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Interpreting or Reporting? An Analysis of Journalistic Interventionism Across Western European Countries

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ABSTRACT

The literature comparing journalistic roles around the world highlights different ways of understanding journalistic work across countries. One of the main differences in conceptualising concerns the journalist's propensity for intervention: where in some contexts it is common practice for journalists to intervene with commentary and interpretation; while in others there is a tendency to adopt a more neutral reporting style. Through the conceptual lens of journalistic role performance, this study investigates the performance of the interventionist role within its two analytical sub-dimensions (content-driven interventionism and style-driven interventionism), together with the specific indicators related to each of the two (interpretation, journalist point of view, call to action, qualifying adjectives, and use of the first person) across nine Western European countries. Contrary to expectations, our data show a higher level of interventionism—particularly content-driven—in Central and Northern European countries when compared to those belonging to the polarised pluralist model theorised by Hallin, D. C., and P. Mancini. (2004. *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics*. Cambridge University Press). Moreover, in almost all the countries considered, when journalists do intervene with their own voice, they predominantly do so through rhetorical devices of interpretation and by expressing their point of view.

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Introduction

Over the years, media and journalism scholars have demonstrated widespread interest in measuring the amount and type of journalistic voices within the news. The propensity of journalists to intervene and comment on or give interpretations of reported facts contrasts with a more neutral journalistic approach aimed at mere reporting on what is happening in their own country or around the world. The absence of the journalist's voice within the news—resulting in the impossibility or difficulty of deciphering the journalist's opinions, points of view, etc.—is defined in the literature as a more detached and disseminatory journalism (Cohen 1963; Weaver and Wilhoit 1991). Whereas, with the

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alternative approach, we are faced with a type of journalism that offers interpretations, playing a participatory and sometimes advocacy role (Donsbach and Patterson 2004; Janowitz 1975).

The literature is keen to explore the role of political-institutional systems but also the reasons why media systems themselves are more or less inclined to favour this type of interventionism. Among them, Hallin and Mancini's (2004) was among the first studies that helped to systematically reason in this regard. In the development of their three main models summarising the way that journalism is carried out in major Western democracies, the two scholars argue that the more liberal and market-oriented a country is, the more neutral-oriented the journalism. In contrast, countries where political and social subcultures are stronger present a higher propensity for intervention (Chalaby 1996; Hallin and Mancini 2004). Nevertheless, several years have passed since Hallin and Mancini carried out their work, which has been reviewed and criticised by numerous scholars (Brüggemann et al. 2014; Herrero et al. 2017; Norris 2009) and even the authors themselves have returned to the matter (see Hallin and Mancini 2017; Mancini 2020). Consequently, the distinction between these models of journalism now seems more blurred (Mellado et al. 2017). In some ways, the diverse journalistic models of Western countries have actually progressed towards a process of homogenisation (Hallin and Mancini 2004), for which Mediterranean and Northern European countries have undergone different processes—first and foremost that of commercialisation—that have weakened ties to social and political subcultures. In other ways, however, in recent years the tendency to comment on news and political partisanship has been intensifying in liberal countries as well (Esser and Umbricht 2014). It seems necessary, therefore, to continue testing the resilience of the models produced and renegotiated to date by analysing the discussions of scholars who have examined the issue. In particular, to verify whether the criteria and variables considered are still applicable for explaining the differences between the various contexts or whether the same conditions no longer seem pertinent.

Building on this framework, the present study aims to assess journalistic voices in the main Western European countries by analysing the presence or absence of an interventionist attitude in the news via the theoretical key of journalistic role performance, i.e., the study of specific norms and ideals collectively negotiated that result in different journalistic practices. Based on survey data, the study aims to investigate this issue through a content analysis of the news produced by the journalists themselves. Specifically, the results presented are related to the “second wave” of the Journalistic Role Performance Project (JRP).¹ As a concept, journalistic role performance is considered to be particularly suited to studying how news is produced in different institutional and cultural contexts, as the outcome of the combination of ideals, norms and practices utilised in journalism performance. To account for these factors, the project analyses a total of six different roles: interventionist, watchdog, loyal-facilitator, service, infotainment, and civic.

