

Mass media and media policy in Western Europe

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Introduction

The scope, aims and method of the work

The subject of this work is mass media *systems*. It explores the relationship between the economic, technological and political factors that have given them shape. The focus is on macro-structures rather than micro-behaviour. What do Europe's media structures look like? What are their distinctive organisational and regulatory features? How have they developed historically? What are the traditional rationales underpinning Western European media systems? How are these values being challenged? What have been the salient media policy issues past and present? What policy alternatives have existed and exist now? How have policies been made, by whom, and in whose interests? What is the influence of economic lobbies, politicians, the public, etc.? In particular, the book examines the contemporary media policy agenda and highlights the scope for and constraints on public policy making in the rapidly changing field. Throughout, it is concerned with concepts like control, influence and accountability. The core theme is that of pluralism. How pluralistic are media systems? How can public policy contribute to media pluralism?

The study is limited to the press and television sectors. Apart from the historical references to the early days of broadcasting, radio is only mentioned incidentally. This decision is simply determined by the constraint of space. It is justified by the fact that the press and television are the main instruments of the mass media and the main agents of political communication in the modern world. The question of who controls these particular mass media is far more controversial than it is in other fields of the media like cinema, books, records, and even of advertising. Disputes about the ownership of

newspapers and commercial television stations, about political influence within public broadcasting corporations, about the independence of journalists and broadcasters, and so on, are both commonplace and serious enough to merit special attention. In answering the kind of questions listed above, it is a central aim of the book to explain the similarities and the differences between Western Europe's media systems. It is a premise of the work that while economic laws and technological developments point generally towards historically convergent outcomes, nationally specific political and cultural factors will explain much of the divergence (Kleinreuter, 1993, p. 324). Put simply, media systems can be expected to vary significantly across countries because politics and policy have made a difference. Clearly, the definition of 'politics' is broad, encompassing political histories, state traditions, party ideologies, variation in politico-institutional structures and policy orientations.

The systems studied are all highly 'comparable' cases. We shall be looking at the media systems of modern capitalist liberal democracies with many common historical and cultural attributes. Their media systems too have shared many core features. As will be explained, their press systems all evolved largely according to a 'free market' model. The forces of economics and technology tended to produce quite convergent patterns of press development, though policy and culture (and market size) still produced some interesting variation. European broadcasting systems came to share a core attachment to a model of 'public-service'. Given the rather greater role of politics, national broadcasting models varied more than in the case of the press. Nonetheless, national distinctiveness could be measured against a shared core model of 'public-service' broadcasting. Accordingly, the comparative method of the book is essentially a simple one. The salient core features of media systems – the 'free press' and 'public-service broadcasting' – are described and analysed. Their historical development, the major policy issues they raise, and the contemporary challenges they face, will all be addressed in a general way. Special attention will be given to cases of interesting national distinctiveness. These may occur because of departure from the norm. Equally they may arise because certain countries display special mechanisms or structures for fulfilling common normative goals. An attempt will be made to abstract lessons from the empirical evidence, to establish causal relationships, to weigh up the balance of factors making for certain developments and – not least of

all – to point out the main policy issues, policy alternatives and policy problems.

The lay-out and central theme of the book

The book opens with questions concerning press freedom: how it historically came to be achieved, how it was defined as market freedom, how the market's operations affected the political press and the principal sources of news, and some of the economic constraints on the operation of the press (Chapter 1). Moving on, the book explores how much constraint, in the post-war period, has been placed on the free press by state action, law, and self-regulation (Chapter 2). The study proceeds (in Chapter 3) to examine how free markets and self-regulation have produced only limited press pluralism, and to discuss the contribution that public policy has made and might make to promote press pluralism. The book then turns to the broadcasting sector, looking first at the various rationales – technical, economic and political – for Western Europe's 'public-service' broadcasting monopolies. The various ways pluralism was promoted, and also abbreviated, by this traditional model of broadcasting are examined (Chapter 4). The book then moves on to examine how much pluralisation of broadcasting has followed from the abolition of the public monopoly model and from the technical diversification of the broadcasting sector with the spread of cable television and satellite channels (Chapters 5, 6 and 7). The book concludes by examining the role assumed already by the European Community in media policy making and discusses the contemporary nature and future scope of European Union action to promote pluralism and competitive European markets on the threshold of the age of digital multi-channel broadcasting and multi-media communication (Chapter 8).

Throughout, a central aim of the work is to examine the extent to which those in positions to exert media power have been able to circumscribe the freedom of the media. Vulnerability to state interference is clearly the Achilles heel of publicly owned media. Yet, it will be argued, the press is no more free from market-based power holders. Certainly no less important than interference with, or even the downright politicisation of, broadcasting corporations is the question of the concentration of private proprietorial control of influential newspapers, magazines, and broadcasting stations. When media

power becomes concentrated in a few hands pluralism is obviously threatened. Therefore, much of the study examines the extent to which there have been monopolistic or oligopolistic developments in the private commercial sectors of the media. In this regard, it is necessary to address the question of the extent to which, in the cause of pluralism, mass media, especially press and broadcasting, have been – and should still be – kept apart from each other in matters of ownership and control. Recent multi-media diversification strategies of companies have made this question of the ‘separation of media powers’ a very controversial issue. In sum, the work is much concerned with how public policy has been, and might further be, enlisted to safeguard pluralism – at the national and European levels.

The ‘pluralist’ versus ‘dominance’ perspectives on the mass media

Media theory provides two ideal-type polar views of how the power of the mass media might be exercised: the ‘pluralist’ and the ‘dominance’ perspectives. Following McQuail (1987, pp. 85–88), the ‘dominance’ perspective stresses the following features. Media power resides in the control of a dominant elite or ruling class. Ownership and/or control of the media organisations is highly centralised and concentrated in the hands of a relatively small number of very powerful interests. Media production is ‘standardized, routinized, and controlled’ by these interests. The media, thus organised, present a ‘selective’ view of the world, decided ‘from above’. They reinforce the hold of the dominant interests over society. They present a very limited range of largely ‘undifferentiated’ viewpoints. They filter out alternatives and reduce the critical capacity of the public. The audience is a dependent, passive, mass public. The media therefore ‘confirm’ the established social order (McQuail, 1987, pp. 85–86).

By contrast, the ‘pluralist’ perspective stresses the more or less exact opposite. Media power is constrained within a social and institutional framework which is not dominated by any unified elite. Control is open to ‘competing political, social and cultural interests and groups’. Power in the media system is balanced between a significant number of independent sources. The media system is ‘open to change and democratic control’. Media output is ‘creative, free, and original’. It is seen as a cultural good. Media production is free of coercion, censorship and editorial dominance. The media,

therefore, present a range of ‘diverse and competing views’. They respond to public demand rather than *vice versa*. They provide an avenue of expression of minority and alternative viewpoints. The audience is a ‘differentiated’ and independent public. It is ‘fragmented, selective, reactive and active’. The media have a particularly important role as a ‘Fourth Estate’ of liberal pluralism. Rather than confirm the social power of a dominant elite, they criticise, circumscribe and exert an important measure of control over the actions of elites (McQuail, 1987, pp. 86–88; also Negrine, 1994, pp. 15–19).

These models are, of course, pure or ‘ideal’ types. The simple dichotomy between ‘dominance’ and ‘pluralism’ is a useful starting-point, but in reality media systems contain a complex mixture of these features. Media systems of West European liberal democracies may aspire to the ‘pluralist’ model. Yet, elite theorists have pointed to the tendency of all societies to produce a ‘power elite’ or ‘Establishment’ exercising power through bureaucratic regulatory structures and socio-economic networks. Marxists, of course, have always judged capitalist society, and therefore capitalist media systems, to exhibit class domination (for a classic exposition of the role of media in capitalist society, see Miliband, 1969, pp. 197–214). Marxists stress how market forces work within the media system *inevitably* to produce market ‘dominance’: monopolies and oligopolies that concentrate economic and social power – and hence media power – in the hands of a few. However, it is certainly not necessary to be an elite-theorist or a marxist to see how liberal-democratic media systems may contain at least certain elements of ‘dominance’. Non-marxist industrial economists have always been concerned about the kind of public policies that may be required to keep markets competitive (i.e. to counteract market dominance). Similarly, pluralist political scientists accept that between the diverse interests in society perfect competition simply does not exist. Quite evidently some interests predominate: imperfect competition is the rule. ‘Neo-pluralists’, in particular, have emphasised that business interests have a very privileged position within capitalist systems and, accordingly, business interests and values are highly influential within their commercial media (for a classic exposition of this viewpoint, see Lindblom, 1977). All pluralists, though, reject the marxist view of state, society and media, being dominated by an identifiable ‘ruling class’. Also, pluralists allow that scope exists – by means of all manner of institutional, constitutional and legal constraints, and through regulation

and public policy – to countervail traits of ‘dominance’ in politics and markets.

