Ib Bondebjerg and Peter Madsen (eds), *Media, Democracy and European Culture*,
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The burgeoning literature on modern European integration has neglected its cultural dimensions, and overlooked questions of media, argue Bondebjerg and Madsen in a collection of essays that seek to redress that neglect. The origins of the book lie in an interdisciplinary conference held at the University of Copenhagen in 2006, organized by the Changing Europe research project. The result is an eclectic but rich collection of studies from media, cultural, political science and policy perspectives, which combines theoretical and empirical investigation, broad surveys and case studies, doctoral researchers and leading scholars. Eighteen authors from 11 European nations are brought together around the book title's themes of media, democracy and European culture.

The book is divided into four parts. The first focuses on the role of media in sustaining and developing democracy. The second part examines how the EU institutions and European themes are reported in national media, alongside consideration of the Europeanization of media and the extent to which a European public sphere is being realized. The cultural dimensions of democracy are examined in the third part, while the final part addresses media policy in a European context. In fact, several essays could have been repositioned and there is more fluidity than these section divisions indicate, with reflections on democracy, politics, culture and identity running throughout. Yet there is also limited dialogue across the contributions. In their introduction the editors make an eloquent case for the book and summarize the individual contributions but they do not attempt a synthesizing survey of its findings, despite their claim to offer 'a comprehensive approach to media, culture and democracy' (p. 17). This would have been challenging, certainly, but also illuminating. Instead, the conclusions that the editors do draw are that we cannot speak of one European public sphere, or a common European culture and identity, yet closer Europeanization does influence national public spheres. We have, then, choice conference papers here but not the debate and dialogue, across and outside panels, that is sometimes the most educative feature of such events.

How should the project of European integration be evaluated from democratic and cultural perspectives? Many contributors are, rightly, cautious about the 'place' from which judgements can be made, as well as their provenance. Yet, the accounts accumulate various indicators of (continuing) crisis for democratic communication at each interacting level: the EU institutions, nation-states, mass media, micro media and publics. More than a third of Europeans were unaware of the existence of the proposed EU Constitution in 2005, the year it was rejected by voters in France and the Netherlands. Against this backdrop one of the most optimistic accounts is offered by Richard Collins. The EU, he argues, demonstrates that a multicultural political community can survive, and thrive, without the 'shared experience of strong cultural community and mutual identity recognition'. Drawing on Weber, Collins distinguishes an 'associative' principle from a 'communalist' one. The communalist coupling of political and cultural identities, which Gellner (1983) found integral to the nation-state, should not be adopted as the yardstick for the supranational EU, Collins argues. The EU has not depended on a nationalistic congruence between polity and culture but has instead been rooted in association and function. The relative importance of cultural affiliations against an instrumental sense of mutuality, of cultural belonging vs calculated interests, harking back to Tönnies' (1988 [1887]) *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesellschaft*, is a recurrent theme in the book. Among the communalist tending contributors, Golding argues that if global sensitivities are to emerge 'it is increasingly obvious that they will emerge from the fostering of values and beliefs which reach beyond the immediate, the calculated and the self-interested'
(p. 133), and involve a sense of mutual and global responsibility.

Collins identifies a shift in EU media policy from communalist concerns with collective identify and cultural protection, informing the Television Without Frontiers Directive, to the more 'associative' concerns of its successor, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive. Here, he identifies a partially realized shift towards the 'associative' goal of protecting freedom of expression, support for which compares favourably with national curtailments, such as that of the UK Labour government. Yet this

alignment of free speech and market freedom takes us to a much older debate in European media policy on socializing the right to freedom of expression into a positive duty to secure media pluralism and cultural diversity, and restrain corporate media dominance. Associating EU policy with a shift to protecting 'freedom' over cultural imposition displaces important issues including the balance of corporate and civic influences on policy-making. The latter are examined by other writers here. Kaitatzi-Whitlock delivers a trenchantly argued critique of neoliberalism in EU media policy-making, which, she argues, has favoured the growth and consolidation of corporate media, resulting in pervasive commodification and commercialization. Kaitatzi-Whitlock, and Kevin, retell the story of failed efforts to tackle media concentration within the EU institutions, and both map important recent developments. 'Pluralism and freedom of information were sacrificed to "Eurochampions" for global games', argues Kaitatzi-Whitlock (p. 33). However, while public service media and public interest considerations mark, for her, the 'previous regime', other authors find grounds for a more optimistic account of the resilience, and continuing influence, of public service media. Moe compares the regulatory treatment of online initiatives by public broadcasters in the UK, Norway and Germany. Corporate competitors have sought to use the apparatus of EU state aid rules and competition law to discipline public service broadcasters, and curtail their expansion online. As Moe highlights, the European Commission and European Court of Justice have indeed adopted restrictive interpretations of public service activities. However, differences are instructive too. The Norwegian government, supporting the public broadcaster NRK before the EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA) in 2003, defended a 'wide and dynamic definition of the public service remit' (p. 318), advancing the case for online services not tied to programmes, or limited to narrow 'market failure' definitions of public service provision. A supranational competition law approach threatens to stymie public broadcasters' efforts to advance their public purposes on new media platforms and services. Moe's call for cultural considerations to be better articulated in policy-making is an ever more salient imperative for academic-led interventions.

