

MOTIVATIONS FOR NEWS EXPOSURE IN DIFFERENT MEDIA SYSTEMS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GERMANY, SPAIN AND THE UNITED KINGDOM

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ABSTRACT:

The purpose of the study is to examine and compare digital users' motivations for news exposure in three European countries (Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom) belonging to each of Hallin and Mancini's media systems. For this research, a cross-national online survey (2020) of over 2,000 people in each country was used. The users' assessment of the preferences for getting news (from sources that share, challenge or do not have a particular point of view) was analysed, as well as the influence of socio-demographic factors and interest in politics on those motivations. Our results show that a majority of digital users prefer unbiased news. With respect to the socio-demographic variables, a clear pattern can be discerned in the age variable, whereby the older they are, the greater the declared preference for unbiased news. On the other hand, those who show greater interest in politics do prefer reinforcing news. In terms of national differences, motivations for news exposure vary depending on the country studied. In Spain, in line with its belonging to the pluralist-polarised system, the preference for reinforcing news is higher than in Germany and in the United Kingdom.

KEY WORDS:

journalism, media systems, news consumption, online news, selective exposure

1 Introduction

Given their responsibility to inform society with rigour, the media constitute a key agent in the development of democracy. Consequently, the factors underlying citizens' use of the media are a recurrent object of research in political communication studies. Journalism has traditionally contributed to generate an educated informed citizenry. In other words, the paths of journalism and democracy are closely linked¹ as from

¹ MCNAIR, B.: Journalism and Democracy. In WAHL-JORGENSEN, K., HANITZSCH, T. (eds.): *The Handbook of Journalism Studies*. London, New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 257-269.



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a normative perspective, for citizens to choose rationally,² news outlets are pivotal contributors. However, the changes brought about by digital technology to information production, distribution, and consumption, together with new actors arriving to the public sphere; raise the question of whether this paradigm is still commonly accepted. This study analyses the use of media and the perception of journalism of digital users in Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. The aim of the research is to examine their motivations or preferences when exposing themselves to news and the effect that socio-demographic factors may have on selective exposure.

2 Motivations for News Exposure

Citizens' perceptions of the social role and public relevance of journalism influence their relationship with the media. Traditionally, both in imaginary and in professional culture itself, the "paradigm of objectivity" has ruled.³ As Reese explains: "To make sense of the world, journalists, like scientists, rely on a paradigm, which remains of value so long as it provides a useful practical guide for them and they share its underlying assumptions."⁴ Like any paradigm, it includes a set of shared preconceptions that underpin and shape the collection of evidence and focus attention on some problems.⁵ This necessarily excludes other situations that cannot be so easily addressed using the tools provided by the paradigm. In the specific case of the objectivity paradigm, these assumptions are: (1) the need for reality in the news, which must be objective, balanced and reflect social reality; (2) the influence of political attitudes of journalists or editorial staff on the bias of the news; (3) such biases can be detected by readers; (4) the most relevant bias is that of partisanship.⁶

From a journalistic point of view, putting this paradigm into practice involves engaging professional skills around the concept of "impartiality", that is, the attempt to consider different ideas, opinions, interests or individuals with detachment.⁷ Specifically, journalists must take into account "(i) a full range of views and opinions; (ii) the relative weight of opinion (this means that established or orthodox views take precedence over challenges to them); and (iii) the changes that occur in the range and weight of opinion over time".⁸ Impartiality is one of the fundamental principles of public broadcasters⁹ and of media companies in general seeking professional quality that builds audience trust.¹⁰

This paradigm is present in journalists' discursive practice and organisational routines. As such, it is transferred to the audience and rules as a professional standard, marking what the audience usually expects, but does not always correspond to actual media consumption. In this sense, a classic concept in communication studies is the selective exposure hypothesis.¹¹ According to this idea, media consumption is determined by the predispositions of the audience. Consumers seek to confirm and reinforce their beliefs through the news content to which they are exposed. This would lead to "the active avoidance of content that contradicts one's own opinions and interests, and/or seeking out likeminded views".¹²

Selective exposure is mediated by several moderating factors, derived from both individual characteristics and environmental elements.¹³ Individual characteristics include cognitive issues such as political knowledge or interest in politics, which are also influenced by environmental elements, including polarisation or fragmentation of media systems.¹⁴ In this regard, the types of media available, the specific topics on which the individual is informed and the characteristics of the media system are contingent conditions that can influence this phenomenon.¹⁵