Looking further into the JRP project framework developed, therefore, and by taking only one of these roles into consideration, we focus on two specific sub-dimensions of the interventionist role. In doing so, we aim to understand whether and what type of interventionism is performed in journalism across a number of Western European countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK), alongside analysing whether it is possible to trace the factors that can be drawn upon to explain the differences between the performance of such an interventionist

role within the respective countries. Inspired by studies already conducted in the first wave of the JRP project (in particular Stepinska et al. 2020), the novelty of this work is that, while previously the analysis focused exclusively on print news, the second wave took various media platforms into consideration (including television, digital news, and radio), which could lead to different outcomes even with the same analysis.

Theoretical Framework

The subject literature demonstrates the existence of different conceptualisations regarding the presence or absence of a journalistic voice within news reporting. As Salgado and Strömbäck (2012) have shown in their review of the main concepts and operationalisations related to interpretive journalism, the matter of the presence of journalists' voices in the news is often approached in different ways. The various studies conducted over the years reflect a historical and contentious debate on the relationship between journalists and the news they convey. Some scholars have interpreted journalists' interpretive behaviour as a deliberate action driven by specific missions or the promotion of a particular set of values, with the aim of actively influencing socio-cultural processes within their respective countries (Hanitzsch 2007; Himelboim and Limor 2005; Janowitz 1975). Conversely, some scholars interpret the journalist's intervention as an intention to actively participate in policy-making processes (Cohen 1963). In this regard, Donsbach and Patterson (2004) have attempted to reconcile the terms of the debate by differentiating between an active/passive approach to news on the one hand and a neutral or advocacy approach on the other. Despite differing conceptualisations, the studies generally agree on the premise that a type of journalism with a more prominent journalistic voice—interventionist and interpretive—stands in contrast to more descriptive, neutral, and fact-based journalism (Salgado and Strömbäck 2012). If the latter approach focuses on responding to the classic five Ws of journalism—prioritising factual reporting grounded in reality and detached from personal interpretations and opinions—then a journalist's voice with a more prominent presence indicates a type of journalism that seeks to emphasise the significance of the news, the implications of certain facts and, as Patterson (1993) argued, the "Why" behind the events. Weaver and Wilhoit (1991) proposed the distinction between a "disseminator" and an "interventionist" type of journalist, whereas Thomson and White (2008) further defined this distinction in terms of "reporter voice" versus "commentator voice", highlighting the presence of the journalist's personal perspective. Nevertheless, despite the various forms it takes, the notion of a more interventionist type of journalism has often been associated with negative connotations (Patterson 1993; Salgado and Strömbäck 2012), even if scholars invited to reason in terms of practices and behaviours that are not bad per se (Esser and Umbricht 2014). Indeed, on the contrary, various scholars have also called for consideration of an emotional thread being present within journalism; if so, this should lead to the definition of new values as subjectivity will also play an important role in news reporting and itself become a journalistic ideal (Peters 2011; Steensen 2017; Wahl-Jorgensen 2020).

However, among the numerous studies conducted internationally, it has been observed that interventionist journalism is more prevalent in developing societies and transitioning democracies than in Western journalistic cultures (Hanitzsch et al. 2011). Yet several studies have also examined this subject within well-established Western democracies—including

