

# EUROMO<sup>\*</sup> WORKSHOP ON MEDIA OWNERSHIP TRANSPARENCY



Media and information literacy  
workshop for students aged 16-18

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# INTRODUCTION



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# ACTIVITY AND GOALS OF THE WORKSHOP

**Activity:** Media investigative workshop for students.

**Goals:** This workshop has two aims:

1. As a general media awareness raising activity, this workshop aims to develop/ strengthen critical thinking and understanding of the importance of **media ownership transparency** of media ownership in a democratic society.
2. As a focused practical activity to engage students, this workshop aims to strengthen critical thinking on (a) the information received through various media outlets, and awareness of (b) political/ideological, economic, social powers (as expressed in media ownership).

### Communication rights related approach:

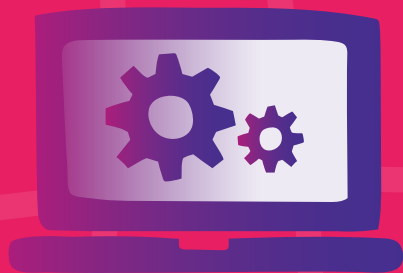
Freedom of expression and access to information through any media is a universal human right and essential if people are to exercise their rights and protect the rights of others. In this task, **media ownership transparency** is viewed as a people's right to know what owners are behind the media organisations and whose interests are being served.

### General skills and capacities to be developed in proposed activities:

- To search sources in different languages.
- To evaluate content from different countries and journalistic cultures.
- To think critically and make informed decisions.
- To share points of view and accept different points of view.
- To take on different roles in discussions.

**Tools:** Computers/smartphones with an Internet connection. Media design/editing programmes/apps.

**Preparation task for the teacher:** Look for materials and dynamics to develop concepts on media power, media ownership, democratically functioning media, media transparency. Finding a clear focus of analysis, and asking focused questions is important in the process of learning about media power and performance. See some inspirational videos through the link below: [Private vs. State-Controlled Media – Video & Lesson Transcript | Study.com](#)



# STRUCTURE OF THE WORKSHOP

The workshop is to be conducted in **two sessions in class**. Optionally, some of the exercises can be conducted outside class, as assignments.

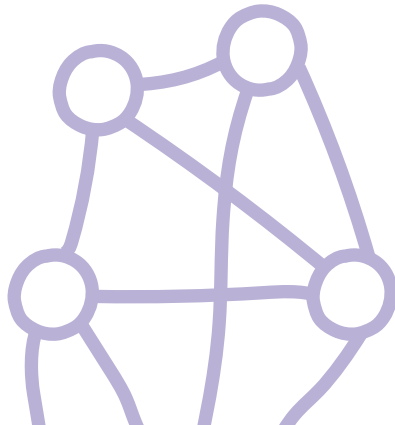
The workshop consists of the following **five learning modules**, each 30–45 minutes long:

- Module (1) **Close reading** of journalistic content.
- Module (2) **Central concepts** related to the analysis of media ownership transparency patterns.
- Module (3) **Media ownership** analysis.
- Module (4) **Group discussion** about fundamental statements.
- Module (5) **Audio-visual presentation** about the learnings.

The first three learning modules (Module 1–3) are the core modules of the workshop, while modules 4 and 5 are refinement modules. Structuring the workshop into these five learning models allows teachers to adapt the workshop plan depending on their time, as well as the course's and students' competences and learning objectives, for instance illustrated below.

## Workshop: option A

- **First session** (in class):
  - » **Module (1) Close reading** of journalistic content.
  - » **Module (2) Central concepts** related to the analysis of media ownership patterns.
- **Second session** (in class):
  - » **Module (3) Media ownership analysis.**
  - » **Module (4) Group discussion** about fundamental statements.
  - » **OR Module (5) Audio-visual presentation** about the learnings.

