in Spain'. Both in *Markets and Myths* edited by Tony Weymouth and Bernard Lamizet. London: Longman. See also chapters in Italy and Spain in Richard Gunther and Anthony Mughan. 2000. *Democracy and the Media: A Comparative Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>23</sup> For a discussion see Panayote Elias Dimitras. 1997. 'Greece'. In *The Media in Western Europe*, edited by Bernt Stubbe Ostergaard. London: Sage.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Dahlgren and Colin Sparks. 1995. *Communication and Citizenship*. London: Routledge; Peter Dahlgren. 1995. *Television and the Public Sphere*. London: Sage.

<sup>25</sup> For a discussion of the complexities and ambiguities in attempting to define 'tabloidization', see Steven Barnett. 1999. 'Dumbing down or reaching out: Is it tabloidization wot done it?' In *Politics and the Media* edited by Jean Seaton. Oxford: Blackwell. See also the discussion in Shelley McLachlan and Peter Golding. 1999. 'Tabloidization in the British Press: A Quantitative Investigation into Changes Within British Newspapers from 1952-1997'. *Communication Research Centre Working Paper #9*. Loughborough: Loughborough University.

<sup>26</sup> See, for example, Jeremy Tunstall. 1996. *Newspaper Power: The New National Press in Britain*. Clarendon Press: Oxford.

<sup>27</sup> John Langer. 1998. *Tabloid Television: Popular Journalism and the Other News*. London: Routledge.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Schudson. 1978. *Discovering the News: A Social History of American Newspapers*. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>29</sup> See James Curran and Jean Seaton. 1993. *Power Without Responsibility: The Press and Broadcasting in Britain*. London: Routledge. 4<sup>th</sup> Edition; Matthew Engel. 1996. *Tickle the Public: One Hundred years of the Popular Press*. London: Victor Gollancz.

<sup>30</sup> See Neil Gabler. 1998. *Life the Movie*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

<sup>31</sup> Raymond Williams. 1961. *Culture and Society 1780-1950*. London: Penguin Books; Raymond Williams. 1970. 'Radical and/or respectable.' In *The Press We Deserve* edited by Richard Boston. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; R. Stevens. 1998. 'For "Dumbing Down" Read Respectable.' *British Journalism Review*, 9(4): 32-35; John Hartley. 1996. *Popular Reality: Journalism, Modernity, Popular Culture*. London: Arnold.

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<sup>32</sup> Knut Hiekkethier. 1996. 'The Media in Germany.' In *Markets and Myths* edited by Tony Weymouth and Bernard Lamizet. London: Longman. P.109.

<sup>33</sup> Kees Brants. 1998. 'Who's Afraid of Infotainment?' *European Journal of Communication*. 13(3): 315-335.

<sup>34</sup> Shelley McLachlan and Peter Golding. 1999. 'Tabloidization in the British Press: A Quantitative Investigation into Changes Within British Newspapers from 1952-1997'. *Communication Research Centre Working Paper #9*. Loughborough: Loughborough University; Shelley McLachlan. 1999. 'Who's Afraid of the News Bunny? The Changing Face of the Television Evening News Broadcast.' *Information and Democracy Research Project: Working Paper No.3*. Loughborough, Loughborough University.

<sup>35</sup> S. Elizabeth Bird and Robert W. Dardenne. 199X. 'News and Storytelling in American Culture: Reevaluating the Sensational Dimension'. *Journal of American Culture*. XX: X:XX-XX.

<sup>36</sup> For a discussion see John Curtice. 1997. 'Is the Sun Shining on Tony Blair? The Electoral Influence of British Newspapers'. *The Harvard International Journal of Press/Politics*. 2(2):9-26.

<sup>37</sup> See Denis McQuail and Karen Siune. 1998. *Media Policy: Convergence, Concentration and Commerce*. London: Sage

<sup>38</sup> See Jeremy Tunstall and Michael Palmer. 1991. *Media Moguls*. London: Routledge; Anthony Smith. 1991. *The Age of Behemoths: The Globalization of Mass Media Firms*. New York: Priority Press; Alfonso Sanchez-Taberner. 1993. *Media Concentration in Europe: Commercial Enterprises and the Public Interest*. London: John Libbey.

<sup>39</sup> Ben Bagdikian. 1997. *The Media Monopoly*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press; Leo Bogart. 1995. *Commercial Culture*.

<sup>40</sup> Robert G. Picard. 1988. *Press Concentration and Monopoly: New Perspectives on Newspaper Ownership and Operation*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Corp.; Robert G. Picard. 1998. 'Media Concentration, Economics, and Regulation.' In *The Politics of News: The News of Politics*, edited by Doris Graber, Denis McQuail and Pippa Norris. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

<sup>41</sup> Peter Humphreys. 1996. *Mass Media and Media Policy in Western Europe*. Macchester: Manchester University Press. P107.

<sup>42</sup> See Leonard R. Sussman (ed). 1997. 'Press Freedom 1997'. *Freedom Review*.

<sup>43</sup> The 1998 NES survey was used to gauge media use in the US and this used a slightly different question: "How many days in the PAST WEEK did you read a newspaper?", "How many days in the PAST WEEK did you watch the national news on TV?", "How many days in the PAST WEEK did you watch the local news on TV?", and "How many days in the PAST WEEK did you listen to news on the radio?". The use of local and national TV news was combined.

<sup>44</sup> Although the low figures in the US may be due to differences in data sources and question wording.

<sup>45</sup> Note that socioeconomic status is based on the household's occupational group, not the respondent's. The definitions for all measures are listed under Table 4.3.

<sup>46</sup> Fred S. Siebert, Theodore Peterson, Wilbur Schramm. 1956. *Four Theories of the Press*. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

<sup>47</sup> Denis McQuail. 1994. *Mass Communication Theory*. London: Sage.

<sup>48</sup> William A. Hachten. 1996. *The World News Prism*. Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press.

<sup>49</sup> See Leonard R. Sussman (ed). 1997. 'Press Freedom 1997'. *Freedom Review*.

<sup>50</sup> For an attempt at revising the normative theories of Siebert et al. see John C. Nerone. (ed). 1995. *Last Rights: Revisiting Four Theories of the Press*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

<sup>51</sup> If we compare the EU-15 and the US at national level the zero order correlation between the proportion of newspaper readers and level of per capita GDP was  $R=0.635$  (Sig. .008). The correlation between newspaper readers and the percentage of the adult population who had completed secondary education was  $R=0.537$  (Sig. .032).