European—and identified various factors that influence journalistic practices and the reach of journalists' voices. In fact, in this context, it is often argued that political factors play a significant role in cross-national variations (Gurevitch and Blumler 2004; Hallin and Mancini 2004; Weaver 1998). In this regard, Southern European countries have been observed to exhibit a higher level of interventionist journalism, characterised by strong interpretive and commentary-driven news reporting that is influenced by the close connections existing between political parties and newspapers. This style of journalism comes at the expense of a more detached and fact-based narrative (Benson and Hallin 2007; Esser and Umbricht 2013; Mellado et al. 2017). Conversely, in European countries with a democratic-corporatist tradition, the journalism sectors combine a legacy of commentary-oriented practices with a more neutral professionalism and information-oriented approach (Esser and Umbricht 2013). In addressing these dynamics, the work of Hallin and Mancini (2004) represents one of the first attempts at more comprehensive and exhaustive research into understanding how different political, institutional, and cultural contexts have given rise to diverse media and journalism systems—at least concerning Western countries—resulting in a robust theoretical framework within which to include the present study. By setting out three models (the Mediterranean or polarised pluralist model, the Northern European or democratic corporatist model, and the North Atlantic or liberal model), future researchers have a useful tool for systematically interpreting how journalistic cultures have developed in their respective countries, producing characteristics that, inevitably, also impact on the ways that journalistic work is conducted. The polarised pluralist model is traditionally characterised by a high level of political parallelism, a low level of journalistic professionalisation, a condition of external pluralism, and a consolidated tradition of partisan journalism that is elitist in nature. This model is more oriented towards commentary and, therefore, involves direct intervention by journalists in the journalistic narratives. In contrast, the liberal model features high journalistic professionalisation, low political parallelism, and predominant internal pluralism—with the exception of the British press, which is significantly more partisan than the others. These characteristics result in a greater inclination towards detached journalism that is focused on reporting and neutrality. Alongside these, the democratic-corporatist model represents a compromise within which high journalistic professionalism, a relatively high level of political parallelism, a moderate degree of external pluralism, and the legacy of commentary-oriented journalism are balanced by the growing trend of an increasingly neutral information-focused model. The study of Hallin and Mancini (2004) combined with others in the field (Benson and Hallin 2007; Donsbach and Klett 1993; Donsbach and Patterson 2004; Esser and Umbricht 2013; Mellado et al. 2017) has contributed to reinforcing the idea—at least concerning Western European countries—that certain media systems, such as those in Central and Northern European countries, are more inclined towards neutral and detached journalism that serves a broader audience. In comparison, those in Southern European countries possess a greater inclination to intervene in political matters and target a smaller elite audience.

Over time, however, there have been numerous interventions by scholars who, taking up the work of Hallin and Mancini (2004), have raised various criticisms and put these theoretical proposals to the test. Criticism includes an inability to represent the reality of the systems under investigation, as well as a failure to keep up with the effects of technological evolution (Brüggemann et al. 2014; Herrero et al. 2017; Mattoni and Ceccobelli

2018; Norris 2009). Furthermore, the same authors have already intervened in response to these requests, observing the transformations occurring within the systems considered, which have taken on different trajectories (Hallin and Mancini 2017; Mancini 2020). Although it could also be said that the authors' (Hallin and Mancini 2004) initial conclusions already argued for the existence of convergence processes among the models. In doing so, they largely favoured the liberal model, driven by non-static nature and long-term change. Likewise, other studies have also highlighted substantial long-term changes; on the one hand, towards more objective and less opinion-driven news—as seen in continental European countries—and, on the other, towards journalism that appears to be increasingly interpretive rather than descriptive over time (Djerf-Pierre and Weibull 2008; Patterson 1993), featuring an increase in commentary, for example, the United States and the United Kingdom (Esser and Umbricht 2014). According to several scholars, the increase in interventionist journalism can be explained by the growth of critical professionalism, mistrust in official sources, and the striving for journalism's independence from outside influences (Patterson 1993; Stepinska et al. 2020). In contrast, Benson and Hallin (2007) relate this to the level of journalistic interplay and the close relationship between the press and politics: the more political actors try to control the news, the more journalists will try to report something else instead (see Stepinska et al. 2020). In this regard, de Vreese, Esser, and Hopmann (2016) suggest the need to consider additional environmental and contextual factors if we are to understand how different patterns within the same system can be created.

Regarding the Journalistic Role Performance Project (JRP), the interventionist role refers to a scenario where the journalist has an explicit voice in the story and sometimes acts as an advocate for individuals or societal groups. In this sense, a higher level of journalistic participation implies a greater degree of interventionism, and vice versa. This journalistic interventionism, however, can stem from different and not always coexisting elements. Specifically, two different types of interventionism are proposed: content-driven and style-driven (also known as “cosmetic” interventionism). The former refers to substantial elements, such as the presence of the journalist's interpretations and viewpoints within the news. Whereas the latter pertains to more stylistic aspects, such as the use of adjectives or the journalist's first-person perspective (Tulloch 2014). The use of either or both of these elements is significant when it comes to defining the type of interventionism performed.

In this regard, when focusing on the “first wave” (2013–2018) of the JRP project, which analysed the news produced in print media only, Stepinska et al. (2020) tested the existence of an interventionist role across the 18 countries examined, resulting in interesting insights. Their findings question the supremacy of the Anglo-American model—the Hallin and Mancini (2004) liberal model—which is known for being more oriented towards neutral reporting. They argue that, particularly in the U.S., the print press registers high levels of interventionism for both types. At the same time, the results of Stepinska et al. (2020) partially confirm the thesis of Western European countries demonstrating a greater presence of journalistic voice—although distinguished by varying degrees of content-driven interventionism, while exhibiting low levels of style-driven interventionism. In this sense, the latter is more commonly used—albeit to a limited extent—in the democratic countries analysed by the researchers to attract audiences in the popular press or to reinforce content-driven interventionism in the case of the elite-oriented press.