Among the types of selective exposure, the one arousing the greatest academic interest is partisan motivation, due to the relationship it may have with social polarisation.¹⁶ There is evidence of a two-way link between the two variables: selective partisan exposure leads to polarisation and, conversely, polarisation leads to selective partisan exposure.¹⁷ Other studies show parallels between reading certain headlines and electoral behaviour.¹⁸ Trust in institutions, ideology and political partisanship seems to influence audiences' trust in the media,¹⁹ although this association cannot be extrapolated to all countries.²⁰

There is an open debate about the role of ideology in media trust. In the Spanish case, some authors confer a relevant role to ideology,²¹ while others moderate its impact.²² In Germany and the UK, Stier et al. found that this trust could also be influenced by national phenomena such as tabloid news or populism.²³ Today, however, the relationship between news and media use and polarisation must be understood in the context of increasingly digital, mobile, and platform-dominated media environments, where news-time decreases. The media ecosystem is characterised by an increasing fragmentation of news supply and demand, a shift in consumption away from traditional media to new digital devices, and the rise of so-called social media as the main tool used by young people to inform themselves.²⁴

Thus, the technological affordances of digital platforms would reinforce selective exposure in this new ecosystem of news consumption,²⁵ as they enable the personalisation of content in two ways.²⁶ On the one

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5 See: KUHN, T. S.: *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1962.
6 HACKETT, R. A.: Decline of a Paradigm? Bias and Objectivity in News Media Studies. In *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 1984, Vol. 1, No. 3, p. 229.
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11 Compare to: LAZARSFELD, P. F., BERELSON, B., GAUDET, H.: *The People's Choice: How the Voter Makes Up His Mind in a Presidential Election*. Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1948.
12 MUTZ, D. C., YOUNG, L.: Communication and Public Opinion: Plus Ça Change. In *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 2011, Vol. 75,

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26 ZUIDERVEEN BORGESIU, F. et al.: Should We Worry about Filter Bubbles? In *Internet Policy Review*, 2016, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 56-98.

hand, the multiplication of information channels expands users' capacity for "self-selected personalisation", so that the cognitive biases that underpin the hypothesis can be expected to be activated;²⁷ even more so, given the rise of hyper-partisan media in the digital space.²⁸ On the other hand, there is also a "pre-selected personalisation" linked to algorithmic curation that presents the user with belief-aligned content,²⁹ favouring "echo chambers".³⁰

However, the reality of selective online exposure is more complex.³¹ In a high-choice media environment, people may select media and content which reinforce their existing beliefs, leading to segregation based on interests or partisanship.³² But the high-choice environment also allows people to consume a wide variety of media, which could lead them to more diverse content and perspectives.³³ Added to this, the dynamics of the digital environment create new patterns of information such as incidental exposure.³⁴ In a context of information abundance, social media introduce the belief that news seeks out users, coined as the "news finds me" perception.³⁵ But, the idea of selective exposure implies a notion of active audiences, who choose specific media according to their preferences.

All of this raises new questions about the connection between selective exposure, trust in the media and the polarising effects that information consumption can have.³⁶ Given this empirical evidence with mixed results, further research is needed. This led us to formulate the following research questions:

RQ1: What are the stated news exposure preferences of online users?

RQ2: What is the relationship between news exposure preference and respondents' interest in politics?

3 Comparing Media Systems

Typologies help identify possible commonalities between different countries.³⁷ Hallin and Mancini, in his seminal work *Comparing Media Systems* distinguished three media systems.³⁸ According to these authors, countries could be labelled in one of the three models depending on four factors: the circulation of the press and structure of the media market, the ideological parallelism between the press and the national political system or other civil-society institutions, the level of professionalisation of journalists, and the strength of

State intervention in the media. Since 2004, this model has become by far one of the most used to analyse media and politics connections.³⁹

The social perception of journalistic institutions can be greatly influenced by the media, especially regarding selective exposure. The closer the national media and political systems are, the greater the influence of like-minded views will be for citizens.⁴⁰ Similarly, Steppat et al. point out the need to include political influence when analysing news exposure, as polarisation and media market fragmentation can have a relevant effect on like-minded news consumption.⁴¹

The aim of this research is to analyse and compare the motivations for news exposure of digital users in three countries: Germany, Spain and the United Kingdom. Each country analysed belongs to one of the Hallin and Mancini models: Germany (North/Central model), Spain (Mediterranean) and the United Kingdom (North/Atlantic).