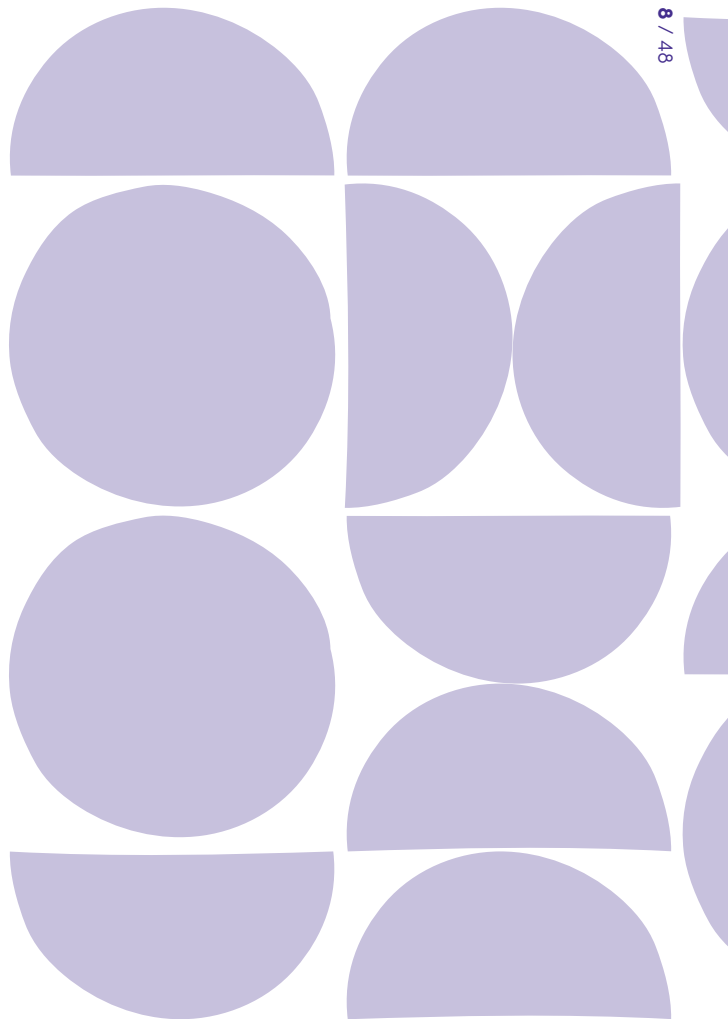


## Workshop: option B

- **First session** (in class):
  - » **Module (1) Close reading** of journalistic content.
  - » **Module (2) Central concepts** related to the analysis of media ownership patterns.
  - » **Module (3) Media ownership analysis** conducted outside class.
- **Second session** (in class):
  - » **Module (3) Media ownership analysis:** presentation of results of each working group.
  - » **Module (4) Group discussion** about fundamental statements.
  - » **OR Module (5) Audio-visual presentation** about the learnings.

## Workshop: option C

- **First session** (in class):
  - » **Module (1) Close reading** of journalistic content.
  - » **Module (2) Central concepts** related to the analysis of media ownership patterns.
  - » **Module (3) Media ownership analysis** conducted outside class.
- **Second session** (in class):
  - » **Module (3) Media ownership analysis:** presentation of results of each working group.
  - » **Module (4) Group discussion** about fundamental statements
  - » **Module (5) Audio-visual presentation** about the learnings outside class.



# WORKSHOP PORTFOLIO: CONTENTS AND HOW TO USE IT



This workshop portfolio provides teachers with the information, module structure and materials to plan and conduct the workshop, structured as two sessions plus possible additional assignments. As indicated, the core modules (1, 2 and 3) should always be part of the workshop, while modules 4 and 5 propose how to conclude the workshop. Therefore, the teachers can find here the learning goals, structure, materials and information needed to plan and conduct each learning module.

## TABLE WITH THE OVERVIEW OF THE FIVE MODULES

<b>Categories of issues studied</b>	News stories, general interest stories, media outlets, media groups, public service media, global platforms
<b>Justification of topic significance</b>	<p><b>Media ownership transparency</b> is of interest to be explored further by all media users (citizens, students, researchers, policy makers) assuming that ownership can have an impact on the contents and journalistic practices. Ownership of news media can take many forms: state ownership, family ownership, party ownership, trust ownership, public or corporate ownership. The main concern with media ownership in journalism is market concentration and monopolisation, and the consequences for media diversity, public opinion formation, democracy and journalistic autonomy. Information is always influenced by its author (journalist or media producer).</p> <p>Too often people don't pay attention or care about who controls the media. However, with the growth of information flows and the proliferation of media channels, it is extremely important to know who controls the information. Everybody must be concerned with crucial questions such as: Who's behind the information?; Who owns and controls the media?</p>

<b>Number of participants</b>	<b>15-20, divided into groups of 3-4 students</b>
<b>Before you start...</b>	<p>Teacher is asked to verify the following aspects within the groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender equality</li> <li>• Diversity of profiles (socioeconomic and academic backgrounds)</li> <li>• Inclusion of minority groups</li> </ul>
<b>Age groups target</b>	16-18
<b>You will need...</b>	Computer, Internet Access, Canvas, Projector
<b>Main Goals</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop and strengthen critical thinking and understanding the importance of ensuring the accuracy and quality of information.</li> <li>• To raise awareness of the political/ideological, economic, social powers expressed in media contents.</li> <li>• To raise awareness of the political/ideological, economic, social powers and their impact on media ownership and media transparency in a democratic society.</li> <li>• To be aware of preconceptions/misconceptions and stereotypes and put them in question.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand one's own media culture and media transparency model, and compare it with media cultures and media transparency models from other geographical contexts.</li> <li>• To facilitate the use of certain tools (such as a database) which help to consolidate what has been learned and help students to face future challenges.</li> </ul>
<p><b>MODULE 1</b></p> <p><b>Presentation-Start Quiz- Read the news- Compare the news</b></p>	<p><b>MODULE PRESENTATION</b></p> <p><b>Duration: 30-45'</b></p> <p>The teacher shows the students different news stories on climate change that are treated differently by media outlets that belong to the same or different media groups. Each student group must identify what information each piece of news provides, the differences that exist and reflect on the media groups' mission statements to which the media outlets that published the news stories under study belong.</p> <p><b>INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY – START QUIZ</b></p> <p>The teacher will prepare a 10-question interactive quiz asking the students individually about their learning expectations after they run the module.</p>

## TEAM ACTIVITIES

### TASK 1: READ THE NEWS STORIES

Students receive two news stories that they must analyse in order to answer the following questions:

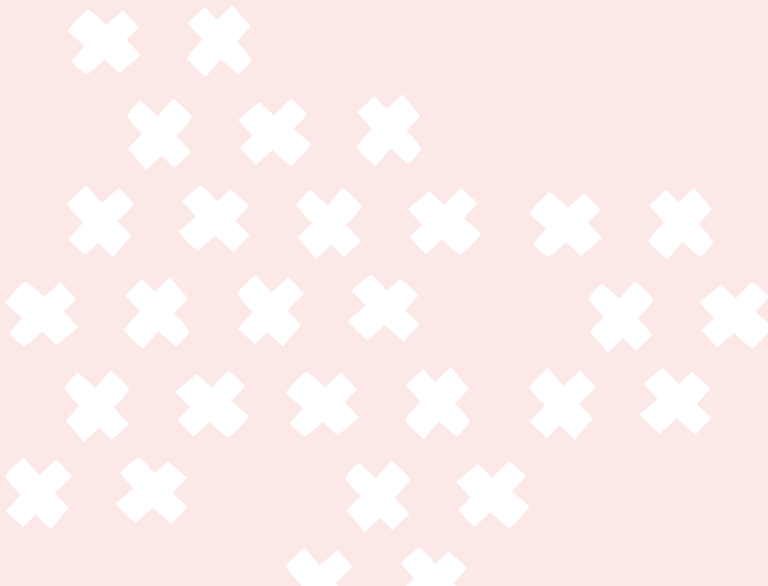
- Whether and if so, what information is provided by various (opposing) sides in each news article?
- Is more space/time devoted to one side, or have all sources had equal time/space to express their stance? Is the medium biased, or balanced?
- What questions have been asked by the journalists and why?
- Who are the sources/people interviewed or quoted?
- What is the language used? Are the words neutral, or expressive? – What headlines, pictures, or graphics are used and how?
- Are there any mistakes (factual, grammatical) made? Are they related to the media type?
- What is the context of the media? What does it react to? Is it relevant?
- Does it use sources that are not relevant?
- What information does not appear?

**TASK 2: IDENTIFY SOURCES FOR INFORMATION VERIFICATION**

Identify the sources used to answer these questions and count how many sources have been used to answer each question. Create an evaluation scale that allows students to assess whether the medium answers very satisfactorily/average/poorly each of the proposed questions.

**TASK 3: COMPARE THE NEWS STORIES**

Compare the evaluation scales of each of the news stories under study in order to detect which of the two media makes a broader, more inclusive and more adequate coverage of the topic under study.



## MODULE 2

### Central Concepts

#### MODULE DESCRIPTION

**Duration: 30–45'**

The teacher introduces one concept or several selected concepts related to the analysis of media ownership transparency patterns. By researching these, differences in media ownership are explored:

- From simple to complex structures, from individual to conglomerate patterns.
- Two models: the public service media model and the private media model.
- Media ownership and transparency in a global context.
- The role played by economic and financial actors on media ownership and transparency.
- The impact of politics on media ownership and transparency.

#### TASK: RESEARCH THE CONCEPTS

Research the four topics (media power, media ownership, democratically functioning media, media transparency) on the Internet. You can use any available source such as articles, wikipedia etc. Compare the information you found with the core definitions of the concepts that were presented in the workshop.

## MODULE 3

### Media Group Search - Media ownership analysis

## MODULE DESCRIPTION

### Duration: 30-45'

This task is designed to help students identify the media groups behind well-known and less well-known news media brands (if the idea is to make use of the EurOMo database, please note that we only included the relevant news media brands in our analysis) and examine how many media groups their country has, or in other words, how concentrated the news and information media market is in their country. In addition, it is also important for students to look outside their country's borders and look, for example, at the media situation in a neighbouring country. Elements that play a role in a concentrated media market can be considered here: e.g. number of inhabitants, size of the language area/ market, presence of large international media corporations, namely from a neighbouring country, sharing the same language.



### TASK 1: MEDIA GROUP SEARCH IN YOUR COUNTRY

Find out which media group the two media outlets in which the news stories have been published belong to.

Questions are:

- What are the central news and information media in your country aimed at different groups of people (children, young people, seniors, minors, professionals, ...)?
- Can you identify the public or state-owned media in your country?
- What are the privately-owned media in your country?
- Are there community media operating in your country?
- Are there media that are (in)directly owned by political parties in your country?
- Do you know who owns the news and information media in your country? Where do you need to look to find such information about media ownership?
- Who are the owners in your country? Do they also own media in other, neighbouring countries?
- What do they think of the role of news and information media? Why do they own news and information media?
- What other businesses do media owners have? How is that relevant? Is there any conflict of interest in that cross-ownership?

Students should pay attention to the following aspects:

- Evaluate the degree of difficulty in obtaining this information.
- Identify to what extent it is necessary to use websites outside the media to obtain this information.
- Check the time needed to obtain this information.
- Analyse how many other businesses are involved in the media ownership chains.

## **TASK 2: COMPARE WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES**

Look at the situation of media groups in a country of your choice and compare with your own.

Questions:

- How can you explain differences or similarities?
- Make use of the EurOMo indicators we have provided for this task.
- Which media are public or state media?
- Which are commercial media?
- Which media depend directly on political parties?
- Which media are so-called community media?
- What are the pros and cons of these different media in terms of their news and information content provision?
- Are media more or less concentrated in your country than in the neighbouring countries?