Research Questions and Methodology

Within this theoretical framework, the present study aims to investigate the performance of the interventionist role—whether content- or style-driven—across nine Western European countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK) selected in order to analyse a sample of countries in the same European context that shared similarities and differences. Although based on the framework outlined by the Hallin and Mancini (2004) models, the study is inspired by the work already conducted by Stepinska et al. (2020) in the JRP project's first wave. Our aim is to test the analysis results, initially limited to print news, in different media platforms previously unconsidered. Moreover, we want to update current research by considering a different period than that focused on by the first-wave scholars, as doing so may lead to different evidence. In particular, we will look at each country to examine the presence, type, and prominence of the interventionist role in the news. Attention is given to the sub-dimensions and factors that can explain such journalistic performance, which will be investigated in relation to the main characteristics of the media outlets considered and the key attributes of the news analysed. The following research questions will be answered:

RQ1. What type of interventionist role is performed in journalism across Western European countries? Is this more style-driven or content-driven interventionism?

RQ2. What factors related to the type of media and type of news can explain the difference between the performance of the interventionist role of journalism across and within countries? Are there media platforms or types of news that can predict a more interventionist attitude on the part of the journalist?

Based on the previous study of Stepinska et al. (2020) within the JRP project, a generally low level of interventionism for both types within the considered countries tends to be hypothesised. According to this, it is expected that interventionism will be more content-driven than style-driven (H1). Referring back to the framework of Hallin and Mancini (2004), it is also hypothesised that there is a higher level of content-driven interventionism among Mediterranean European countries belonging to the polarised pluralist model and a lower level of interventionism of both types in the countries following the liberal model and the democratic-corporatist model (H2). Additionally, according to Stepinska et al. (2020), it is assumed that the media's different characteristics are more applicable for explaining any differences between countries (H3).

Within the present study, the analysis of interventionist role performance is based on two analytical sub-dimensions (content-driven interventionism and style-driven interventionism) and five specific indicators related to each sub-dimension. These indicators are: interpretation, journalist point of view, call to action (for content-driven interventionism), and qualifying adjectives and use of the first person (for style-driven interventionism). To explain the dynamics of interventionist role performance, each sub-dimension and indicator have been further analysed based on several intra-country factors. The selected factors in this study include: media type, media ownership, type of news, and news geographic frame.

A content analysis of the news published in the most important newspapers, websites, radio, and TV news programmes² of the countries under study was conducted—generally selected according to audience size, reach, and level of agenda-setting influence.³ Taking

Table 1. News stories and outlets by country.

Country	Cases	Number of outlets
Austria	4821	10
Belgium	2411	7
France	4661	9
Germany	4777	6
Ireland	2421	8
Italy	4494	11
Spain	6089	12
Switzerland	3555	10
United Kingdom	4185	15

into consideration that the structure and format of media systems differ in many ways across countries, including size, audience orientation, ownership, political leaning, and the presence of more than one language in a territory, outlets were selected to represent the diversity of each country's media system as much as possible. Using the constructed week method, a two-week stratified-systematic sample was selected for all outlets from 2 January to 31 December 2020. The same days were analysed in all of the countries included (Table 1).

The unit of analysis was "the news item", which was defined as a set of contiguous verbal and, if applicable, audio and/or visual elements that refer to the same event/issue/person. Each news item was then coded based on the operationalisation proposed by Mellado (2015) and validated in previous studies (Mellado 2020; Mellado et al. 2017; Mellado and Van Dalen 2017) to measure professional roles in news content. The codebook included operational definitions of the performance of the watchdog, interventionist, loyal-facilitator, service, infotainment, and civic roles based on the relationship between journalism and the de facto power, the presence of the journalistic voice in the story, and the way the journalists address the audience. As already mentioned, in this study, we focus only on the interventionist role and specifically on its five indicators. Each one of these indicators is measured on a presence (1) or absence (0) basis. Finally, once the coding process was finalised, a post-test was conducted within each country to ensure the reliability of the coders in the actual coding process. Based on Krippendorff's alpha (K_a), the final global intercoder reliability was .79.⁴ The variation in intercoder reliability across roles ranged from .76 to .86, while the variation across countries ranged from .72 to .91.⁵

We ran Anova tests to measure the significance and effect sizes of differences in the presence of both types of interventionism (content-driven and style-driven) across countries and in relation to media type (print, online, television and radio), media ownership (private and public), type of news (hard, soft and hybrid), and geographic frame (foreign and domestic). We also ran Pearson correlations between the particular indicators of the interventionist role, as well as between the interventionist role and other roles overall and for each country.