However, even if we follow Hallin and Mancini, it is important remembering these authors already recognised some limitations to their study in 2012.⁴² After all, the proposed three original models are but ideal types, from which countries will always differ if analysed in detail. For example, the UK complies with some of the features Hallin and Mancini distinguished in their North/Atlantic model, but the British strong public media corporation distances the country from being a perfect representative.

Spain fulfils most of the features Hallin and Mancini indicated for the Mediterranean or polarised pluralist model. This system corresponds to countries located in the Mediterranean region (France, Italy, Greece and Portugal). The defining features of this model are a high political parallelism between media and politics;⁴³ a strong state role and intervention in the media system; a small historic commercial media with the press highly focused on the ruling elite; small print runs and a low level of professionalisation of journalism.

Germany belongs to the Democratic Corporatist model, a system also found in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden. Typically, the country belonging to this model has a remarkable cultural tradition with the press showing high print runs.⁴⁴ Together with this, the model also includes a strong development of journalistic professionalism and an active albeit limited role of the State.

The United Kingdom fits the liberal model, predominant in Canada, Ireland and the United States. These countries feature the relative prevalence of market mechanisms, commercial media companies' hegemony and consolidated professionalism. There is little state intervention in the media system and a limited political parallelism. The UK case, however, is different in this last dimension as Hallin and Mancini themselves point out.⁴⁵ While there is a clear tendency for political parallelism to decrease in the British quality press, it remains strong in the tabloid press. In the light of the above, the question arises:

RQ3: Are there notable differences between the three countries studied with regard to news preference motivations, considering that they belong to different media systems?

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4 Method

Design and Procedure

This study is based on the survey conducted by YouGov for the Reuters Institute Digital News Report (DNR), an international study on the consumption of digital information promoted in 2012 by the University of Oxford, which has been published in Spain since 2014 by the University of Navarra. The fieldwork was carried out between the end of January and the beginning of February 2020. The YouGov organisation selected around 2,000 users in each country to compose national panels to survey digital news consumption. DNR participants are adult Internet users, who have consumed news in the last month, representative of the online population according to socio-demographic and geographic criteria. The data was weighted according to official census and industry-accepted majority data for age, gender, region, news reading and education level, in order to reflect the population of the countries analysed.

Sample

For this research, the 2020 survey was consulted. Specifically, samples of Internet users from Germany (2020: n=2,011), Spain (2020: n=2,006) and the United Kingdom (2020: n=2,011) were used.

It is worth noting limitations of the research set out in these samples used. Given that the survey is completed online, it is not representative of the population as a whole, but of the digital population. Therefore, the research questions ask about digital users. Moreover, as in any survey, the respondents' recollection or perception (self-reported data) does not always coincide with the actual use of these media and social networks. Accordingly, it asks about the stated preferences or motivations of digital users.

A notable limitation affects the representativeness of the political orientation declared by the respondent, as they are asked where they place themselves politically. Therefore, we do not have the memory of the vote in the last elections. Hence, it is convenient to consider the possible 'hidden vote' or reservation to declare one's political position. One last notable limitation due to the sample would be that the study presented here constitutes an analysis limited to the year 2020. The scope of the results is, in this sense, limited by the use of a single survey as a data source. Future studies should carry out longitudinal analyses (preferably with panel data) with different data sources.

Questionnaire and Variables

The online questionnaire covers a wide range of questions on news consumption. For this research, in particular, a statistical analysis of the following questions in the survey has been carried out, relating them to the socio-demographic variables of age, educational level and ideological self-positioning:

Thinking about the different kinds of news available to you, do you prefer...

- getting news from sources that share your point of view?
- getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view?
- getting news from sources that challenge your point of view?
- Don't know.

How interested, if at all, would you say you are in politics?

- Extremely interested.
- Very interested.

- Somewhat interested.
- Not very interested.
- Not at all interested.