## MODULE 4

**Final debate  
- debunking  
preconceptions/  
stereotypes  
by following  
explanations by  
the teacher, and  
playing a game of  
statements**

## MODULE DESCRIPTION

**Duration: 30–45'**

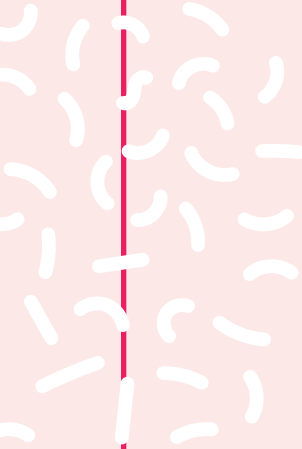
This task is designed to help students discover their preconceptions/misconceptions/stereotypes about media ownership (political, commercial, community, etc.), availability of data on media ownership (transparency of ownership), forms of media ownership influence.

**PRECONCEPTIONS/MISCONCEPTIONS/STEREOTYPES:** Preconceived notions are general knowledge that we all have before we get to know certain ideas more deeply. It is rather an imaginary idea, i.e. an opinion that is formed in advance of discovered knowledge through deeper study or practical experience. Stereotypes/preconceptions are formed on the basis of a whole set of ideas about how the world works. These ideas might be formed from discussions with friends and parents, could have been seen in the media or arise from their own thinking habits. Preconceptions are often contrasted with misconceptions. Students need to see evidence to change their misconceptions. Changing ideas requires time, but also critical thinking and idea sharing (comparing, contrasting). Stereotypes are mostly unfair beliefs that are formed about groups. Stereotypes are deeply embedded in our societies, and different contexts/cultures might expose different stereotypes in relation to 'media owners'.

**TASK:** Students need to learn not only **what** they will know from this Task (they will review the main concepts and challenge them with their ideas), but also **why** they need to know it. Two types of activities are proposed here – (a) Explanations and Questions, and (b) the Game of Statements.

**(a) An important explanation linked with ‘media ownership’ provided by the teacher is supplemented with a few questions to students:**

- **Explanation:** Media owners can influence media content and their motives may be political/ideological, personal/social, or commercial.
  - » **Q:** Why would different types of owners (politicians, entrepreneurs, social/community groups) be interested in owning media?
- **Explanation:** Media owners are those who might “dictate” media content, because they set up the conditions under which a newsroom operates. By controlling the means of production, thus the allocation of resources, media owners influence media output. For instance, if resources are scarce, investigative or fact-checking media efforts are compromised. If journalists are denied means of transportation, they cannot leave the newsroom to report and interview sources, mostly leaning on secondary sources. Hence, media owners exercise different types of (financial, ideological) power.
  - » **Q:** Which media owners do you know – what other types of businesses (except for media) do they run?

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- **Explanation:** By answering the question of who owns the media (who's behind the information?), we also answer the question of who holds the reins of power. Hence, transparency of media ownership data is an important requirement to democratically functioning and accountable media. Publicly accessible data about media owners enable citizens to freely decide whether conflict of interest is involved in specific cases. Transparent data further prevents the holders of political and economic power from abusing the media for the promotion of their own interests.
    - » **Q:** Who owns the leading news media outlets in a country of your selection? Where would it be appropriate to look for this type of information? What strategy should be taken?
  - **Explanation:** Media transparency has to do with the transparency of funding. Advertising is still an important source of revenues for media: if media depend on important advertisers, these can put pressure on the journalistic work.
    - » **Q:** What about public funding? How do states support media activity – with what forms? Is there room for political pressure in public service media?

**(b) Students are invited to take part in a 'Game of Statements' in which they have to take a position and argue it:**

- Student groups can choose one of the proposed statements and prepare in detail their stance. Each statement is accompanied by some extra explanation from the teacher (see in the explanatory section above):
  1. **Concentration of media ownership threatens the 'marketplace of ideas'.** (pros and cons)
  2. **It is okay for journalists to write articles for different media.** (pros and cons)
  3. **Media should be transparent with regard to funding.** (pros and cons)
  4. **Media must be transparent to protect the right of expression.** (pros and cons)
  5. **The public should be able to decide on the content of public service media.** (pros and cons)
  6. **It is okay for States to support (aid/subsidise) the media.** (pros and cons)

## MODULE 5

### Results presentation: media product design and quiz activity

#### MODULE DESCRIPTION

**Duration:** Since this Module is proposed as an activity outside of regular class, only approximate estimates are given on the time required to produce the media product. Product design may take 20–30 hours. For in-class presentation, each group is assigned 15’.

This Task is designed as an elective activity which students are invited to engage in during their free time. Student groups should present the results of their learning (using Canvas, PowerPoint, other types of media editing programmes, etc.) as a media product.

**MEDIA PRODUCT:** As a media product, a number of design options are proposed to students, namely an essay, ppt presentation, poster, photo-novella (a series of photographs), visual graph (a media tree), podcast, digital story, diary, cartoon, etc. Media product requirements (no of words for an essay, no of ppt slides, no of min for podcast, etc.) must be determined by the teacher on the basis of students’ age and their knowledge of media products’ creation.