Results

The analysis results do not provide a homogeneous picture of the performance of content- and style-driven interventionism in the countries under consideration. First of all, in general, the results do not report evidence of interventionism being widespread

(H1). Within this, keeping in mind the framework outlined by Hallin and Mancini (2004), the presence of the journalistic voice within the news in different countries appears generally fragmentary. Indeed, failing to replicate the differences expected (H2). Referring to Figure 1 and considering both sub-dimensions through which the journalistic voice is expressed in the news, the countries that show a higher inclination towards interventionism with a higher average compared to others, albeit in different ways among them, are Germany, France, Ireland, and Switzerland; all countries belong to different journalism models, in which institutional, political, and cultural dynamics have historically followed different trajectories (Hallin and Mancini 2004). Following the distinction between the two sub-dimensions (e.g., content-driven interventionism and style-driven interventionism), Figure 1 displays how the performance of the interventionist role is distributed between the two sub-dimensions in each country, providing a clearer understanding of the type and extent of the detected journalistic voice. The Anova test conducted on this data reveals a significant difference between content-driven interventionism and style-driven interventionism: $F_{\text{content}}(8,37400) = 220.223$; $p < .001$; $F_{\text{style}}(8,37400) = 229.972$; $p < .001$. The effect size was relevant for the content-driven interventionist approach ($\eta^2 = .04$) and for the style-driven type of interventionism ($\eta^2 = .05$).

The country with the highest presence of content-driven interventionism is Germany ($M = .26$, $SD = .29$), followed by Switzerland ($M = .22$, $SD = .26$) and, with similar averages, also the United Kingdom ($M = .18$, $SD = .23$) and Spain ($M = .17$, $SD = .23$). In comparison, the country with the highest presence of style-driven interventionism is France ($M = .26$, $SD = .30$) from which emerges a significant difference compared to content-driven interventionism ($M = .14$, $SD = .21$), followed once again by Germany ($M = .24$, $SD = .28$), Ireland ($M = .21$, $SD = .26$), Switzerland ($M = .20$, $SD = .28$) and Spain ($M = .19$, $SD = .27$).

When testing the first research hypothesis (H1), the averages reported in Figure 1 show that some countries generally exhibit a higher level of interventionism, explained by both content and style factors, while others are characterised by a specific type of

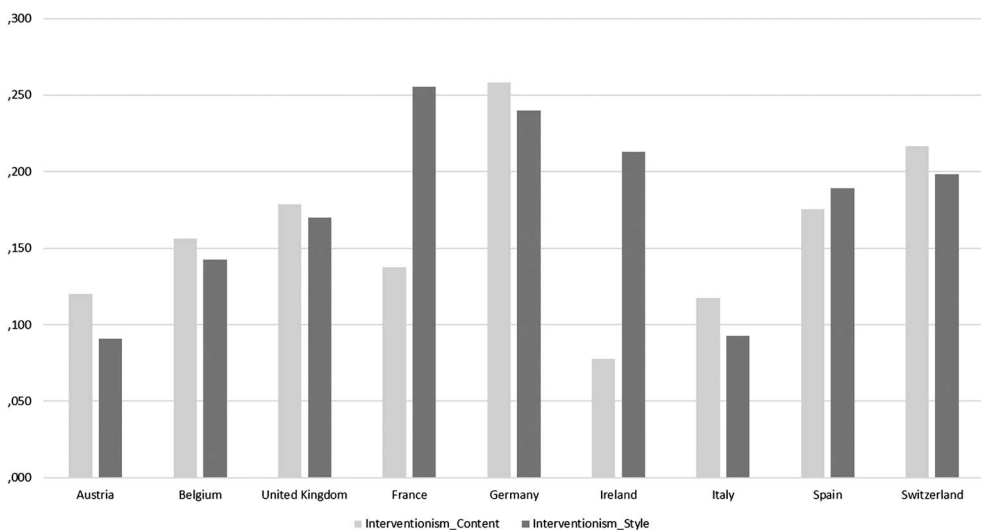


Figure 1. Content-driven and style-driven indicators of interventionism (means).