Data Analysis

First, we identified the DNR question related to the aspect we wanted to measure: the impact of ideological preferences on news selection. Given that DNR is a more general study than the one presented in this article, we selected some DNR variables in order to limit the responses to the specificity of our research. In order to get a more subtle analysis in this first analysis, we recategorized our first variable into three; one per each of the options offered in the original variable: reinforcing, challenging, and unbiased news. Likewise, we recategorised interest in politics to a dichotomous variable, reducing the five categories to two: Interested/Not interested. The answers were subjected to McNemar's test and Chi-squared test, and the relationships between the different variables were tested with Spearman's correlation.

5 Results

This section is structured as follows. First, citizens' preferences for news exposure are analysed, cross-checking them with socio-demographic variables (RQ1) and their interest in politics (RQ2). The answers are examined from a comparative perspective, across the three countries, to see whether membership of different media systems is significant for the issue observed (RQ3).

When analysing citizens' news exposure preference, diversity is self-evident (Table 1). Spain is the country where preference for confirming news is the highest (29.8%), contrasting with Germany and the UK, where the preference for that type of source is but a third of the Spanish, staying around 10% of the total. Similarly, more than 60% of British and German respondents preferred unbiased sources while only 48% of the Spaniards said so.

Table 1: News preference

	Germany	Spain	UK	P
Getting news from sources that share your point of view <i>Reinforcing news</i>	11%	29.8%	12.5%	<.001
Getting news from sources that don't have a particular point of view <i>Unbiased news</i>	62.2%	48.2%	64%	<.001
Getting news from sources that challenge your point of view <i>Challenging news</i>	9.3%	9.6%	4.2%	<.001
Don't know	Slight (56%)	13%	14%	10%

Notes: Question "Thinking about the different kinds of news available to you, do you prefer...". *p-value of the Chi-squared test for the inter-country comparison

Source: Adapted from the Reuters Institute DNR survey 2020, conducted by YouGov

A similar pattern can be detected across the three countries in the relationship between age and consumption of challenging news (Table 2). In all countries, the older the age, the higher the percentage of respondents who say they consume unbiased information. Germany stands out as the only country where there is a statistically significant correlation between the consumption of challenging news and age. In this case, the younger the age, the higher the reported consumption of challenging news, a similar behaviour to that seen in the UK. In Spain, on the other hand, young people report consuming reaffirming news to a greater extent than the rest of the age groups.

Table 2: News preference by age

	Germany					P	Spain					P	United Kingdom					
	18-24 N=194	25-34 N=295	35-44 N=285	45-54 N=367	55+ N=870		18-24 N=156	25-34 N=288	35-44 N=393	45-54 N=396	55+ N=773		18-24 N=201	25-34 N=282	35-44 N=343	45-54 N=349	55+ N=838	
Reinforcing news	9.8%	19.3%	14%	7.6%	12.3%	0.206	34%	32.3%	32.6%	27.0%	28.1%	0.039	16.4%	13.8%	8.7%	8%	10.9%	0.096
Unbiased news	58.8%	55.3%	60%	66.2%	68.6%	<.001	41.7%	43.4%	43%	49%	53.4%	<.001	51.2%	62.1%	55.7%	62.2%	67.5%	<.001
Challenging news	12.4%	5.8%	3.9%	4.1%	2.1%	<.001	14.1%	11.5%	9.2%	8.3%	8.8%	0.063	11.9%	8.2%	11.4%	11.2%	7.5%	0.056
Don't know	19.1%	19.7%	22.1%	22.1%	17%	0.121	10.3%	12.8%	15.3%	15.7%	9.7%	0.082	20.4%	16%	24.2%	18.6%	14.1%	<.001

Notes: Question "We are now going to ask you whether you think the news media in your country is doing a good job or not. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements". * p-value of the Spearman correlation between each type of concern and age (within each country).

Source: Adapted from the Reuters Institute DNR survey 2020, conducted by YouGov

As can be seen in Table 3, the level of education does not have the same influence in the three countries. Although a trend can be detected indicating that the higher the level of education, the higher the consumption of unbiased news, the correlation is statistically significant only in Spain and the UK. This is not the case for respondents' ideological self-positioning. The correlation between ideological news bias and self-positioning is significant in all three cases, especially in the case of unbiased and challenging news (Table 4). In all three countries, left-wing voters tend to consume more challenging information, although the percentage is small (Germany 5.8%, Spain 10.9% and UK 6.3%).