	<p><b>DESIGN PROCESS:</b> By engaging in media product design, students will have to choose a role (idea generator, media designer, scenario planner, data collector, etc.). Also, as a first step in scenario planning and design process, student groups are asked to prepare a list of media products of the selected type (essay, poster, podcast, etc.) that they find inspiring.</p> <p><b>FINAL STEPS - QUIZ ACTIVITY:</b> The teacher will prepare a 10-question interactive quiz asking the students on how their learning expectations on the module were fulfilled (what they think they have learned, what they have enjoyed and why, what sections of the learning process were difficult and why).</p>
<b>Competences</b>	<p><b>Types of competences acquired:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital Competence</li> <li>• Communication Competencies</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary Knowledge</li> <li>• Intercultural Awareness (European/global perspectives on media ownership and regulation)</li> <li>• Media Design</li> </ul>

<b>Skills Evaluation</b>	<p><b>A set of skills to be evaluated by the teacher:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessing and gathering information from different sources</li> <li>• Evaluating sources of information and the responsibility of media promoting ideas and forming opinions on topics of general interest</li> <li>• Acknowledging political, economic, and social powers in society and their impact on the media</li> <li>• Evaluating how these powers are defined and identified within the journalistic narratives</li> <li>• Doing team building activities</li> <li>• Accepting different points of view</li> </ul>
<b>References</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lateral reading</b> <a href="https://cor.stanford.edu/curriculum/collections/teaching-lateral-reading/">https://cor.stanford.edu/curriculum/collections/teaching-lateral-reading/</a></li> <li>• <b>The SIFT Method:</b>  <a href="https://hapgood.us/2019/06/19/sift-the-four-moves/">https://hapgood.us/2019/06/19/sift-the-four-moves/</a>  <a href="https://www.notion.so/checkpleasecc/Check-Please-Starter-Course-ae34d043575e42828dc2964437ea4eed">https://www.notion.so/checkpleasecc/Check-Please-Starter-Course-ae34d043575e42828dc2964437ea4eed</a></li> <li>• <b>The CRAAP test:</b>  <a href="https://researchguides.ben.edu/source-evaluation">https://researchguides.ben.edu/source-evaluation</a></li> </ul>

## Variations

### **These modules (1-5) can be developed using the following variations:**

Students are asked to analyse cases (news articles, media ownership structures) from their own country and compare the results with media in other countries. This makes it easier for them to see the similarities and differences between their own country and other countries.



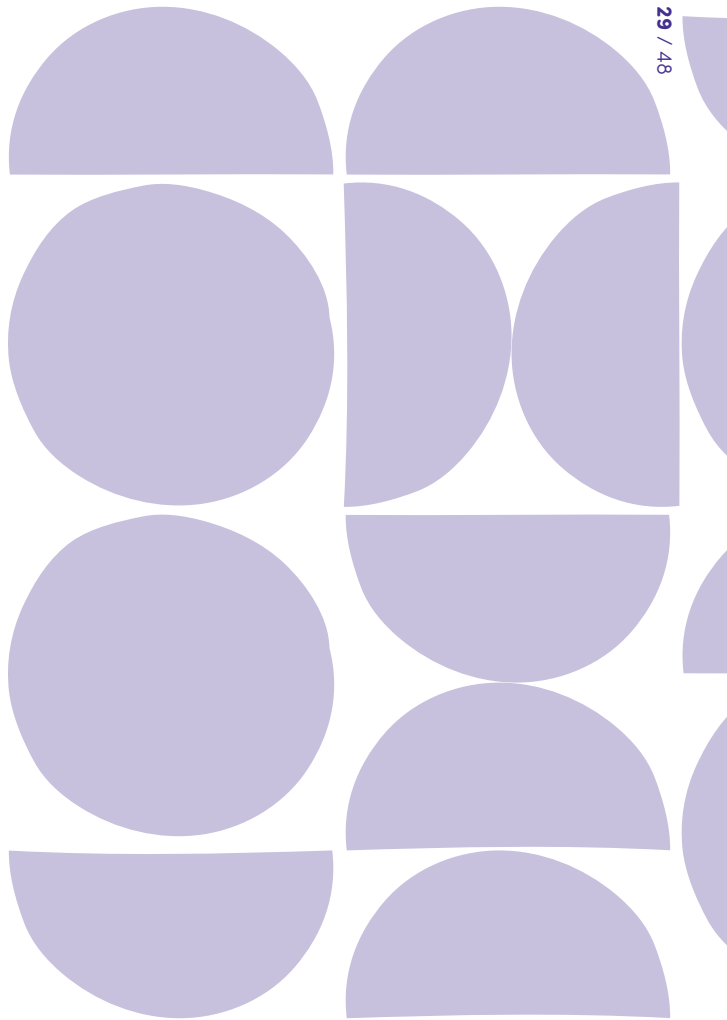
# ACTIVITIES OF THE FIVE MODULES:

1. Analyzing and getting deeper into news
2. Learning about theory and concepts
3. Clarifying the significance of the idea of 'Transparency'
4. Reflecting on what was learned and how that affects the students
5. Transferring learning experience into media designs

# MODULE 1: CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEWS STORIES



The purpose of this module is to identify how two news stories referring to a topic of general interest, such as climate change, can be treated differently by two media outlets that belong to different media groups. For example, the teacher can choose an article published in a newspaper aimed at a more educated and well-to-do audience and another article of a popular newspaper highlighting more the concerns and views of the general public. Students must identify these differences and detect the type of information they receive in each of the two news stories under study.