interventionism where the performance of one type does not correspond to the performance of the other. In the first case, Germany is the prime example for demonstrating the performance of both types of interventionism, meaning they go hand in hand. Also, the case of Germany becomes even more interesting when compared to the earlier studies discussed. According to the framework of Hallin and Mancini (2004), Germany falls within the democratic-corporatist model, which historically exhibits a high level of political parallelism—albeit mitigated by a growing emphasis on a more neutral model of information—that can explain a more interventionist performance observed. Within the study conducted by Stepinska et al. (2020), Germany was found to demonstrate a significant level of interventionism that, in their study, primarily manifested as a higher level of content-driven interventionism. In the case of the present study, however, Germany records the highest averages in both types, indicating an interventionism that manifests in different nuances and grants insights for testing the second research hypothesis (H2). In the case of Germany, therefore, there is no substantial difference between either type of interventionism, which indicates a journalistic voice expressed through different rhetorical and stylistic devices—as we will delve into shortly. Similarly, Switzerland also shows significant averages for both types. Plus, the case of Ireland is also interesting, as it exhibits a rather high average in style-driven interventionism, particularly for a country within the liberal model (Hallin and Mancini 2004), and scores significantly lower for content-driven interventionism. This finding contradicts the results presented by Stepinska et al. (2020), where Ireland displayed dynamics typical of neutral-oriented journalism (Nechush-tai 2018), differing from what was observed in the United States, which is not examined in this study. Similarly, France demonstrates a similar pattern to that observed in Ireland, although it belongs to different journalistic systems; namely, the polarised pluralist model (Hallin and Mancini 2004).

To further explore the data regarding the two types of interventionism performed (H1), [Figure 2](#) provides a detailed and in-depth analysis of the various indicators of style-driven approaches. As mentioned in this study's methodological note, style-driven interventionism is measured through the use of qualifying adjectives and the first-person perspective. In general, across all countries, the prevalence of style-driven interventionism characterised by the use of qualifying adjectives rather than the first-person perspective is clear, aligning with previous research (Stepinska et al. 2020). Qualifying adjectives are prominently used in three countries and account for almost 50% of the news content (Germany 45%, France 43%, and Ireland 41%). Even in cases where the overall level of interventionism is low, as seen in Austria and Italy, the performance of style-driven interventionism is mainly driven by the use of qualifying adjectives (both Austria and Italy reach 17%). The data suggests that, across the Western European countries considered, even when the mode of intervention is stylistic and “cosmetic”, it still goes beyond the use of the first person, implying a more disruptive form of involvement (directly exposing oneself). This differs from the use of descriptive adjectives, which still indicate the expression of a journalist's judgement.

Moving to content-driven interventionism ([Figure 3](#)), as mentioned earlier, this type of interventionism is manifested through the journalist's point of view, interpretation, and call to action. In the same way as style-driven interventionism, these sub-dimensions show significant variation, and there is limited use of content-driven interventionism through call to action by journalists (Austria 2%, Belgium 4%, United Kingdom 2%,

