

Preface

When members of the Euromedia Research Group convened in Lisbon in November 2014 for the group's 56th meeting, they were invigorated by the preceding ECREA Conference, and pleased that the group had successfully delivered the manuscript of *Media in Crisis* to the publisher (Routledge) only a few weeks earlier (Trappel, Steemers, & Thomass, 2015). At that meeting, we all knew that something had changed. Starting from the research interest of the members and judging by the rapid changes in the field of media and communication, a critical observation was shared: digitalisation is not just about transforming the media and communications business; its social implications run far deeper than Silicon Valley pundits would have people across the globe believe.

The following debate quickly generated new research questions about: “*inequalities of the media in Europe*”. The group met a further seven times to explore further common understandings of observed inequalities in the existing media landscape and the emerging digitally transformed media world. In each of these meetings, members presented concepts and draft chapters for a future book. Along the way, the group struggled to develop a common understanding of the numerous strands in which media inequalities occur. It became clear that the scholarly and dominating discourse on inequalities, focusing either on wealth and income, or on race, class and gender, is not always sufficient to understand the variety and diversity of inequalities in media and communication.

Denis McQuail, the late Honorary President of the group, delivered his thoughts on equality and the media in a discussion paper, which became a crucial reference document for further work. Although his health did not allow him to participate in group meetings at that point, he revised his draft after receiving comments from our meetings. His chapter in this volume is his (unfinished) manuscript, slightly and carefully edited, based on handwritten notes he left after he passed away on 25th June 2017. We thank Denis' daughter, Rachel, for sharing these notes with us. All other chapters of this volume refer to Denis' work in some way.

The group is deeply grateful for Denis' intellectual and personal contributions over the entire life span of the Euromedia Research Group, of which he became a founding

member in March 1982. Tribute is also paid by his many friends and collaborators in the *European Journal of Communication*, Vol. 32 (6) 2017.

The April 2018 group meeting in Bergen, Norway marked the final approval of the book's manuscript. Chapters had gone through an (in some cases lengthy) in-depth process of peer-reviewing by other group members, facilitating critical debates, which were often more rigorous and thorough than in a blind peer-reviewing exercise. Some of the chapters have been considerably altered by this discursive process, which also included debates in the plenary sessions of the group as well as individual reviews. Chapter authors appreciated the opportunity to engage with their reviewers in a dialogue that contributed to a better understanding of the underlying themes of the volume.

Because of this re-iterating review process, the book is more than just another edited volume; it represents the collective efforts of the Euromedia Reseach Group, although each chapter has its own authors. As in other books by the group (recently d'Haenens, Sousa, & Trappel, 2018; for more information, see www.euromediagroup.org), a number of guest authors have also contributed: Judit Bayer, Anna Gladkova, Willem Joris, Kristine Juraitė, Quint Kik, Ralph Negrine, and Sara de Vuyst. Many thanks!

The group is particularly thankful to Nordicom, its publisher, for their excellent work in publishing this book in an open access format, which is most appreciated, and gives all access in the spirit of equality.

Josef Trappel, for the Euromedia Research Group
Salzburg, September 2018

References:

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- Trappel, J., Steemers, J. & Thomass, B. (eds.) (2015). *European media in crisis: Values, risks and policies*. London, New York: Routledge. (Paperback edition 2017)