Table 3: News preference by education level

	Germany				P	Spain				P	United Kingdom			
	Low N=36	Medium N=1,620	High N=355			Low N=229	Medium N=1,338	High N=439			Low N=68	Medium N=1,218	High N=725	
Reinforcing news	8.3%	12.3%	13.5%	0.409	30.6%	30.3%	28.0%	0.398	5.9%	10.3%	12.6%	0.057		
Unbiased news	55.6%	63%	69.9%	0.008	41.5%	46.9%	55.4%	<.001	57.4%	60%	66.2%	0.005		
Challenging news	5.6%	4.1%	4.8%	0.662	7%	9.8%	10.3%	0.251	2.9%	9.8%	9.2%	0.752		
Don't know	30.6%	20.6%	11.8%	<.001	21.0%	13%	6.4%	<.001	33.8%	19.9%	12%	<.001		

Notes: Question "We are now going to ask you whether you think the news media in your country is doing a good job or not. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements". * p-value of the Spearman correlation between each type of concern and education level (within each country).

Source: Adapted from the Reuters Institute DNR survey 2019, conducted by YouGov

Table 4: News preference by political self-positioning

	Germany				P	Spain				P	United Kingdom			
	Left N=711	Centre N=673	Right N=415			Left N=974	Centre N=324	Right N=441			Left N=679	Centre N=367	Right N=609	
Reinforcing news	11.3%	13.5%	14.5%	0.545	33.2%	16.7%	37.4%	0.02	12.7%	9.5%	12.6%	0.033		
Unbiased news	71.4%	62.9%	67.5%	<.001	48.2%	62.3%	47.6%	0.006	66.3%	61.3%	68.6%	<.001		
Challenging news	5.8%	3.3%	3.6%	<.001	10.9%	11.7%	6.3%	0.012	10.3%	11.4%	8.2%	0.057		
Don't know	11.5%	20.4%	14.5%	<.001	7.8%	9.3%	8.6%	<.001	10.8%	17.7%	10.5%	<.001		

Notes: Question "We are now going to ask you whether you think the news media in your country is doing a good job or not. Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements". * p-value of the Spearman correlation between each type of concern and ideological self-positioning (within each country).

Source: Adapted from the Reuters Institute DNR survey 2020, conducted by YouGov

After these descriptive results, the question remains whether national differences and the relevance granted to politics are statistically significant or not. Apparently, and according to what Hallin and Mancini explain, national particularities do have an effect over media consumption.⁴⁶ To do so, our news preference variables were again merged. The resulting new variable is similar to the original one, but leaves aside the answers of those citizens who chose the "Don't know" category. Since our variable has three possible outcomes, we used a multinomial logistic regression, using unbiased news as our reference value (Table 5).

According to our results, most of our sociodemographic variables, especially age, sex and income, do not work as statistically significant predictors. On the contrary, country of origin and interest in politics do have a statistically significant influence on news exposure preference. Thus, both variables are to be considered when selective exposure is analysed. Of the three countries analysed, Spain is the country with the strongest influence over ideological news preference, something which concurs with the pluralistic-polarised media system. Similarly, disregard for politics is inversely related to both challenging and reinforcing news. Thus, those who are not interested in politics generally prefer unbiased news. On the other hand, those who claim to be interested in politics prefer reinforcing news.

Table 5: Multinomial logistic regression to predict news preference

Independent variable	Dependent variable: News preference			
	Reinforcing news ^a		Challenging news ^a	
	Coef. (95% CI) ^b	P	Coef. (95% CI) ^b	P
Age ^c	-0.01 (-0.02 to -0.01)	<.001	-0.02 (-0.02 to -0.01)	<.001
Sex ^d				
Female	0.09 (-0.07 to 0.25)	0.28	0.03 (-0.20 to 0.26)	0.808
Education ^e				
Secondary	-0.25 (-0.45 to -0.06)	0.12	-0.19 (-0.47 to 0.10)	0.199
University	-0.24 (-0.47 to -0.02)	0.36	-0.23 (-0.56 to 0.09)	0.164
Income ^f				
Low	0.12 (-0.08 to 0.31)	0.24	0.27 (-0.01 to 0.54)	0.58
High	-0.03 (-0.24 to 0.17)	0.75	0.04 (-0.25 to 0.32)	0.796
Political self-positioning ^g				
Left	0.47 (0.28 to 0.65)	<.001	0.27 (0.01 to 0.53)	0.41
Right	0.69 (0.45 to 0.94)	<.001	-0.25 (-0.67 to 0.17)	0.24
Country ^h				
United Kingdom	-0.06 (-0.30 to 0.18)	0.62	0.88 (0.56 to 1.20)	<.001
Spain	1.07 (0.87 to 1.27)	<.001	0.97 (0.65 to 1.29)	<.001
Politics interest				
Interested	0.36 (0.11 to 0.60)	0.4	0.04 (-0.28 to 0.35)	0.813
Not interested	-1.38 (-1.79 to -0.98)	<.001	-1.92 (-2.48 to -1.35)	<.001