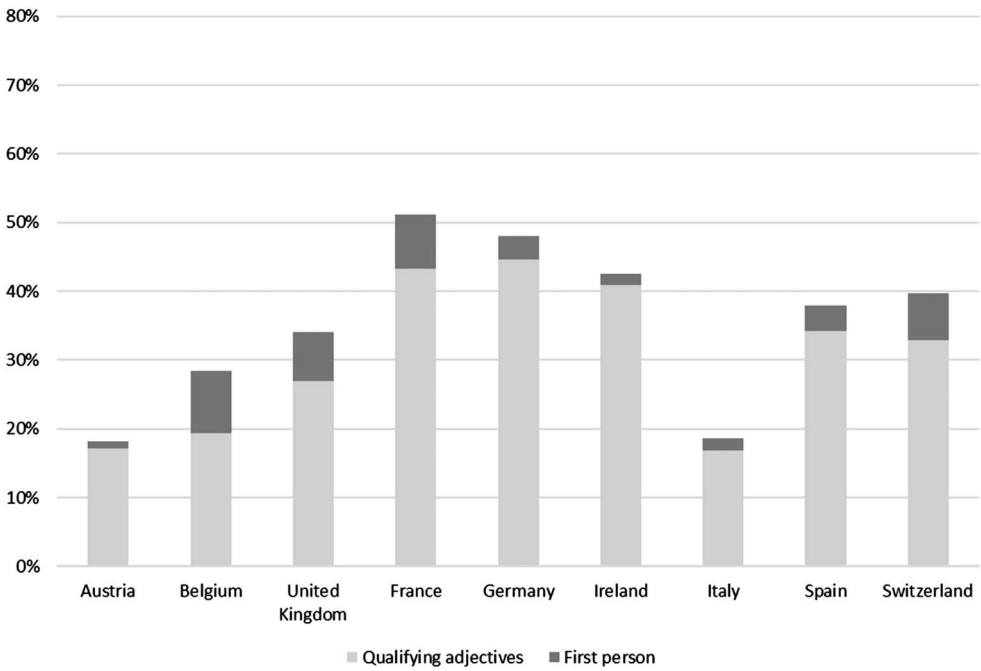


Figure 2. Presence of style-driven related indicators of interventionism (%).

France 2%, Germany 4%, Ireland 5%, Italy 1%, Spain 1%, and Switzerland 5%). This data is not surprising and indicates a limited inclination among journalists to intervene with a proactive purpose, to propose a way of reacting to a situation, to demand change, or

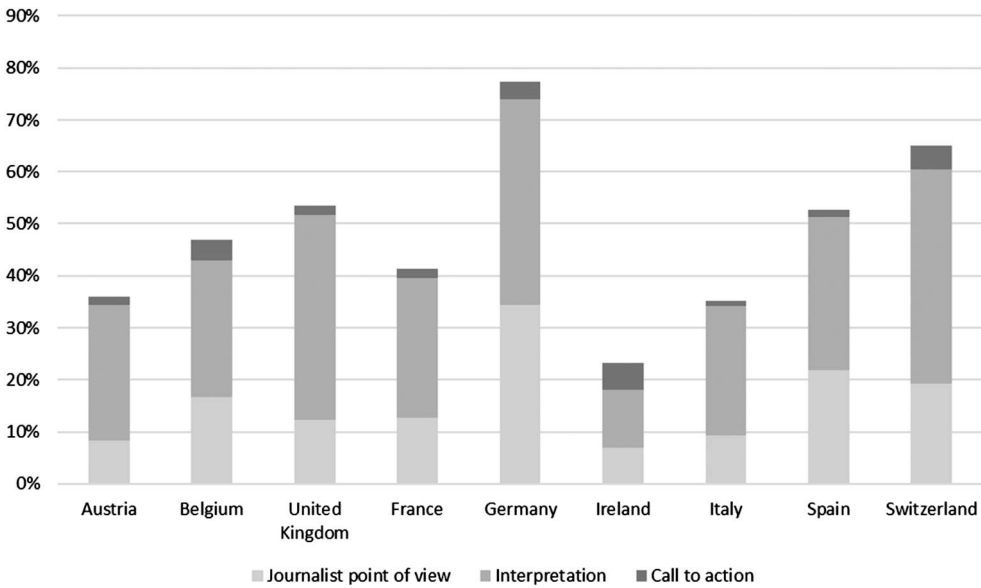


Figure 3. Presence of content-driven related indicators of interventionism (%).

to resolve conflict. On the other hand, the type of content-driven interventionism that records the highest percentages arises from journalists' interpretations of the reported events. The preferred way for journalists in the analysed countries to intervene, which contributes to shaping their own perspectives, is to explain the causes that led to a specific event and its possible effects and consequences. Higher use of this type of interventionism is observed in Switzerland (41%), Germany (40%), and the United Kingdom (39%). The other countries generally show lower levels of performance in the interventionist role in the different sub-dimensions. Along with this, fair levels are also recorded for content-based interventionism driven by the journalist's point of view, indicating an approach that does not hesitate to intervene by taking a position on an event or fact. Once again, Germany shows significant percentages (34%) along with Spain where, despite a lower level of both-dimension interventionism, a balanced split is clear between the different factors constituting the content-driven sub-dimension—interpretation accounting for 30% and the journalist's point of view for 22%. This finding aligns with the observations made by Stepinska et al. (2020), whose study similarly found a higher emphasis on interpretation and limited utilisation of calls to action.