# MODULE 2: CENTRAL CONCEPTS RELATED TO THE ANALYSIS OF MEDIA OWNERSHIP PATTERNS.



Concept 1: Media Power – p. 31

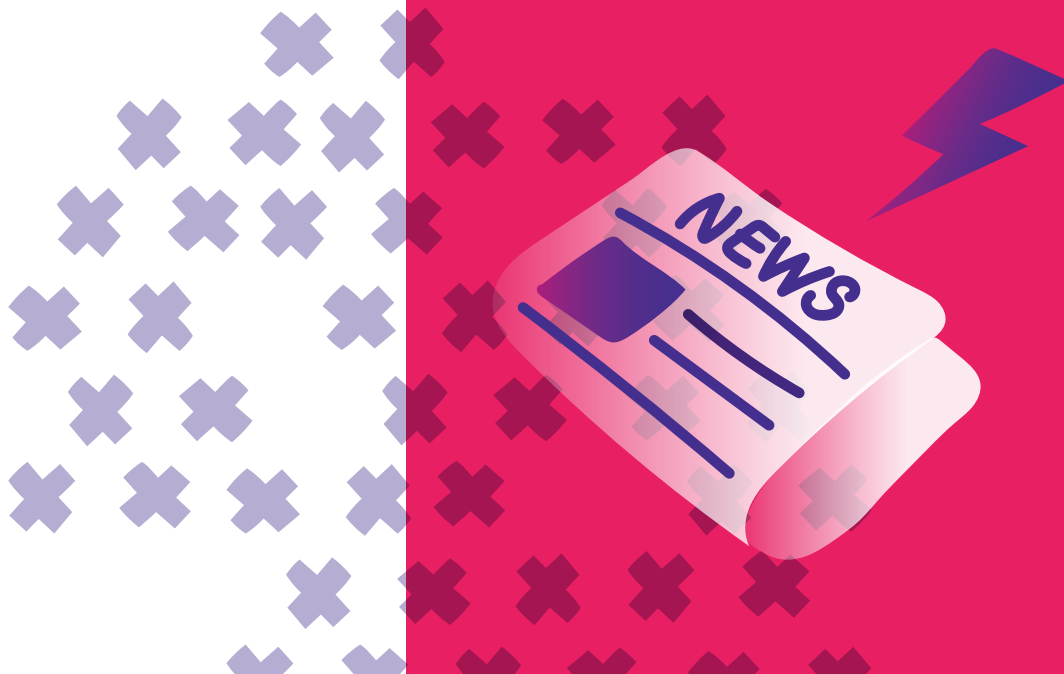
Concept 2: Media Ownership – p. 33

Concept 3: Democratically Functioning Media – p. 36

Concept 4: Media Transparency – p.37

Students are introduced to concepts such as media power, media ownership, democratically functioning media, media transparency, types of media (e.g., public media, state media, commercial media, community media, media owned by political parties). Short definitions will be provided to the teachers that can be used by way of introduction.

# CONCEPT 1: MEDIA POWER

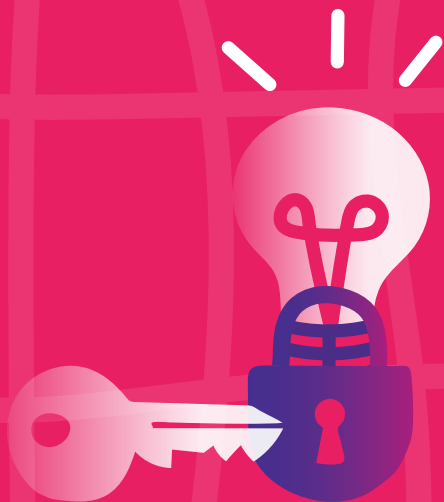


Within modern democracies media organisations play a key role in informing the public about current affairs and keeping political actors accountable for their actions and decisions. As “extensions of man” (McLuhan, 1964), contemporary media outlets also provide citizens with an easy means of communication, breaking down space-time limitations. Overall, media power refers to a network of relationships between socio-political actors, institutions and entrepreneurs affecting the allocation of the symbolic resources which dictate our perceptions of the world around us as well as our ability to intervene in it (Freedman, 2015). However, the benefits of media power are sometimes overturned or undermined by phenomena such as information manipulation, exerted by media ownership. In this regard, even though we are overloaded on a daily basis by vast amounts of information, much of this information might as well misguide us. These are threats afflicting quality information and media pluralism that

originate, among others, from “the increasing concentration of economic resources into just a few gigantic online platforms/media and the spreading of the disinformation that is favoured by the available technological instruments” (Parcu, 2020).

### References

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## CONCEPT 2: MEDIA OWNERSHIP

Media ownership refers to the various forms of structural governance based on which natural persons or legal entities exert influence on the public through the operation of a media organisation. The development and implications of media ownership on democratic society depends on the particularities and specificities of the media system in which ownership evolves. When it comes to news media, ownership can take many forms: state ownership, family ownership, party ownership, trust ownership, public, ownership, corporate ownership (Sjøvaag & Ohlsson, 2019). Behind the act of owning media outlets may lie financial and political benefits. Among the several concerns being related to the media ownership regimes concerns the potential monopolization or concentration of power within a media market, features that affect considerably public opinion formation and democracy. The presence of multiple owners in the overall media landscape is an asset within democratic societies amounting to conditions of pluralistic ownership.

All forms of media ownership are accompanied by advantages and disadvantages. A major typology of media ownership structures can be summarised as follows (Pickard, 2015): Horizontal: when a legal person owns distinct but similar media products; Vertical: when a legal person owns different stages of production and distribution of media; Diagonal: when a legal person is related to the cross-ownership of diverse media businesses

Ownership structures might also include the following categories:

- Public service media, which can be divided into two sub-categories: a) public service broadcasting and b) state-owned media.
- Private and corporate media: In contrast to public media, they are independently owned, for-profit, and primarily supported by sales and advertising, commercial income is what keeps private media in operation.
- Community media: These are typically modest platforms that are participatory, community-owned, and non-profit.