All the same, the media still occupy a vulnerable space of relative and conditional freedom between the market and the state. Ownership and control of the mass media is not necessarily always diffuse, democratically accountable, and responsive to public demands. To a marked extent the press is in the hands of large business interests while the public broadcasters are exposed – to a greater or lesser degree – to government or party pressures. Media production is, very often, not simply free and creative. Nor is media output necessarily seen as primarily a cultural good. The commercial media have been industrialised along capitalistic lines. This implies a degree of standardisation, routinisation and managerial control. It also implies a ‘commodification’ of media outputs. Nor is this media output invariably diverse and pluralistic. The dictates of commercialism may have a homogenising effect. The media may be geared, for instance, towards entertainment at the cost of other values. On the ideological front, powerful proprietors, with economic interests and particular political convictions and social views, will be in a position to use their media outlets to promote and to proselytise. Equally, politicians may try to press their causes through exerting influence on the publicly controlled broadcasters. As for the idea that the media have to be responsive to consumer demands, this is only the case in competitive markets. Wherever choice is limited – or where numerical choice simply means choosing between similar products – consumers will actually have rather little ‘sovereignty’. Bureaucratic regulation may be no better at ensuring public accountability and responsiveness, and may be worse. Moreover, journalists and other production workers may have little control over their own creative or investigative activity. Proprietorial power, editorial disciplines, state secrecy, political interference, may all seriously restrict journalistic freedom to pursue this kind of activity. Against all this, regulatory frameworks and media policies geared towards promoting pluralism and diversity, openness and accountability, investigation and free creativity, are certainly conceivable. It is, of course, a hallmark of liberal democracies that they aspire to pursue the ideal of pluralism. Even imperfect pluralism is held to be far better than its authoritarian or monopolistic alternatives. This book inclines towards certain views, this will be clear. Yet, it aims to allow the reader enough scope, on the basis of evidence from a range of sources, to decide for herself

or himself the extent to which West European media systems are pluralist, and how much they exhibit traits of dominance.

Four historically derived ideal types of media system

The concepts of ‘pluralism’ and ‘dominance’ are the benchmarks by which we can judge media systems, but we also need a workable theoretical framework of analysis. Siebert, Peterson and Schramm produced a useful framework for classifying media systems in their 1956 classic, *Four Theories of the Press*. (By ‘press’ they meant all mass communications although more attention was given to the press because television was still young at the time of writing.) Negrine (1994, p. 25) suggests that ‘there has been no significant advance on the theories of the press as set out by Siebert *et al.*’ McQuail (1987, pp. 111–123) also gives their model considerable attention, suggesting that it ‘remains the major source and point of reference’ for comparative press theory (p. 111). Siebert *et al.* provide a historical exploration of the four philosophical and political ‘rationales’ that have been relevant for Europe’s mass media systems. These are coupled into the ‘authoritarian’ and its modern outgrowth, the ‘Soviet-totalitarian’ rationales; and the ‘libertarian’ and its modified ‘social-responsibility’ rationales. The former two clearly fell at the ‘dominance’ end of the above mentioned continuum. The latter two took the ‘pluralist’ pole as their lodestar. As Negrine goes on to note, this framework could be criticised for being too optimistic about the virtues and achievements of the Western pluralist rationales. (They were writing at the height of the Cold War). It was also over-informed by the US experience of ‘social responsibility’. Consequently, as Negrine notes, it failed to address adequately the European contribution to the panoply of media rationales, namely that of public-service broadcasting. Nevertheless, *Four Theories of the Press* does provide a useful theoretical starting point for our inquiry. What then did they say?

The authoritarian rationale was the dominant feature of the media systems of Europe’s *ancien régime*, before liberal democratisation. It

* It should be noted that Negrine sees the need to re-think media theory to take account of the impact of new developments, notably internationalisation. The theme is developed in this book.

came into being in the 'authoritarian climate' of the late Renaissance, following the invention of printing. It reflected the dominant ideology of absolutism. The press functioned 'from the top down'. Its main goals were to uphold established authority and social order. Truth was 'the property of power'. This was the justification for widespread and extensive licensing and regulation, libel and sedition laws, and censorship. In practice, there was some tolerance of elite political discussion and politico-philosophical debate. Enlightenment thinking did find its way into print. However, open and direct criticism of public authority and officialdom was strictly proscribed. The press certainly did not act as a check on government. It mattered little if media were privately or publicly owned, they remained subservient to the state. But they were not mobilised massively by the state as they were under totalitarianism.

A twentieth-century phenomenon, the totalitarian rationale based itself on powerful ideologies. Totalitarian media structures were 'in and of' the state, directed nominally on behalf of the interests of nation or class. Siebert *et al.* focused on the Soviet variant, suggesting that Nazi media control had been a complex mix of old authoritarianism and modern totalitarianism. A key difference was certainly that the Nazis tolerated private press ownership. All the same, the degree of media control was awesome. Both Nazi and Stalinist systems were far more repressive than the old authoritarianism. They disposed of modern technologies and mass distribution systems that made the media's reach all-pervasive. Nazis and Soviet Communists alike 'instrumentalised' the media for propaganda and social control. Western Europe's experience of both the authoritarian and the totalitarian rationales served to strengthen the commitment of liberal elites to the 'libertarian' rationale.

Liberal ideas (of Locke, Mill, the Enlightenment, etc.) provided the foundation of the 'libertarian' rationale. The latter's displacement of the authoritarian rationale occurred gradually over several centuries, but was mainly achieved by the nineteenth-century progress of liberalism in Western Europe. As just suggested, the experience of twentieth-century collapse into Fascism or Fascist occupation, together with the Cold War ideological confrontation with Communism, served to reinforce the 'libertarian' underpinnings of the free press in post-World War II Western Europe. In this model licensing and (most) peace-time censorship were abolished. State interference was deemed illegitimate save for the protection of state security and

individual freedoms such as privacy. Press infractions like libel and defamation, were now the business of the courts. The main purposes of the media, from the libertarian perspective, were to inform objectively, to entertain and to sell copy. It was also held to be important that the media should serve to discover truth and to act as a check on government. At the core of this rationale was the notion that 'a free market of ideas' was both possible and highly desirable. The libertarian rationale had a key economic component: media activity was considered to be capitalistic, commercial and open to anyone. In essence, press freedom was analogous to a property right. This obviously placed a practical limitation on the 'free market of ideas'. The privately owned press was, in an important sense, the servant of a restricted number of owners.

This leads us, finally, to consider the 'social responsibility' rationale of Siebert *et al.*. A modification of the libertarian model, the doctrine gained ground during the early post-war period because of growing recognition of the pure libertarian model's shortfalls: notably, the limited public access it had granted; the way that industrialisation and commercialism of the free press was constricting other media values; and perhaps above all because of the concentration of media ownership in the hands of a powerful few. The power and monopoly position of the media in terms of providing information to the public, it was now felt, placed a special obligation on media owners and managers to be 'socially responsible'. The arrival of television and the growth of broadcasting as a mass medium too posed problems for the libertarian model: the air-waves were in limited supply. This necessitated some public control even if only to allocate frequencies. The libertarian model's stress on the media's role in establishing truth and checking government was now developed further to emphasise the need for informed public debate. Freedom of the press was no longer deemed to be sufficient; the citizenry required *adequate* information. The media had to reflect social diversity and minority viewpoints, to respond to community opinion and to respect professional ethics. The informational, educative and cultural purposes of the media were strongly emphasised. The marketplace should not be allowed to obstruct these aims. Public regulation and even ownership might be required. In fact, the latter was the case for nearly all of Europe's broadcasting institutions. In the field of the press or privately owned broadcasters, these 'social responsibility' duties might be safeguarded by such means as: specific media laws

and regulatory codes; self-regulation by press councils or, for private broadcasters, by independent regulatory authorities; professional codes of ethics and advertising standards authorities; anti-monopoly legislation and direct market intervention (eg. subsidies to promote press pluralism); and so on (see McQuail, 1987, p. 117). Whatever the mechanism, it was held desirable that the media should serve society.

This book will be very much concerned with the relationship, and tension, between what are in effect the libertarian and social responsibility rationales advanced by Siebert *et al.* However, the term 'free market' is generally preferred to indicate what Siebert *et al.* mean by 'libertarian' which is essentially the *laissez-faire* free market operation of the media. As we shall see, the West European press has functioned largely in a free market context overlain with certain 'social responsibility' features. Moreover, as suggested, we need to extend the understanding of the 'social responsibility' rationale (Siebert *et al.*) to include a 'public service' dimension relevant to West European public-service broadcasting. Their 'social responsibility' theory, elaborated with the US situation very much in mind, did not explore the possibilities of public ownership and strict regulation. Indeed, Siebert *et al.* had a distinctly market-orientated understanding of 'social responsibility'. Broadcasting in the USA remained very close to the libertarian/free market model. In Western Europe, by contrast, broadcasting was conducted as a 'public-service' monopoly (or duopoly) and it was strictly regulated. It was also far closer to politics and the state than intended by the American model, which favoured privately owned media, a limited role for regulation, and 'hands off' government.

Moreover, the West European experience of public-service media stimulated yet another normative theory of the media of considerable relevance to our concerns: the 'democratic-participant' rationale (McQuail, 1987, pp. 121–123). The principal achievement of the public-service model was that it ensured a more diverse range of programming than the commercial US broadcasters, yet it was also open to criticism for being elitist/paternalist, bureaucratic and too close to the state and political elites. There arose, therefore, a radical theory of democratic participation which called for the democratisation of the media, and in particular the granting of far more opportunity for grass-roots and minority expression. This rationale had what we might call a 'left-libertarian' ethos in that it sought freedom from the 'dominance' supplied both by the operations of the free market

(eg. media concentration) and by the bureaucratic and politicised public-service models of media organisation. This 'democratic-participant' rationale informed the development of new ideas for democratising the public-service model and providing scope for a decentralised and publicly accessible range of non-market, non-state communications systems (Keane, 1991 and 1992). However, as we shall see, the shortfalls of the traditional public-service model also stimulated a radical 'Right-libertarian', neo-liberal critique that argued that the public-service principle had had its day and that there should be a return to *laissez-faire* media policy. Libertarians of both the Left and the Right pointed to how features of authoritarian dominance might still be detected in modern liberal-democratic media systems. However, they disagreed profoundly about the kind of reforms that were required. Some modest concessions were made to the 'democratic-participant' critique by the public-service broadcasters themselves from the 1960s onwards. However, as will be seen, the 1980s and 1990s saw the Right-libertarians in the ascendant. Most on the Left therefore now felt compelled to rally to the defence of an increasingly beleaguered traditional public-service model.