The relationship between corporate media and political power is a rather peripheral theme here, but there are some fascinating studies, such as Mancini's critical review of 'Berlusconi common sense'. While not repudiating orthodox accounts of Berlusconi's harnessing of media power, Mancini explains why this needs to be situated in the broader context of political, social and media conditions and changes in Italy, including the underdevelopment of journalistic professionalism, media instrumentalization, shifts towards the trivialization and personalization of politics and the failure of an older, elitecentred political communication system, all of which Berlusconi exploited. Berlusconi focused communications on publics that had been largely excluded from political participation, 'the avid-low-to medium-class watchers who had abstained from political activity, and if we want to be more precise, mostly female' (p. 117).

Such audaciously manufactured political re-engagement is far from the normative model of citizen participation advanced by most authors here. Instead, against variants of public sphere ideals, problems of communication, such as the manner in which European issues are reported in national media, are carefully examined. Studies of the degree of Europeanization of media include analyses of journalism (Golding), TV coverage of the EU (De Vreese), coverage of debates on the EU Constitution (Vetters), reporting of the EU in Denmark (Orsten) and a comparative study of Scandinavian newspapers (Tjernström). Some common trends and explanatory factors are identified across the volume. The privatization of public broadcasting 'has restricted dramatically the space of a unified public sphere'. Commercial pressures on journalists have marginalized 'foreign' news coverage, and reporting on the EU. The prevailing system of news values sustains barriers to 'mediatization' of the EU, focusing on 'negative' stories, and on political strategy conflict motives (De Vreese, Trenz). EU citizens' ignorance is exacerbated by the lack of universally receivable communication channels between an EU quasi-state and its citizens (Kaitatzi-Whitlock). The failure of various pan-European media initiatives, such as Robert Maxwell's *The European* newspaper, are discussed. While increasing, transnational media remain mainly focused either on business elites, or ethnic and diasporic collectivities (Golding). Summarizing, Golding finds at best equivocal answers to four key questions: Is there a (growing) European public? Are there European media oriented to a

European scale? Is there a common discourse for a European public? Are there vehicles for citizen interaction located and rooted in the European dimension of people's experience?

National media overwhelmingly shape communication in the political public sphere and, while Europeanization is advancing, there are trends towards depoliticization. What then is the contribution of media to a Europeanizing cultural public sphere? Here the editors fulfil their promise to reassert the cultural dimensions of democracy with essays that explore the role of culture in the formation and transformation of political as well as personal identities. Gripsrud emphasizes the political importance of culture, using examples from music; Bondebjerg assesses the influence of media fictions on cultural identities; Hauswedell examines European cultural journals; Madsen reviews the role of intellectuals in the creation of cultural institutions; and Hellgren examines the communication strategies adopted by immigrants organizing variously around politics of recognition and redistribution in Sweden and Spain. In various ways all these accounts challenge singular or exclusionary conceptions of culture. Bondebjerg argues against modelling a European public sphere and cultural identity on the re-creation at a higher level of national cultures. Rather than a singular, pan-European culture, he finds evidence of a gradual Europeanization of the national public spheres of Europe. Moreover, the 'national' cinemas of Europe are already 'deeply globalized and Europeanized' (234).

This book brings together a range of writers working within and across different disciplines. Contributors engage with diverse approaches from functionalist systems theory (Nieminen) to new institutionalism, with the problematic of the public sphere serving as a common point of reference, or departure. A shared normative outlook, too, underlies most contributions, comprising greater democratization of European policy, cultural affiliations that privilege civic solidarity over ethnic or nationalist exclusivity, and media that provide information and cultural exchange though a plural mixture of local, national and transnational, public service and regulated commercial services. Against these measures many accounts note achievements but catalogue deficiencies. An elite political project, democratic deficits, media commercialism and communication failures compound shifts from what Hoffman describes as citizens' 'permissive consensus' to growing apathy and distrust. Habermas's (2000) radical vision of a 'global welfare regime' with a strong civil society curbing transnational capitalism and fostering cosmopolitan solidarity is latent at best, although there are important realizations of such vision, for instance in the communication interventions cultivated by immigrant groups in Hellgren's study. A study of Turkey (Gencel Bek) argues that the EU negotiations have had a positive effect on democratization, and encouraged greater media independence and pluralism (although this might well be revised in an account of statist media restrictions today). Another source of optimism is the internet, a 'perfect communicative environment for a deterritorialized public sphere' (p. 60), but one with limitations in aggregating public opinion and influencing political decision-making. Bondebjerg, too, regards forces of digitalization and the spread of the internet as probably boosting the process of formation of transnational public spheres. However, both observations are not developed and some readers will be disappointed by a lack of engagement with the internet.

There is a conference paper feel to several chapters, presenting research and ideas in different stages of development, and this is exacerbated by some proofing errors throughout the book. Yet all the contributions are strong, and the mix of theoretical elaboration, argumentation and empirical research will make this a very valuable collection for readers of this journal. Although some exploratory effort is required, this book delivers a treasure trove of research and analysis on the transnationalization of media, politics and culture in Europe.

## References
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