^a Base outcome: Unbiased news

^b Coefficient (and 95% confidence interval)

^c Continuous variable

^d Reference category: Male

^e Reference category: Less than Secondary education

^f Reference category: Low

^g Reference category: Centre

^h Reference category: Germany

Source: Own processing with data from the Reuters Institute DNR survey 2020, conducted by YouGov

6 Discussion and Conclusions

In this study, we have examined the online users' stated preferences or motivations when consuming news. Regarding the first research question (RQ1), "What are the preferences declared by online users in their exposure to news?", it could be said that the paradigm of objectivity remains in place for the audience. Today, the preferred option for most users is to get information from journalistic sources that meet the requirements of impartiality. Selective exposure theory claims citizens are exposed to the media based on their ideological preferences. According to our results, a majority of our respondents prefer unbiased news. This might be due to two reasons: firstly, it could be that the theory of selective exposure does not apply in digital environments, a fact that has already been disproved by authors such as Dylko.⁴⁷ Secondly, it could be because users are unable to perceive the ideological biases of the information sources they consult. In addition, the percentage of survey respondents who chose the "Don't know" category is notable, reaching up to a fifth of the total or being higher than those who prefer reinforcing news. Since the DNR is an autonomous survey, this could mean respondents are using this category as a refuge or comfort category, preferring to answer, "Don't know" instead of giving an honest answer.

Regarding interest in politics (RQ2), our regression analysis shows those who show a greater interest in politics do prefer reinforcing news. In terms of national differences, selective exposure preferences vary depending on the country studied. When compared to Germany, Spain is where respondents show greater fondness for biased news (RQ3), this is, both challenging and reinforcing news. This trend is in line with the polarised pluralist model. As both Goldman and Mutz⁴⁸ and Steppat et al.⁴⁹ highlight, the more fragmented-polarised a media system is, the easier it will be for citizens to choose ideologically aligned information.

With respect to the sociodemographic variables, in the age variable, a clear pattern can be discerned whereby the older they are, the greater the declared preference for unbiased news (linked to a classic vision of journalism, not so widely shared by young people). Education seems to also exert influence over news preference. This is especially true for secondary education, where the starkest difference is seen. Interestingly, university education does not seem to influence as much as secondary education, which calls for further research. One would assume that if secondary education influences news preference, so should university.

The possible implications of these results for the proper functioning of democracy are ambiguous. On the one hand, selective exposure increases the polarisation of political attitude,⁵⁰ which is associated with higher levels of political participation.⁵¹ This seems to be a desirable result from the point of view of the Participatory Democracy Theory, which highly values the generalised participation of citizens in politics.⁵² However, higher levels of selective exposure (and a corresponding increase in polarisation of attitudes) are considered undesirable as frequent encounters with diverse views are of utmost relevance, from the perspective of Deliberative Democracy Theory.⁵³

Finally, from the prism of media systems (RQ3), the data shows that the country that most closely matches the features described by Hallin and Mancini⁵⁴ is Spain, while between Germany and the UK there are no such clear differences according to their respective models. In the case of the United Kingdom, its peculiarities mean that it does not fit the characteristics of the Liberal Model so well. This situation is similar to that already

described by Brüggemann et al., who advocate taking the UK out of the Liberal Model and including it in a new model together with Germany due to the levels of press market inclusiveness and strong public broadcasting.⁵⁵ The similar values found in this research provide new evidence to complement this proposal. This distancing of Spain from other European countries is something that Albaek et al.⁵⁶ and Hallin and Mancini,⁵⁷ who put an end to their thesis on the convergence of the three systems towards the liberal model, also agree on.

It seems relevant to continue researching along these lines and to introduce new variables such as, for example, whether there is a difference in the phenomena analysed here between citizens who prefer to consume information through digital media and those who get their information through 'traditional' media.

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