Political systems and the media

Liberal-democracies assume manifold forms. It is interesting to examine how these different forms impact on the question of media pluralism. A central hypothesis here is that, all things being equal, in the relations between state and the mass media, the ideal of pluralism in the latter will probably best be served by political systems that exhibit diffused and weak rather than concentrated and strong state power. One very useful distinction, therefore, is that between 'consensual' and 'majoritarian' democracies. In the former, the executive is constrained by various checks and balances and power is shared between political forces and levels of government. The latter allow for the largely unconstrained exercise of majority power by highly centralised governments. In these 'majoritarian' systems, we might expect the publicly owned media to be more vulnerable to capture by the dominant political tendency. By contrast, in consensual – 'power-sharing' – systems, we might reasonably expect influence over the media to be shared (on 'majoritarian' and 'consensus' democracy, see Liphart, 1984).

As we shall see, these distinctions are worthwhile. Media power is shared in a number of Western European systems which, in their political structures, are 'consensual' in various ways and to different degrees. The Netherlands provides the best example of a very consensual, 'power-sharing' media system. But Germany, too, provides an example of a system where power is divided by federalism and the strong role of the country's Constitutional Court. A power-sharing tradition is reflected in a culture of 'negotiation government'. This is manifest in the relations between the *Länder* (i.e. the states in the sense of sub-national units of government) which are mainly responsible for media policy. It is manifest in the relations between the parties as well. Power-sharing is also reflected in the tradition of *Proporz* (influence in proportion to party strength). It is also evident in the corporatism that gives special 'voice' to the 'socially significant groups' and organised interests. Germany and many of Europe's small countries are consensual in this corporatist sense to greater or lesser extents (see below). By contrast, Britain and France are countries that have been characterised by strong and centralised executives that have been comparatively unconstrained in the exercise of their authority. One-party government in Britain and presidentialism in Fifth Republic France, plus the fact it had one of the weakest legislatures among liberal democracies, has conferred on governments in both of these countries tremendous potential for majoritarian rule.* In theory, this has presented more opportunity for media control and greater scope for executive voluntarism in media policy-making. As we shall see, France certainly testified to this possibility. In Britain, other factors worked against it.

In this connection, it is important not to ignore the importance of political traditions. Political convention and state tradition go a long way towards explaining why majoritarianism has not greatly affected the British media system, at least until under Prime Minister Thatcher (Humphreys, 1991). In great contrast to Britain and the United States, France had a long tradition of a 'strong state' (on state traditions see Dyson, 1980). This tradition went back as far as the monarchical system and owed much to Louis XIV and his chief minister Jean Baptiste Colbert (1619–83). Indeed, 'Colbertism' is the term often given to the French tradition of industrial interventionism

* Surprisingly Lipphart did not see France as 'majoritarian'. Here it is argued that France is!

or *dirigisme*. The triumph of the Jacobins in the French revolution and subsequent Napoleonic innovations meant that this statism – or *étatisme* – endured and flourished in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In particular, the Liberation of France after the Second World War saw a massive increase in state *dirigisme*. Finally, the Fifth Republic (1958–) greatly strengthened central political authority and confirmed the state's already overweening bureaucratic power and dominance. As we shall see, this statism (*étatisme*) has been a constant constraint on the media. Indeed, Kühn (1995, p. 10) has noted that the 'key political actor ... whose role must be central to any analysis of the media in France, is the state'. Britain, by contrast, has usually been seen as having had a comparatively 'weak state' tradition. Britain's industrial and social modernisation was conducted in a culture imbued with doctrines of economic liberalism and of distinctly arm's length government. This British 'weak state' tradition was mirrored in the development of a non-political civil service and also of correspondingly strong institutions of civil society, among which towered key public institutions like the BBC and later the IBA. However, British 'liberalism', it should be pointed out, always had a strong economic ingredient which reasserted itself in the shape of 1980s 'neo-liberalism'. Public-service institutions like the BBC and the IBA have been profoundly shaken up in the name of the free market doctrine. Britain's 'weak state' tradition may have contributed to the rise of comparatively independent public institutions; as we shall see, it also served the free market well. Also, the British state does not appear to be so weak when it comes to looking to state's own interests (e.g. security) – hence the glaring paradox of a 'weak state' tradition but a highly centralised, secretive and occasionally very 'strong' state.

Though useful, the strong state/weak state distinction is rather limiting. Katzenstein (1985) has carried it further by adding a category to 'liberal' states like Britain (and the United States) and 'statist' states like France. In this new category were the northern European 'democratic corporatist' ones where organised social interests played a stronger and much more formalised role within the policy-making process than in either of the other two cases. In fact, many writers have pointed to the 'social partnership' – the politics of consensus – that has characterised Scandinavia and Austria, the Benelux countries, Switzerland and post-war (West) Germany. Katzenstein explains how important was the economic vulnerability of small

countries as a factor for their characteristic politics of consensus (Germany was an exception to this 'small state' rule but there social consensus was similarly given a high premium for obvious historical reasons). Indeed, this theme has been picked up by experts on these small countries' media systems and policies. For most of the post-war period, corporatism was the very foundation of these countries' media policies; the 'social partners' were involved in making all important media policy decisions and the political parties, too, shared in this consensual approach. Corporatism, and its politics of compromise and consensus, was a particularly efficient way of managing the problems of preserving cultural autonomy and social harmony in economically vulnerable small states. During the 1980s, however, far-reaching processes of marketisation and internationalisation – to be explored in the latter half of this book – threatened to undermine this model of social partnership and to empower instead increasingly internationalised commercial interests (Trappel, 1991; Meier and Trappel, 1992).

Finally, an interesting concept, with potential relevance to understanding the relations between media and politics, has been developed by Katz and Mair (1995). Focusing on the historical evolution of the West European political party, Katz and Mair have come up with the concept of the 'cartel party'. Their theory holds that in much of post-war (North) Western Europe the mainstream parties have tended in effect to 'collude' with each other in that they have accepted to compete in only a rather limited sense and instead they have sought to share in government (we might add, either in central coalitions or through the 'power-sharing' implicit in federal systems). For these 'cartel parties', interested in controlling state resources, control of the media has been one of the principal attractions of office (access to party subsidies being another). It is interesting to note that Katz and Mair (1995, p. 17) consider this pattern to be most developed in – more or less consensual – 'countries such as Austria, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Norway and Sweden, where a tradition of inter-party cooperation combines with a ... privileging of party in relation to patronage appointments'. Most pertinently for our purposes, Katz and Mair continue: 'it is likely to be least developed in a country such as the United Kingdom', with a 'tradition of adversary politics' and 'where the possibilities for patronage, while growing, also remain relatively limited'. As we shall see in Chapter 4, this concept would appear to have considerable purchase – at least

for explaining the power relations between parties and the publicly owned media.

The new media revolution: back towards the 'libertarian' – free market – model?

In an important sense, developments in the media have always been driven by new technologies. The invention of the movable letterpress by Johannes Gutenberg ushered in a media revolution in the mid-fifteenth century; the application of rotary printing from the latter decades of the nineteenth century onwards industrialised the press; the introduction of computerised systems in the 1970s and 1980s was not without a major impact on the economics of newspapers as well as on the conditions and practices of media workers. In the modern era, first telegraphy and later advanced telecommunications revolutionised news-gathering. The invention of radio in the early twentieth century and the later invention of television constituted another communications revolution. The 1980s has seen another leap: with the convergence of information technology and the mass media, yet another 'communications revolution' has been under way for some time now. Much of the second part of this book is concerned with the attendant policy issues and in particular with the new technologies' impact on traditional broadcasting structures and regulatory policies. It will be argued that technological change has been instrumental in bringing about a 'paradigmatic change' from a model of public-service broadcasting towards a newly marketised model of electronic media.

At first sight this might imply the triumph of the libertarian/free market model, in key respects, over the social responsibility/public service model. Certainly, modern-day neo-liberal advocates of the former model see the latter as an anachronism in the age of multi-channel broadcasting systems that is being brought about by cable and satellite broadcasting. Indeed, visionaries now predict the fairly imminent demise of 'broadcasting' as we know it. In its place, they announce, we will soon see 'electronic publishing'. Broadcasting, they suggest, is becoming analogous to the press sector. The regulators, they argue, should retreat with dignity because the broadcast media will escape from the state in any case. Moreover, new digital techniques (see the Conclusion) will mean mass broadcasting to pas-

sive audiences is replaced by hundreds of 'interactive' channels allowing the consumers (though only subscribers) to call up the information and entertainment services of their choice from a vastly expanded menu. Even advertisers are said to be worried that there will be little place left for traditional commercials. Instead, they will soon have to find new ways of reaching audiences that are no longer held captive for them. From this perspective, the public-service broadcasting model, so much a special feature of Western Europe's media scene, is now written off merely as a temporary expedient for an age of limited hertzian air-space (broadcasting frequencies).