- Party and politician-owned media: This category includes a variety of mass media outlets produced by political parties, from party pamphlets to outlets controlled by wealthy politico-businesspeople.

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# CONCEPT 3: DEMOCRATI- CALLY FUNCTIONING MEDIA



The media play a crucial role in the functioning of modern democracy, however, in order to fulfil their role and promote democratic ideals through the dissemination of information, the media system itself should be democratic in terms of its construction and infrastructure. In this regard, it is important that both public and policy makers have a clear image of the structure and size of a media market, in order to make sense of whether it can serve democracy. Ideally speaking, the importance of media lies in their ability to distribute the interpretive frameworks, ideas, concepts, facts, and arguments that people use in order to make sense of political issues and current affairs. However, the frameworks on offer are limited by the nexus of interests that are producing them, therefore it is important to map those interests (Murdock & Golding, 1974). Moreover, the sheer number of outlets does not determine content diversity, therefore it is important when examining a media system to look at the diversity of content and opinion and paint a

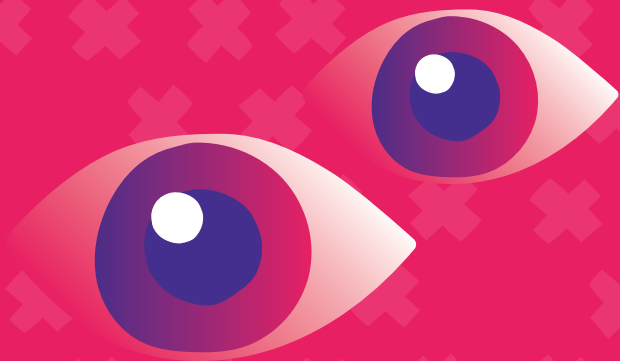
picture of content variety within a media market (Wasko, 1994).

One of the concerns for a democratically functioning media system is the so-called phenomenon of **media ownership concentration**, because rising costs for entering the media market can limit the number of people who can own media outlets and distort the idealized role of the media (Murdock, 1990). At the same time, there are other factors that need to be considered, since the relationship between media ownership concentration and diversity of voice is not linear. The size and structure of the market, diversity of content, sources, and innovation tendencies are also important (Doyle, 2012).

## References:

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# CONCEPT 4: MEDIA TRANS- PARENCY



Independent news media are one of the most important pillars of modern democracy and have often been called the fourth estate. The media in modern democracy are tasked with providing the citizens with information that assists them in forming their own opinions and making better-informed political decisions (Williams and Delli Carpini, 2011), but also with a watchdog function that requires them to hold state and corporate sectors accountable for failures and abuses of power (Barendt, 2007). However, in order for the media and journalists to be able to fulfil their normative roles media ownership transparency is a prerequisite. Particularly transparency in journalism is a means of counterbalancing the declining trust of the public regarding news operators (Karlsson, 2020).

The media can often be ‘captured’ by powerful political and economic interests (Dragomir, 2019) that may place limits both on the diversity of information provided, as well as on the capacity of journalists to question authority.

Therefore, it is crucial that information on who owns the media and how journalism is funded is publicly available and accessible both upwards and downwards. Downward transparency concerns the accountability of the media to civil society, investors, and the general public and concerns the decision-making process, whereas upward transparency concerns the availability of information about the ownership of the media to regulatory bodies (Craufurd-Smith, Klimkiewicz, & Ostling, 2021). Media ownership transparency ensures that policy makers and regulators have the information they require in order to develop the rules that are necessary for the optimal functioning of the media market.

Albeit media ownership transparency is not by itself a sufficient condition for democratic engagement, it is nonetheless a crucial prerequisite both for policy makers and for the general public, in order to ensure that the media can fulfil their democratic role.

## References:

Barendt, E. (2007). *Freedom of Speech*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Craufurd-Smith, R., Klimkiewicz, B. & Ostling, A. (2021). Media ownership transparency in Europe: Closing the gap between European aspiration and domestic reality, *European Journal of Communication*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323121999523>

Dragomir, M. (2019) *Media Capture in Europe*. New York: Media Development Investment Fund. Retrieved from <https://www.mdif.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/MDIF-ReportMedia-Capture-in-Europe.pdf>

Karlsson, M. (2020). Dispersing the Opacity of Transparency in Journalism on the Appeal of Different Forms of Transparency to the General Public, *Journalism Studies*, 21:13, 1795–1814, DOI: 10.1080/1461670X.2020.1790028

Williams, B. A. & Delli Carpini, M., X. (2011). *After Broadcast News: Media Regimes Democracy and the New Information Environment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

### Tasks:

Students are divided in groups of 4–5 persons and based on the concepts provided are asked to work collaboratively (for approximately 10 minutes) in order to specify two examples from the media market of their country reflecting

- a) one positive and one negative aspect media power

Or

- b) two different distinctive cases of media ownership structures (e.g. horizontal, vertical, diagonal)

At the end of each team's brainstorming one representative presents to the cohort the selected paradigms aimed at stimulating creative dialogues.

Then, students are divided in two groups and based on the concepts provided are asked to work collaboratively (for approximately 15 minutes) in order to create the key message

of a campaign (intended to be viewed online on news portals). The project is supposedly funded by a very influential incubator/NGO in the country, whose mission is to support and promote the transparency, credibility and independence in journalism aimed at securing meritocracy and excellence in the media field.

