

COMPARATIVE MEDIA RESEARCH AND MONITORING IN EUROPE: LESSONS LEARNED AND WAYS FORWARD. ATHENS, GREECE, JANUARY 29, 2024

Comparative media research is essential for understanding trends in the functioning of the media and for revealing the impact of economic, political and technological forces on the ability of the media to fulfil their democratic role. It is also an essential resource for the design of evidence-based media policies, capable of addressing the various challenges facing the media in contemporary European societies. Based on these observations, the Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) organized a workshop on “Comparative Media Research and Monitoring in Europe: Lessons Learned and Ways Forward” in Athens, Greece. The event was part of Mediadelcom, the EU-funded research project concerned with risks and opportunities for media-related deliberative communication in Europe (March 2021-February 2024, grant agreement number: 101004811).

The first session was about the Mediadelcom project and its comparative output.

Martín Oller Alonso, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at the University of Salamanca, presented Mediadelcom’s methodology for studying the capacity to monitor mediascapes in terms of their ability to support deliberative communication. As explained, the proposed methodology offers the possibility of making a diachronic assessment of the risks and opportunities associated with media monitoring, and the nature and breadth of research focused on deliberative communication in a comparative way. It is structured around the concept of ‘capabilities of monitoring mediascapes’ (CMM), which focuses on the skills and resources that agents have at their disposal to analyze media (policy) developments over time and the changes that result from media transformations. Based on a systematic review of available literature and research, the Mediadelcom consortium has explored the CMM in relation to media regulation and self-regulation, sustainability of journalism, media literacy and patterns of media use in the 14 countries that make up the consortium.

Dina Vozab, Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Zagreb, presented Mediadelcom’s comparative approach to the study of the conditions of the media system that are conducive to deliberative communication. This comparative work that will be published as an edited volume by Routledge in 2024, uses the set-theoretic method to identify the

combinations of conditions that create risks – or opportunities – for deliberative communication. The information for developing the conditions was drawn from the case studies carried out in the Mediadecom partner countries, while deliberative communication (the outcome) was measured by an index combining macro, meso and micro levels of societal discussion and deliberation. In outlining some of the key findings, Dina Vozab noted the importance of structural factors of the media system, alongside aspects of agency related to the practices and actions of groups or individuals. For example, strong market development as a structural condition is important, indicating a potential risk for countries with small populations and commensurately modest media markets. The study also shows the importance of legacy media as a core condition for deliberative communication. Those countries that not only have audiences who place more trust in legacy media, but also use legacy media as their main source of news, have higher levels of deliberative communication.

The next session focused on other comparative research projects and studies on media monitoring in Europe.

The session began with a presentation by Elda Brogi, adjunct professor and research coordinator at the Centre for Media Pluralism and Media Freedom at the European University Institute, on the Media Pluralism Monitor (MPM) project. The MPM is a tool for assessing weaknesses in national media systems that pose potential risks to media pluralism. Since 2016, it has been conducted regularly in all EU Member States and other European countries, providing an important source of comparative data. The project is co-financed by the European Union. Elda Brogi presented the development of MPM and discussed the benefits and challenges associated with its implementation.

Michał Głowacki, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies of the University of Warsaw, introduced the audience to the PSM-AP project, which is a cross-national study of public service media in the age of platforms. The PSM-AP project focuses on television, which remains at the heart of PSM, and examines the various dimensions of platformization it experiences. Michal Glowacki presented key findings and recommendations, focusing on the need for policy makers to balance public service obligations with the expectations placed on PSM to compete with platforms, and the need for it to maintain its distinctiveness in terms of content and accountability.

Evangelia Psychogiopoulou, Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science and International Relations of the University of the Peloponnese and Senior Research Fellow at ELIAMEP, presented a comparative study examining European and national high court rulings on social media over the past decade. The study, which was published in 2023 as an edited volume entitled *Social Media, Fundamental Rights and Courts: A European Perspective* (edited by Federica Casarosa and Evangelia Psychogiopoulou), examines the contribution of national and

European judiciaries to the protection of fundamental rights in a social media environment and explores patterns of dialogue and interaction between national courts, the Court of Justice of the EU (CJEU) and the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), and between the CJEU and the ECHR. The book specifically examines the extent and ways, in which national and European judges incorporate fundamental rights reasoning in their social media rulings. The book also investigates the use of European case law in domestic judicial assessment and analyzes the engagement of the CJEU and the ECtHR with each other's case law. The study instills jurisprudential dynamics into the study of social media and regulation, and shows that the fundamental rights dimension and the effects of European constitutionalism are growing in importance in relevant case law.

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