However, critics of this viewpoint point out that it reeks of technical adventurism and economic sophistry as well as, of course, 'social irresponsibility'. Certainly, one weakness of the above argument is that it derives too many conclusions from the diversification of possibilities for broadcasting distribution (including 'interactivity'). What has been missing in the debate, is an understanding that media economics is essentially about funding diverse programmes, sustaining an adequate choice of newspapers and magazines, affording networks of foreign correspondents, access to different news sources and so forth. Without public policies to meet these challenges, the counter-argument goes, large sections of the media industry will be unlikely to withstand the effects of fragmenting markets. Moreover, those that do will be the giant corporations. Media concentration, not media pluralism, will ensue. And all this is not to mention the harmful consequences of allowing market values to swamp the social responsibility/public-service functions of the media. Following this latter line of argument, the state should not abdicate its regulatory responsibilities. Instead, new market and technological developments should be seen as opportunities for policy innovation. Within the marketised paradigm, new rules and regulations, possibly new regulatory institutions, certainly new regulatory practices, are required to tackle the dangers of emerging oligopolistic structures of unaccountable market-based media power. They are needed to ensure that the new media do not have a harmful homogenising impact ('wall to wall' commercialism). They are needed to protect journalistic independence (not served at all well by the 'free' market's preference for 'flexible' employment contracts and a 'casualised' media workforce). They are needed more than ever to protect the cultural function of the media and to promote the cultural values of localities, small countries, and so on. Certainly, a new

note of urgency can be detected in the calls for regulatory initiatives to counter media-concentration; to do more to secure journalists' independence (for instance by underpinning their employment and co-determination rights); to act more strenuously to limit media cross-ownership, and so forth. Given that satellite broadcasting has made for increasingly internationalised markets, some look hopefully to the European Union as an appropriate source of this kind of regulatory inspiration and policy initiative (see Chapter 8). For the advocates of continued social responsibility and public service, the press is no model for broadcasting. Rather, they see a new need to look afresh at the shortfalls of the 'free press' model as it has been practised. Whatever the viewpoint, the problem nowadays is how to ensure that the mass media perform in the best public interest – in the interests of pluralism – under the new technological and international market constraints.

1

Press freedom: the free market and the development of the modern press

The obligatory starting point, in studying the European press, is to mention the invention by Gutenberg in the mid-fifteenth century in the small German city of Mainz, of the movable letter press. Thereupon, printing companies proliferated across Europe. Thus began the 'first age of printing' (McQuail, 1992b, p. 5). At the same time the growth of a class of merchants, with its own special communication needs, led to the establishment of early postal systems. Printing became an industry serving commerce. This age was accompanied by the first stirrings of the demand for press freedom. However, these developments provoked a reactionary response from traditional authorities. Worried by the political consequences of a free flow of information, state and church – the *ancien régime* – developed strict systems for the censorship and licensing of printed matter. To publish political comment was to risk confiscation of printing presses, imprisonment of journalists and so on. Enlightenment thinking gradually undermined authoritarianism, but the freeing of the press had to await the overthrow or passing of the *ancien régime*. The American and French revolutions produced classic statements of press freedom: the 1791 First Amendment of US Constitution and the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens. Whether won by revolution or not, press freedom was very much a product of the decline of pre-democratic elites and the rise to social and political power in their stead of the 'bourgeois' or liberal capitalist middle classes in the 'early industrial age' (McQuail, 1992b, pp. 6–7; Hardt, 1983, pp. 291–308).

The historical origins of freedom of the press: the granting of political freedom

The detailed picture is rather more complicated. Industrial capitalism was certainly crucially important for the growth of the modern press. It provided an abundance of print materials, communications infrastructure, modern technical facilities, and so forth. It also created a huge demand for news and information, primarily for commercial purposes. It contributed to the financial independence of the press, seen by many as no less than the midwife to press freedom. But the purely legal emancipation of the press depended, mainly, on the decline of traditional power structures. In Scandinavia, press freedom was actually granted long before the region industrialised.

Famously, Sweden's parliament adopted a Freedom of Press Act as early as 1766 as part of its first constitution. Similarly, press freedom was granted by Norway's 1814 constitution. Both of these countries had a relatively weak experience of feudalism; the power of the aristocracy was much constrained by the existence of a strong peasant middle class that was a crucial outlier of the egalitarianism that came to distinguish modern Scandinavian society. Holland too – which granted press freedom as early as 1815 – had a fairly weak feudal experience and a long-established mercantile bourgeoisie (Katzenstein, 1985, pp. 158–159). The British case was also exceptional. Not only was Britain the first industrial nation in Europe, it also developed a strong orientation to *laissez-faire*. Britain developed a 'weak state' tradition in which the market was empowered and largely safeguarded from the interference of officialdom. Britain actually dispensed with state licensing of the press as early as 1694, following the Glorious Revolution (1688) which put an end once and for all to absolutism. All the same, Britain's early 'bourgeois' state successfully kept newspaper circulations restricted to a social elite by subjecting the press to stringent taxation. The 'taxes on knowledge' were only repealed in the period 1853 to 1861. Since newspapers were rendered expensive, their readership remained the bourgeoisie. In France, where absolutism and feudalism were more strongly implanted, the first surge towards liberal democratisation – and press freedom – occurred violently, with the French Revolution. Thereupon, press freedom was boldly announced by Article 11 of the 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizens. Briefly, a free press flourished before it was once again repressed successively by the

Directory, the Consulate, Napoleon I and the monarchist Restoration. Nevertheless, the growth of a liberal press, backed by business interests, with a circulation fast out-growing that of the royalists, was a major factor in the collapse of the Bourbon monarchy in 1830. However, the repressive 1835 press laws of its Orleanist successor regime immediately took revenge. The 1848 Revolution introduced another brief period of general press freedom before it too was replaced by the repression of the Napoleonic Second Empire (1851-70). Only with consolidation of the Third Republic, were sweeping bourgeois freedoms such as freedom of assembly and press freedom at last introduced in 1881. It was no coincidence that this was the very year that the Republicans gained their first large parliamentary majority. At the time this law was widely seen as being the most liberal in Europe. 'Crimes of opinion' were now abolished save only for the offence of insulting the President and defamation of the public authorities. Nominally at least, this law specifically protected the press from all *a priori* administrative action and stipulated that all *a posteriori* action against supposed abuses by the press be the subject of due legal process. Although the infamous *lois scélérates*, enacted by the Right in 1894, briefly re-imposed strict penalties on 'press offences', the Third Republic (1875-1940) was a period of marked *laissez-faire*. Therefore, the year 1881, shortly after the adoption of liberal democracy, was when France definitively gained press freedom.

Meanwhile, the 1848 revolutions had seen press freedom introduced in two more northern European small states. Denmark's constitution of 1849 enshrined press freedom. In Switzerland the 1848 revolution saw the culmination of decades of struggle between liberals and conservatives and the extension of press freedom to every canton. Both of these countries had long since seen the erosion of what were anyway comparatively weak feudal traditions. In Denmark the 'Age of the Nobles' had ended in the mid-seventeenth century. Like the Netherlands, Switzerland had a tradition of municipal (and cantonal) freedom. Also very like the Netherlands, both Denmark and Switzerland had a markedly strong mercantile bourgeois class (Katzenstein, 1985, pp. 159-160). Thereafter, the period from about 1850 to the turn of century could be described as the 'high bourgeois' phase of press history (McQuail, 1987, p. 12). In Britain, Scandinavia, Switzerland and the Low Countries – and from 1881 onwards in France – the extension of press freedom reflected the

triumph of bourgeois liberalism. It followed from the rise of commercial and/or industrial middle classes, and their successful challenge to the established political power of traditional, authoritarian, pre-democratic elites. Moreover, as the bourgeoisie grew stronger during the latter half of the century, press laws were liberalised to a significant extent even in countries that remained essentially authoritarian and pre-democratic, where the forces of bourgeois liberalism remained blocked or diverted into national-conservative directions.

In Habsburg Austria the practice of pre-publication censorship was formally abolished by a law of 1862. In Bismarckian Germany, too, the first national press law of 1874 abolished pre-publication censorship and the state-licensing of most newspapers. Post-publication censorship was certainly not dispensed with in either of these cases, yet these important measures of liberalisation, by what remained highly conservative, regimes (especially Germany), were important steps towards press freedom. They reflected the rising socio-economic influence of the industrial and commercial middle classes. In Germany, by now undergoing rapid and intense socio-economic modernisation, the free expression of bourgeois political opinion was already widespread. Germany's tremendous industrialisation also produced Europe's strongest labour movement; the labour movement lent its considerable weight to the demand for a greater extension of democracy and press freedom. Bismarck's infamous Anti-Socialist Law of 1878, outlawing the publication of socialist opinions until lifted ten years later, served only to encourage the growth of Europe's most vigorous socialist press, albeit one that had to remain underground for the period in question. *Vorwärts*, the famous organ of the German SPD (Social Democrats), was founded in 1876.

What precisely was meant by press freedom?

The achievement of a free press, then, was a function of the transition to 'bourgeois' liberal democracy. What, though, exactly was meant by press freedom? In the first instance, of course, it implied abolition of practices like licensing and censorship. More generally, press freedom meant acceptance of the principle of the legitimate freedom of the press to become a Fourth Estate in the political realm. Newspapers became freer to engage in political debate, to publish

social and political comment, and even to criticise state authority without fear of punishment or imprisonment. The 'bourgeois' press reflected new liberal values like independence from the state and antipathy to pre-democratic interests. Newspapers aligned themselves with the new social and economic elites and in particular with the bourgeois political parties that emerged during the nineteenth century to contest politics democratically. Indeed the press played a key role in the development of democratic politics. Negrine (1994, p. 42) notes that by the mid-point of the nineteenth century all the English metropolitan dailies, and four-fifths of the provincial press, reflected a commitment to either the Conservatives or the Liberals. The free press also brought a growing sense of 'social responsibility' and introduced an important measure of political reformism. It created a new journalistic professional class, dedicated increasingly to social criticism and an ethic of objective reporting. In Britain, where press freedom was never explicitly enshrined in statute, Negrine notes that by the mid-nineteenth century the press had emerged from its 'pre-Victorian shackles'.