One team is assigned the campaign on the importance of democratically functioning media, while the other team is assigned the campaign on the importance of media transparency. Each team presents its campaign and is evaluated by a media expert invited in the class either in person or through a digital platform.

# MODULE 3: MEDIA OWNERSHIP ANALYSIS



Media owners can influence media content. Their motives may be political/ideological, personal/social, or commercial, but the outcome is the same. Media owners are those who might “dictate” media content, because they set up the conditions under which a newsroom operates. But by controlling the means of production, thus the allocation of resources, media owners influence media output. For instance, if resources are scarce, media investigative efforts are compromised. If journalists are denied means of transportation, they cannot leave the newsroom to report and interview sources, mostly leaning on secondary sources. Hence, media owners exercise power. By answering the question of who owns the media, we also answer the question of who holds the reins of power. Hence, transparency of media ownership data is an important requirement to democratically functioning and accountable media. Publicly accessible data about media owners enable citizens to freely decide whether conflict of interest is involved in specific cases. Moreover, transparent data further prevents the holders of political and

economic power from abusing the media for the promotion of their own interests.

Other important issues regarding media transparency have to do with the transparency of funding. Advertising is still an important source of revenues for media: if media depend on important advertisers, these can put pressure on the journalistic work. And what about public funding? How do states support media activity? Is there room for political pressure?

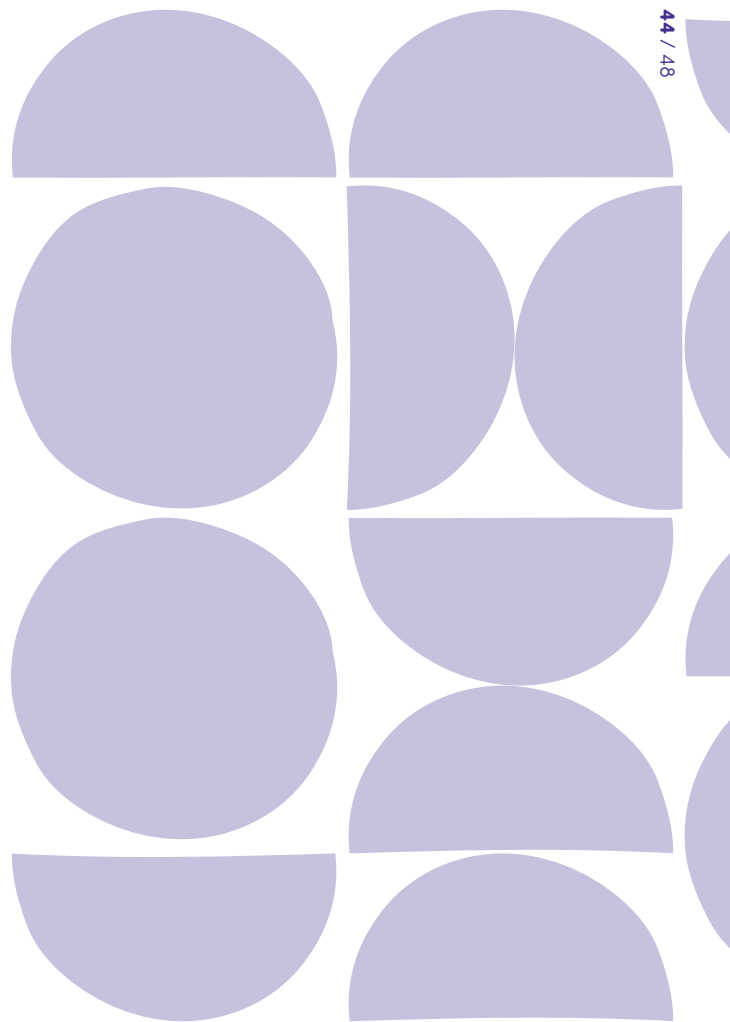
The students have to find an example of a media brand for each of these ownership realities in their own country. If there is none, they should look for examples in a neighbouring country sharing the same language for instance or other countries.

Further materials needed: A simplified version of the EurOMo indicators and of a EurOMo visualisation tool will be made available. The teacher may also recommend that students watch AV productions that focus on the power of media monopolies and the news production process. Examples include: Tomorrow Never Dies or The Newsroom.

# MODULE 4: GROUP DISCUSSION ABOUT FUNDAMENTAL STATEMENTS



Students need to learn not only **what** they will know from this Task (they will review the main concepts and challenge them with their ideas), but also **why** they need to know it. Two types of activities are proposed here: (a) Explanations and Questions, and (b) the Game of Statements.



# MODULE 5: MEDIA PRODUCTION ABOUT THE LEARNINGS



Students are asked to present their findings in a media format of their choice (video story, poster, essay, photo-novella, ...). Teachers can evaluate the skills developed in the sessions.

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**Lay-out**

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**Partners**

\* “The EurOMo (the Euromedia Ownership Monitor) is a pilot project with the objective of making EU democracies more resilient by empowering citizens with media awareness skills and competencies. This objective is in line with the European Democracy Action Plan, presented by the European Commission in December 2020. The EurOMo offers a publicly accessible online database of the most relevant news media in 15 EU countries, and country reports that assess the level of transparency of this information”. Webpage: <https://media-ownership.eu>.