By stark contrast, in Germany during the period of the Imperial *Obrigkeitsstaat* (the Bismarckian and Wilhelmine 'authoritarian' state), the press remained for the most part politically acquiescent. In Germany, it required defeat in World War I to bring about the full instauration of liberal freedoms. Thereupon, the liberal democratic Weimar Republic (1918–33) duly saw the majority of newspapers develop easily identifiable political allegiances and give free expression to political views. In fact, during the Weimar Republic's short lifespan, there flowered a rich diversity of free political reporting. Therefore, by the early part of the twentieth century the concept of press freedom had widely taken root across Western Europe. Moreover, by now a distinctly socialist press had appeared on the scene. Indeed, the first half of the twentieth century was the heyday of an overtly political press as a sub-section of the press.

The heyday of the political press

Political press freedom meant that the press became intimately involved in the political realm. Newspapers adopted political positions, reported a variety of political views, and developed partisan political identifications and alignments. There also quickly developed

a thriving 'party press'. (For a highly interesting political-science discussion of press/party system 'parallelism', see Seymour-Ure, 1974, pp. 156–201). Alongside the general commercial press, characterised by mass-readership newspapers, there typically grew up a large number of smaller overtly political papers. These might have political paymasters, they might be owned outright by the parties themselves, often they were privately owned but still maintained very close political links. The inter-war period was a golden age for the political press. This was altogether unsurprising. It was a period of mobilisation in a new era of mass politics. Political cleavages were deep. Economic crises, immediately after World War I and again in the 1930s, contributed to the politicisation. Liberal democratic stability was precarious, national and social integration equally so. In this context, the political press was highly ideological.

In many countries, the labour movement remained 'negatively integrated'. Religion too served to 'negatively integrate' whole communities. During this period, for example, Dutch society was 'pillarised' into distinct socio-political segments. About two-thirds of the press became linked to the Calvinist, Catholic, Liberal (secular middle-class) and Labour pillars. Austria was similarly divided, but far more bitterly, into mutually antagonistic 'black' and 'red' sub-cultural 'camps' (*Lager*). The 'black' camp was Catholic, bourgeois and very strongly implanted in rural Austria. The 'red' camp was anti-clerical, working-class and concentrated in urban districts. Each *Lager* had an extensive network of political newspapers. Similarly, in Germany around a third of the press sector was accounted for by 'party papers': the Catholics had over 400, the Social Democrats around 200, and the Communists around fifty. In the early 1930s the number of Nazi papers grew from a handful to over a hundred. In France, too, a multiplicity of newspapers reflected conservative and centrist positions. The Radicals – the backbone of the Third Republic – had a number of papers, so too did the Left. One of these was *Humanité*. This newspaper still has a loyal readership today. Founded in 1904 by Jean Jaurès, it became the renowned organ of the Communist party (PCF) when it broke away from the Socialists in 1920. There were also a number of combatively conservative Catholic papers, one of which *La Croix*, founded in 1883, also still has a large circulation today. The period saw a number of fascistic papers flourish as well, the best-known being *L'Action française* launched by Charles Maurras and Léon Dauder. Generally speaking,

the politicisation of the press was a symptom of the political polarisation that these countries exhibited during this period; the press stoking the fires of the political struggles being waged at the time.

Not everywhere, though, was this kind of 'political press' so vigorous. The British press had by this time already assumed its modern form, dominated by mass-circulation commercial papers, alongside a more limited 'quality' press, with the narrow political press increasingly marginalised. Negrine (1994, pp. 45-47) describes how by the turn of the century explicitly political papers had been largely replaced by the mainstream commercial press. The latter certainly had strong political sympathies, but the press did not display the rich variety of specialised papers with politics as their very *raison d'être*. In the first place, Britain's political development was not marked by the same intensity of doctrinal polarisation of society as was evident across much of continental Europe. Accordingly, the 'political market' for such papers was more limited. Britain's newspaper proprietors, whose principal motive was pursuit of profit, were averse to maintaining newspapers for political reasons alone. They were still partisan, usually towards the Right, but their papers adopted a modern format that interlaced political bias with 'objective' reporting. Secondly, the industrialisation and commercialisation of the press sector left little place for the narrow political press. On the Left, as Curran and Seaton (1991, pp. 48 ff.) tell, the 'radical press' went into terminal decline as early as the latter half of the nineteenth century. The huge rise in publishing costs, they suggest, was the major constraint: 'the committed Left press in the late nineteenth century existed only as undercapitalised, low budget, high-price specialist periodicals and as community papers'. Curran and Seaton (1991, p. 38) observe, poignantly, that 'market forces thus accomplished more than the most repressive measures of the aristocratic state'.

Freedom of the press: market freedom

The principle of the 'free market' was an essential ingredient of the nineteenth-century 'bourgeois' understanding of how a free press should operate in capitalist democracies. That this should have been so is hardly surprising. The 'high bourgeois' phase of press history in the latter half of the nineteenth century was, above all, the result

of the proliferation of new middle-class elites in the public sector, the professions, business, commerce and industry. This was, after all, the age when mass capitalism began to take off across Western Europe: its most powerful doctrine was that of the 'free market'. Since newspaper markets were purely national (or regional and local) the free market creed encountered little obstruction from the protectionism that, in practice, characterised many other economic sectors (though news agencies were a different matter – see later). Above all, the free flow of business information was a vital precondition for capitalistic economic development. Ironically, it was in one of the politically most backward countries – Germany – that the process of capitalist economic modernisation proceeded fastest and most intensely. National unification in 1871 combined with rapid technological progress and socio-economic modernisation, to create a mass market for the German press industry by the beginning of the twentieth century. The main constraint on the take-off of press markets was not political, it was structural.

For much of the nineteenth century, newspaper readership remained confined to an educated elite, albeit a fast expanding one. The liberal 'quality' press largely catered to the bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia. Much of its content reflected the socio-economic and political aspirations and concerns of the business and propertied classes. However, as the century drew onwards, newspaper readership increasingly extended to the working classes as well. As suggested, there began to appear a distinctly working class political press. But there also appeared a mass market for 'popular' commercial newspapers. A major reason for the appearance of the mass press was, of course, the spread of basic literacy. Another crucially important factor was technological progress. The application from the 1870s onwards of rotary printing greatly reduced the costs of newspapers and made their mass production and distribution both feasible and economic. Other factors – like improved transportation (better roads, the arrival of railways), urbanisation, and the creation of nationally unified markets (in Germany or Italy) – contributed to the creation of mass commercial markets in Europe. With mass markets came new sources of income for newspapers. Firstly, advertisers were now attracted by the newspapers' fast growing circulations. Secondly, more and more popular newspapers could be sold on the street directly to a mass public. Suddenly, the press sector was big business and proprietors became principally concerned with prof-

itability. The process of mass commercialisation of the press, taking off towards the end of the last century, both 'commodified' newspapers and increased the scale of publishers' operations.

However, the inter-war years presented the press with a combination of rising costs and financial insecurity. In the first place, newspaper proprietors were faced by rising costs of labour, transport and newsprint (paper). Secondly, the press sector suffered a slump as a result of the First World War. Thirdly, it experienced another trough after the Great Crash of 1929; the 1930s were years of general economic crisis. Many smaller newspapers were compelled to close down. In France, according to Albert (1990, p. 32) between 1914 and 1939 the number of Parisian papers declined from 80 to 31, and provincial papers from 242 to 175, while circulation remained stable in the Paris region and actually grew in the provinces. Even in Britain, where the press sector remained in better economic condition and did not experience such a dramatic hecatomb of titles, Curran and Seaton (1991, p. 63) note that 'no new national daily or Sunday newspaper was successfully established between 1919 and 1939'. Moreover, under largely unregulated and competitive market conditions, press concentration quickly became pronounced. Those concerns with powerful backers were the best placed both to prosper from rapid expansion and to survive periodic adversity. In Weimar Germany (1918-33) the dominant position of the giant right-wing Hugenberg press empire was a very good case in point. Backed by the industrial barons of the Ruhr, the Hugenberg concern was able to acquire the world's first 'multi-media' empire with effective control of hundreds of newspapers, its own advertising agency and news agency, as well as (untypically at that time) interests in the nascent German film industry. The Hugenberg media empire was aligned with the radical nationalist Right and its propaganda contributed much to undermine Weimar democracy. (In 1928 Hugenberg was elected leader of the very Right-wing German National People's Party which allied itself to the National Socialists in the infamous 'Harzburger Front').

Press concentration was by no means simply a German phenomenon: all over Europe the industrialisation of the press brought similar concentration tendencies in its wake. In France, where the economic crisis of World War I killed off a large number of titles, the development of press concentration was given a further stimulus by the deflationary policies of the period 1926 to 1932. As ever, the

smaller newspaper concerns were the main victims. During this period, the Parisian press became dominated by five major titles. The situation in provincial France was less competitive still: this was the era when the famous *grands régionaux* established their provincial fiefdoms (see pp. 83-85). France's most famous press baron of the inter-war period, Jean Prouvost, had originally made his fortune in the textile business. His best known title was *Le Paris Soir*, bought in 1930; by 1939 it had a circulation of one and a half million. The success of this particular paper's 'new journalism' – mass-appeal, modern techniques – had a great impact on the French press (Albert, 1990, p. 165; Kuhn, 1995, p. 21). In Britain, too, the inter-war period has been described as the 'era of the press barons' (Curran and Seaton, 1991, pp. 49-69). This was, after all, the era of Lords Beaverbrook, Rothermere, Camrose and Kemsley (and Northcliffe, too, though he died in 1922). Curran and Seaton (p. 52) illustrate the scale of their press oligopoly by reference to the fact that by 1937 'they owned nearly one in every two national and local daily papers sold in Britain'. Their combined circulation was 13 million. One reason they were so successful was that they too understood the laws of a commercial press. They encouraged modern journalistic methods, downgrading political analysis, upgrading entertainment (a development already quite noticeable by the turn of the century). At the same time, though, they were certainly closely interested in the politics of their time, and highly partisan towards the Right. Very rich individuals, they were very much in charge of their papers, exercising strict, and often idiosyncratic, proprietorial control. The 'free market', it was already clear, was also characterised by oligopolistic press ownership structures.

The free market, the 'end of ideology', and the decline of the party press

Following World War II, market forces confirmed a trend already seen in the British case: the decline of the overtly political press. Party and radical papers were increasingly squeezed by commercialism. Since the mainstream commercial press mostly had a conservative orientation, albeit a moderate one in the post-war period, the Left was affected adversely – and the radical Left very adversely – by this development. The high costs of publishing and distribution were

a major constraint. By the 1960s, the remnants of the 'radical press' in Britain had collapsed with the trade unions selling their share in the hitherto pro-Labour *Daily Herald* and Cadburys withdrawing their support from the *Liberal News Chronicle*, which finished off the publication. Under new direction, the *Daily Herald* went on to become the mass-tabloid *Sun*. The demands of profitability and audience-maximisation left little prospect for papers that continued to prioritise political proselytism over the information and entertainment function (Hollstein, 1983, p. 243). As Curran and Seaton (1991, pp. 107-109) explain, the failure to attract as much advertising as the conservative mainstream press was another factor for the 'death of radical papers' in Britain. Their mainly working class readership was not large enough to compensate for the difficulty that they had in attracting advertising. Some advertisers were prejudiced against Left papers.

In continental Europe, which had directly experienced Fascist dictatorship or occupation, a popular aversion to an overtly political press bore testimony to a widespread ideological fatigue. This was nowhere more so than in Germany where in the post-war period very little was to remain of the once-proud German tradition of a party press. During the post-war occupation, political expression in the press was strictly controlled. Many pre-war political linkages were broken. In the vacuum a new press system emerged. It was heavily influenced by Anglo-American ideas, especially the principle that news and comment be clearly distinguished. It was also fiercely competitive commercially. The only thing that now kept a tiny party press going was the relative wealth of the state-funded German political parties (Humphreys, 1994, esp. p. 91).

Similarly, in France the party press fell into marked decline. This reflected, Williams (1972, pp. 60-62) suggests, 'the reader's distaste for polemical politics'. After a brief post-war interlude when under the Left's brief ascendancy many papers passed into the hands of former Resisters sympathetic to it, there soon followed a dramatic collapse of all but a small handful of party papers. Furthermore, as Williams (p. 62) notes, most of France's great regional papers now desisted from re-engaging in old-style political battles; they became reluctant to offend potential readers by violent polemics'. The decline of the party press was most dramatic of all in Austria where historically it had been stronger than anywhere else in Western Europe, outside Scandinavia. Newspapers owned by or with close

links to the parties actually dominated the Austrian press scene in the immediate post-war years. In 1953 they accounted for almost 50 per cent of the daily press. By 1971 this share had sunk to barely 20 per cent – still a very respectable figure in international comparison. However, by 1990 it had fallen as low as 5 per cent (Wimmer, 1992, pp. 479-490).

A factor for the possible survival of the party press has been the channeling of specific state support to 'papers of opinion' with a view to promoting political pluralism. As will be seen in Chapter 3, this policy explains the post-war survival of a noteworthy party press in Scandinavia and, until the 1980s, in Austria as well. It helps to explain its partial survival in France and Italy where there continues to exist a Communist press (or, strictly speaking, in Italy's case a post-Communist Left-wing press). Yet, the combination of market forces and a post-war popular ennui with ideological politics, accounts by and large for a marginalisation of the political press. This has not meant, of course, that the mainstream press was no longer partisan. As Chapter 3 also describes, in all countries the commercial press has leaned towards the conservative side of the political spectrum in its overall editorial orientation; in some cases, imbalance has been conspicuous. Nonetheless, commercialisation entailed a political secularisation process. Papers pitching for wide readerships had to take care not to alienate their customers.

News agencies and press freedom

The state did not relinquish its hold over national news agencies in most cases until much later than it did in the case of the press. These news agencies were important providers of information to the press. However, for reasons that will now be explored, the state played a key role in their establishment and subsequent progress. A brief survey of the development of Europe's great news agencies reveals a history of distinct vulnerability to state power. In continental Europe, news agencies were instruments for plying the free press with an official version of the news.

Like newspapers, news agencies' development was originally driven by a combination of technological and market imperatives. The last century saw a massive increase in demand for information as the result of industrialism and the expansion of world trade. Their

rapid success was facilitated by the development of cable telegraphy and later radio telegraphy. However, the use of telegraphy required enormous capital investment and at first it was mainly restricted to the financial and commercial trade sectors. As Gross (1982, p. 16) has noted, it was hardly surprising that the founders of the great European news agencies – Charles Havas, Julius Reuters, and Bernhard Wolff – were all individuals with close links spanning the financial and commercial world and the press. The special success of Reuters owed (and has continued to owe) much to the prominence of the City of London (Tunstall and Palmer, 1991, p. 52). Until the post-war period, European news supply was dominated by the French Havas agency, founded in 1835, the British Reuters agency (1851), and the German Wolff's Telegraph Bureau (1849). These three great European news agencies formed an 'agency cartel' or alliance which underpinned the international news flow between 1859–1940 (Tunstall and Palmer, 1991, p. 49). Together with the American Associated Press agency (AP), they divided the world into four zones within which they granted themselves exclusive rights to news gathering and distribution. Reuters had a monopoly in the British empire and parts of the Middle and Far East. Havas had a monopoly in the French empire, southern Europe and Switzerland. WTB had a monopoly in Germany and Austria, the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Russia and the Balkans. AP had a North American monopoly (Schenk, 1985, p. 54).

From the start, the press sector was highly dependent upon these rapidly growing commercial giants, whose clear priority was the supply of financial and commercial information. Even great newspapers like the *Times* of London, which had started up its own embryonic news and information networks, soon submitted to their superior resources. However, World War I played havoc with world trade, the commercial news agencies immediately found themselves reliant on the press as their principal source of custom. At the same time, developments in radio technology expanded dramatically the scope of their news gathering operations beyond the narrow commercial sphere. The quality and extent of their news and information services for the press sector expanded commensurately and the balance of influence in their relationship began to change in the favour of the press.

The Anglo-Saxon news agencies enjoyed a large degree of political independence. Reuters' independence – and press freedom – was

confirmed when, from 1925 onwards, it passed progressively into the direct ownership of the press sector itself, as had been the case right from the start in the United States. The British Press Association held a majority stake in Reuters until 1941 when the Newspaper Proprietors Association became its joint owner. Now Reuters became an independent trust owned and managed by the newspapers of Australia and New Zealand and those of Britain which held over three-quarters of the shares. The founding articles of this trust contained the specific guarantee that the agency should never fall under the influence of an interest group or political party. Reuters remained a largely non-profit-making trust until the decision was taken in the 1980s to transform it into a private company, quoted on the London stock market. Nevertheless, even then, special steps were taken to assure the prized editorial independence of the company (for a detailed and very interesting history of Reuters, see Read, 1992).

By contrast, the continental European news agencies had always been very closely linked to the state. In return, they were granted quasi-monopoly status. This state of affairs reflected France's and Germany's 'strong state' traditions. In both countries the technical apparatus of telegraphy and later of radio was very closely supervised by governments (see Chapter 4). Inevitably, this meant that the news agencies were tied from the outset into an intimate relationship with the state. Another factor was the degree of state aid poured into these news agencies, particularly during the financial crisis that followed World War I. In return for state aid, they acquiesced in being instruments of officialdom. The period immediately after World War I saw the establishment by national governments of official news agencies all over Europe. This was largely prompted by *raison d'état*: a reluctance to remain dependent on foreign news agencies. As Smith (1978, p. 161) has eloquently described the situation: 'the establishment of a news agency, like the acquisition of a parliament, a flag or a currency, became one of the *sine qua non* of modern European nationhood'. Invariably these news agencies were heavily subsidised by their respective states. As Smith goes on to say, 'by this means Government in those countries has been able to develop a major role in providing the input, the basic content of the papers circulating within their boundaries' (p. 161). Therefore, the inter-war period saw the progressive loosening and finally the abolition of the great agencies' news gathering and distributing cartel. They were now faced by the proliferation of 'lesser' national news agencies. More-

over, the great agencies began poaching in each others' markets. By the mid-1930s the cartel was rendered well and truly a thing of the past by an international treaty declaring all markets for news-gathering and distribution to be open. Inevitably, this market-opening diluted the hold of 'official' news and weakened individual governments' traditional ability so effectively to manage the information sources of their domestic press (Schenk, 1985, pp. 55-56).

The Fascist episode saw the media subjected to a wholly new degree of totalitarian information control and misuse. In Germany, even before the Nazi accession to power, during the 1920s, the Right-wing Hugenberg press empire had established its own news agency, the *Telegraphen-Union* (TU). Like the hundreds of Hugenberg newspapers, this news agency had been little more than the mouth-piece of radical nationalist circles. After the National Socialist seizure of power in 1933, both the 'official' WTB and Hugenberg's TU agencies were rationalised into the notorious *Deutscher Nachrichten Büro* (DNB) under the direct tutelage of the Josef Goebbels' propaganda ministry (Gross, 1982, pp. 23-24). Yet this experience provided another stimulus to liberalisation. After the defeat of the Nazis, the *Deutsche-Presse-Agentur* (DPA), West Germany's new post-war agency, was deliberately constituted as a cooperative owned by a wide range of newspapers together with the new public-service broadcasting corporations. From now on, these media clients of the agency, not the state, between them wholly financed the agency's operations. In order further to safeguard pluralism, the maximum share taken by any single publisher in the agency was limited to a meagre 1 per cent (a figure subsequently raised to 1.5 per cent in 1975); the share given to the public-service broadcasters was 15 per cent. By these means, the state's influence was banished once and for all; nor could another Hugenberg gain control (Humphreys, 1994, pp. 60-65).

The French story was more nuanced. During the Occupation the entire press sector, including all information services, had fallen under Nazi information control. Havas was transformed into an advertising agency and Vichy France was equipped by Pierre Laval with a new state-controlled news agency, called the French Information Office which followed the line of the collaborationist regime. Despite this experience, after the war the French were slower than the Germans, who had been heavily influenced by their Anglo-Saxon occupiers, to draw the obvious lesson. The Liberation saw the estab-

lishment, by former Havas journalists with resistance credentials, of the *Agence France Presse* (AFP) as the country's central news agency. The AFP remained a 'provisional' state institution for the next thirteen years. However, in the new post-war climate of opinion, it soon became clear that state control was very detrimental to the agency's international image and to its commercial prospects. Therefore, in 1957, legislation was enacted to free the AFP from government. This reform specified that the agency should 'under no circumstances, pass into the control of any ideological, political or economic group'. The decision secured AFP's place as one of the world's four leading news agencies (Albert, 1990, p. 53). The AFP has since been governed by a board of fifteen members, of whom eight have given a majority representation to the press. In addition, two places have been reserved to representatives of the AFP staff. The state's direct and indirect numerical influence has been limited to three representatives of the public, these being actually ministerial nominees, and two representatives of the state-controlled broadcasting services. The board chose its own director-general. However, a source of continued influence was the contribution the state continued to make to AFP's budget both as a major client of the AFP and as a large-scale provider of subsidies. For some, AFP remained a rather ambiguous case of liberation from the state (Dunnet, 1988, p. 150; Eisendrath, 1982, p. 77).

In Britain, as mentioned, Reuters remained until the 1980s in the hands of the press interests it served. This had long ensured it an enviable measure of political independence. However, during much of this period, the organisation wallowed in relative decline, a state of affairs that reflected Britain's diminishing world role and the post-war expansion of American news services into Europe. In the 1980s, Reuters' fortunes were transformed. In 1984 it reverted to being a private commercial company, quoted on the London stock exchange. In order to protect the agency's famous editorial independence, a veto was given to the previous owners - ie. the British, Australian and New Zealand press interests. They retained a 25 per cent block shareholding with a special voting status giving them an effective veto; individual commercial interests were prevented from acquiring more than 15 per cent of the remaining shares. The Newspaper Publishers Association and the Press Association retained an important stake in the company. This too assured the British press a continued important voice in the company. The company now became much

more commercially orientated again; and with it, exceedingly successful. While remaining one of the world's leading press agencies, the principal part of its activity came to focus squarely once again on the world of commerce and finance. The organisation had come full circle (Schenk, 1985, pp. 39–41; and Read, 1992, p. 1).

The 1980s witnessed an 'information revolution'. This confirmed the trend away from state power over news. This 'revolution' was the product of spectacular advances in technical communications systems arising from the convergence of telecoms with computing and the growth of satellite transmission. Reuters now joined the exclusive club of media giants that were embarked upon an international strategy of multi-media diversification to exploit this global information revolution (see Chapter 6). Just as the company had capitalised upon telegraphy and radio in the past, now it was foremost among companies to join the information revolution. Under its new more commercial direction, during the 1980s Reuters' operations in the world of finance and commerce leapt in magnitude. It became 'the indispensable tool of the foreign exchange or currency market' (Tunstall and Palmer, 1991, p. 46). It was now the world's leading provider to media and business customers of news, real-time price information, computerised trading facilities, and interface equipment for dealing rooms. Beyond the press, it branched out into other media, notably television. In 1992 it took over *Visnews*, the well-known international television news supplier. In 1993 it acquired a stake in ITN, released from ITV ownership by the 1990 Broadcasting Act. Reuters also supplied news to BSkyB, the commercial satellite channel. In 1994, Reuters bought into commercial radio in London as well. The company had become the world's leading electronic supplier of news and information to the press and broadcast media (Peak, 1993, p. 129). Reuters was not alone, merely the most dynamic, in pursuing this multi-media strategy. In 1988 the American agency UPI (which had been struggling throughout the 1980s) was taken over by Infotechnology. As Cayrol (1991, p. 78) has put it, it too transformed itself from a 'classic' supplier of news and information to the media, into a 'polyvalent' agency catering to the worlds of industry, commerce and finance. Similarly, the other major US agency, Associated Press, had a joint venture called 'AP-Dow Jones' serving the world of finance. AP also had branches catering to a wide range of sectors in commerce and industry, and also the fields of medicine, academia, and not least of all, television. Agence

France-Presse, too, diversified, albeit more modestly (despite state aid), into multi-media operations (Cayrol, 1991, pp. 76–78).

In conclusion, modern European news agencies had come a long way from being simple instruments of state control. Modern internationalised news markets were open to an extent unknown in the last century or in the first half of this one. Even though a select number of giant Western agencies still dominated the international information business, they found themselves in competition with many more national and international companies each with their own correspondent networks (eg. companies like ITN, and more recently CNN and its various imitators). As for domestic news, there was an abundance of specialist agencies and manifold other sources of news and information. The news agencies of the post-World War II period scarcely resembled their pre-war characters. They were now dedicated to the supply of objective factual information and were no longer the servants of officialdom that they once were. Their news values came quickly to reflect the more stable and less ideological context of post-war society and politics in Europe. They had rediscovered their original commercial identity, becoming again a key link between media and big business in a liberal capitalist international order.

The economics of the contemporary West European press: some general remarks

In the post-war period, the economics of the press sector has varied considerably across Europe. The industry has been stronger in northern Europe and weaker in southern Europe (see Table 1.1). This mainly reflects consumption patterns. Most northern Europeans are high consumers of newspapers; southern Europeans are low consumers. As a consequence, the northern European markets have supported a greater number of newspapers per head of population; interestingly, this has been especially the case in Scandinavia. At first sight this might be considered to be a surprising finding given the small size of these latter countries' markets in absolute terms (and the smaller scope they have presented for economies of scale). As Chapter 3 will explain, a crucial factor for the existence of so many papers in Scandinavia has been the selective state support directed to smaller papers in order to promote overall press pluralism. Britain and Germany, highly populous countries, have had the largest indus-

tries by far; this was altogether unsurprising. Surprisingly, France and Italy, despite having large populations, have had conspicuously weak press industries.

Table 1.1 Newspaper industry statistics in Western Europe, 1989/90

Country	Daily newspaper circulation (millions)	Daily newspaper circulation per thousand inhabitants	Dailies per million inhabitants
Austria	2.7	350.1	2.2
Belgium	2.1	211.4	2.8
Denmark	3.2	622.6	8.5
Finland	2.8	564.3	13.3
France	8.6	152.1	1.3
Germany	20.3	321.0	5.6 ^a
Greece	0.8	79.8	1.9
Ireland	0.8	227.6	2.3
Italy	6.4	111.3	1.4
Netherlands	4.6	307.8	5.4
Norway	2.5	589.3	18.4
Portugal	0.5	47.5	2.3
Spain	2.9	74.4	3.3
Sweden	4.9	572.0	18.2
Switzerland	2.7	404.6	17.1
UK	22.3	389.6	1.7

Note:

^a This refers to main titles only and does not count 'side-editions'. However, this figure still exaggerates the degree of genuine editorial pluralism. If 'independent editorial units' only were counted then the above figure would be around 1.9. See Chapter 3, pp. 79–80.

Source: Data from A. Sánchez-Tabernero *et al.*, *Media Concentration in Europe*, Dusseldorf: European Institute for the Media, 1993, Media Monograph No. 16, pp. 40–43.

A related factor for the comparative strength of the northern European press industries and the weakness of the southern ones has been the share of advertising expenditure received by the press. The lion's share of media advertising in the northern European countries has tended to be reserved to the press. This has certainly been the case in Scandinavia where the broadcasters were long prohibited from

carrying any advertising whatsoever. It was also the case in the Netherlands and Switzerland where the broadcasters were restricted to very little advertising. As seen above, these cases accounted for all those smaller countries which sustained press industries that, comparatively speaking, were apparently characterised by reasonable or strong diversity in terms of the number of publications per head of population.

Table 1.2 Percentage shares of advertising expenditure by media

Country	Press		Broadcasters	
	1980	1990	1980	1990
Austria	49.5	52.3	42.4	40.0
Belgium	75.1	54.0	8.3	32.9
Denmark	96.2	85.0	0.0	12.1
Finland	82.0	79.1	15.1	18.1
France	60.0	55.9	24.6	31.8
Germany	81.5	77.2	13.7	18.4
Greece	44.5	44.5	55.5	47.4
Ireland	56.3	54.0	37.9	39.0
Italy	59.0	44.0	32.2	50.7
Netherlands	85.8	78.9	8.0	16.7
Norway	97.7	91.2	0.0	4.4
Portugal	26.7	30.5	66.6	49.2
Spain	46.8	54.7	45.1	41.6
Sweden	95.5	95.5	0.0	0.0
Switzerland	85.0	78.9	8.0	8.2
UK	66.0	63.6	29.3	32.4

Note:

The remainder is accounted for by cinema, posters, etc.

Source: Adapted from A. Sánchez-Tabernero *et al.*, *Media Concentration in Europe*, Dusseldorf: European Institute for the Media, 1993, Media Monograph No. 16, p. 129.

As will be seen (in Chapter 4) in most countries the press has had to face some competition from the late 1950s onwards from the broadcasters. Nevertheless, until the 1980s, this competition was kept within generally strict limits – in some cases, as noted, very strict limits indeed. However, as Table 1.2 shows, during the 1980s the press in many countries saw its share of the advertising cake

diminish further as the result of the abolition of public-service broadcasting monopolies (or duopolies) and increased competition from new commercial broadcasters (a development to be explored in Chapters 5, 6 and 7). Belgium and Italy were most affected. Bucking this trend were countries which still had domestic (terrestrial) public broadcasting monopolies or where private broadcasting had only just commenced. Among these, the other Mediterranean countries' public broadcasters already accounted for high shares of advertising expenditure in any case. By 1993 only Austria had yet to abolish its public-service television monopoly (see pp. 187–190). In recent years the mainstream press has had to face up to the challenge of cable and satellite television, direct mail advertising and the proliferation of 'free-sheets'. Franklin and Murphy (1991, p. 10) estimate that there are, across Western Europe, around 4,000 free papers distributing 200 million copies; these are totally dependent upon generating advertising business.

Competition for what is ultimately a finite source of revenue has become very fierce. As we shall, however, this has advantaged those with market power. The strong players have been able to expand across the press sector and diversify their operations into other media. As we shall see in Chapter 3, the free market has been a very 'imperfect' one.

The industrial relations of the European press

Another factor that has had some bearing on the comparative economic health of press sectors across Europe has been the balance of industrial relations. As Hollstein (1983, p. 251) has remarked, 'news-paper unions throughout Europe have been among the best paid, most organised, and most left-inclined in the world'. Historically, print unions long tended to see themselves as being in the aristocracy of the labour movement. The leading French print union, the *Fédération du Livre*, was affiliated to the Communist-dominated trade union confederation, the *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT) (Kuhn, 1995, p. 43). The German print workers had been the first workers to organise themselves in a union; in post-war West Germany, the *IG Druck und Papier* remained in the vanguard of the labour movement. In Britain, too, the print unions were strongly

organised and powerful. The 'closed shop' was commonplace in Europe. Generally, employers were reluctant to confront their strongly organised workforces.

As a result of union power in the sector, the industry long suffered from overmanning; there was widespread aversion to replacing traditional processes of production with those involving new computerised technologies. Kuhn (1995, p. 43) characterises the French case as a 'conspiracy of inefficiency at the expense of the consumer'. Minc (1993, pp. 59–70), too, points out how for years French publishers preferred to cover the costs of inefficiency in the prices they charged for newspapers, rather than confront the unions. This helped to explain France's comparatively low newspaper circulation figures; in turn, this deterred advertisers. It was a key factor for the weakness of the French industry. Similarly, in Britain labour difficulties long afflicted an industry that remained, for all its strengths, especially vulnerable to periodic increases in the price of newsprint and slumps in advertising revenue (these being general problems across Europe). Both failure to rationalise production methods and disrupted production could do untold damage. Across post-war Europe, newspapers succumbed to takeovers in part because they were damaged by poor industrial relations; or because they failed to modernise production. Strikes afflicting the *Times* in the late 1970s and early 1980s were a direct contributory factor for the Thomson group's sale of the paper to Rupert Murdoch in 1981 (see pp. 100–101).

One reason for the comparative strength of the northern European small countries' industries was their relatively good industrial relations. In Scandinavia and the Netherlands corporatist relations between employers and workforces were a factor for a smooth transition to new printing methods; but occasional industrial action in Denmark proved that even here there could be problems. Elsewhere, the problems of modernisation were worse (Hollstein, 1983, p. 251–252). In West Germany, a series of grave industrial conflicts wracked the newspaper sector in 1976 (over wages), in 1978 (over the introduction of new technologies) and in 1984 (over the 35-hour week). The 1978 confrontation brought much of the industry to a halt and was met with widespread lockouts by the employers. In the end, German corporatism prevailed. A settlement was produced that secured some generous compensation for the workers for their cooperation in the introduction of computerised typesetting and photo-composition. The resultant collective agreement provided the model

for similar agreements in Austria, Denmark, Italy and Switzerland (Humphreys, 1994, pp. 111–116).

In Britain and France, both countries with more combative unions, there were far worse conflicts. In France, a strike over the introduction of the rationalisation of production of *Le Parisien Libéré*, a large popular paper serving the Paris region, lasted for twenty-nine months. It was accompanied by demonstrations and 'solidarity strikes' that brought much of the industry to a halt. The action was only curtailed when the government intervened to compensate the workers. Very much a Pyrrhic victory for the employers, the conflict inflicted huge damage on the Amaury group that owned the paper. While the struggle did serve to 'blaze' a trail for other newspapers seeking to rationalise production processes, the modernisation hardly improved the economics of the sector (Kuhn, 1995, p. 43–44; Hollstein, 1983, p. 252). The main reason, as Minc (1993, pp. 62–70) has commented, was that French employers were generally afraid of provoking such destructive conflicts. They preferred instead to pass the costs of modernisation on to the consumer; consequently, in 1991 French newspaper prices remained much higher than those in Britain or Germany. High prices kept circulations low, which deterred the advertisers, and so the vicious circle was maintained. The French employers' situation was not helped by their comparatively weak financial standing. They had to finance the costs of modernisation by borrowing. Further, they simply could not afford to risk sustained conflict with the print unions.

In Britain, decades of union power were reversed, it seemed, almost overnight. The assault on union power was actually led by a relatively small-time regional publisher, Eddie Shah, who first defied the unions and introduced new technologies into his northern English newspaper chain and then followed his success up by launching a new national daily called *Today* (subsequently taken over by Rupert Murdoch). He was promptly followed by better known national newspaper proprietors, Robert Maxwell, Rupert Murdoch and Conrad Black. Most dramatically, when confronted by the unions, Murdoch simply moved his newspapers – literally overnight – away from Fleet Street, hitherto the famed home of the British national press, to a fortified complex in London's docklands, at Wapping. The fact that Murdoch won the resultant conflict could be explained by two factors: he did have the financial resources and staying power to withstand the union counterattack; and he

benefited from new industrial relations legislation introduced by the Thatcher government that outlawed both the 'closed shop' and secondary picketing. Indeed, as Negrine (1994, pp. 77–78) notes, this legislation might have been cast with the print unions in mind. As the result of this victory, British proprietors were able to rapidly modernise production, rationalise their workforces and reap large profits. Lorimer (1994, p. 121) cites the case of Conrad Black who bought the *Daily Telegraph* for £30 million in 1986 and by 1992 was turning a pre-tax profit of £40.5 million. By the 1990s the publishers of the press in Britain had gained a new supremacy over their workforces. Their market freedom was unmatched in Western Europe.

Summary

To conclude, the European press had travelled far in the course of a century and a half. Under the impact of new print technologies and tremendous socio-economic changes, it had been thoroughly industrialised. It had played an important part in the mobilisation of mass politics. Yet commercial pressures and the de-ideologisation of post-World War II politics, brought about a later 'depoliticisation' of the press. The party press became marginalised: this disadvantaged most the European Left. Importantly, the industrialisation and commercialisation of the European press had been achieved through a large measure of *laissez-faire* economics. Exceptions to this rule were rare. A French ordinance of 1944 that attempted to structure press markets – notably by restricting ownership – was remarkably short lived in its effect (as will be seen in Chapter 3). Very quickly, the principle of the economic freedom of the press re-asserted itself. National news agencies – historically closely linked to the state – were deliberately freed from political supervision. In any case, their former quasi-monopolistic control of international news was progressively swept away by market developments. These national news agencies' trajectory from state organs to internationally competitive providers of economic information symbolised, as clearly as anything else in the world of the media, the primacy of markets and the commodification of 'information'. However, the conventional wisdom that press freedom was fully achieved as the forces of liberalism triumphed over those of repression, is too simplistic. As Curran and Seaton (1991) remind us, economic pressures and market forces,

leading to the marginalisation of the radical press and the concentration of the mainstream press into relatively few hands, constrained the diversity of viewpoints presented to the citizenry. We will return to this theme of press concentration and its effects in Chapter 3. In the meantime, we need to examine more closely the quality of the press freedom established by liberal democratisation.

Guide to further reading

On the history of the press

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