Moving on, in order to further explore the dynamics of interventionism's performance, both interventionism sub-dimensions have been examined in relation to various factors that could explain their presence. Specifically, the focus was placed on two broad factors, related to the media taken into account for the study and the type of news analysed, respectively. In other words, the obtained results were tested in the context of different types of news (hard, soft, or hybrid) and taking into account the geographic frame. Additionally, the analysis considered different types of media outlets (such as print, television, radio, or online) and media ownership. These factors were chosen to provide a comprehensive understanding of how interventionism manifests across different media and news contexts, so as to test the third research hypothesis (H3). Research results show that the characteristics of the media and news analysed do not directly discriminate between one type of interventionism and another (H3). When looking at the overall data, these appear relatively consistent in both directions. Nevertheless, some interesting distinctions arise when looking at the data of individual countries. In order to facilitate an easier understanding of the data, a reading of the evidence from the particular to the general is proposed. In other words, we will first show the results relating to the analysis conducted on the type of news, then move on to show those relating to a broader look at the type of media.

The first aspect taken into consideration, therefore, is the type of news. Table 2 displays the presence of content- and style-driven interventionism for different types of news (hard news, soft news, or hybrid news). The Anova test conducted on these data also reveals differences between the various types: $F_{\text{content}}(2,35640) = 9.533$; $p < .001$; $F_{\text{style}}(2,35640) = 170.647$; $p < .001$. The analysis reproduces some of the differences observed in the previous analyses regarding the type of media and media ownership. In particular, among the countries examined, those included in Hallin and Mancini's (2004) North Atlantic or liberal model—namely, the UK and Ireland—exhibit the highest averages of interventionism in correspondence with hard news. Specifically, the UK displays a more interventionist approach in hard news for content-driven interventionism (.20). In contrast, Ireland exhibits higher averages for style-driven interventionism in hard and hybrid news (.23 and .23, respectively). Spain, on the other hand, belonging to the

Table 2. Presence of content- and style-driven interventionism on different types of news (means).

		Type of news			
		Hard	Soft	Hybrid	Total
Austria	Content	.11	.13	.12	.12
	Style	.06	.13	.11	.09
Belgium	Content	.16	.16	.13	.15
	Style	.12	.19	.11	.13
France	Content	.14	.14	.12	.13
	Style	.23	.32	.25	.25
Germany	Content	.22	.32	.29	.26
	Style	.19	.32	.27	.24
Ireland	Content	.08	.06	.04	.07
	Style	.23	.14	.23	.21
Italy	Content	.10	.14	.12	.11
	Style	.06	.17	.11	.09
UK	Content	.20	.12	.16	.18
	Style	.16	.17	.17	.16
Spain	Content	.16	.20	.21	.17
	Style	.16	.25	.21	.18
Switzerland	Content	.21	.21	.22	.21
	Style	.16	.31	.21	.19
Total	Content	.16	.17	.17	.16
	Style	.15	.22	.19	.17

polarised pluralist model typical of Southern European Mediterranean countries, shows a higher average in soft and hybrid news of both types. It is also interesting to note the data regarding Germany, which, in line with that observed for Spain, exhibits a higher level of interventionism of both types in relation to soft news (both .32 on style-driven and content-driven)—although the data is still quite significant for other types of news as well—and France (.32 style-driven). Thus, the data represents a distinguishing factor between countries belonging to traditionally distant—almost polar opposite—models of journalism, where journalists tend to express their voices in different news contexts. Although it might have been expected that the political parallelism traditionally characterising Mediterranean European countries (such as Spain) would play a role in the expression of a potentially higher level of interventionism in hard news.

Subsequently, the analysis also considers the geographic frame as an indicator of where the news story takes place. In the JRP news analysis, it was possible to indicate whether the event described took place in the country where the journalist was operating, or whether there were references to at least one other country or actors from other countries. Conversely, whether the event covered was foreign but with the participation of actors from the journalist's reference country, or whether it was exclusively foreign. In this study, we choose to analyse the first two cases, classified as domestic news, together with the other two, classified as foreign news. The Anova test shows slight differences regarding geographic frame related to both content- and style-driven interventionism: $F_{\text{content}}(1,37407) = 56.800$; $p < .001$; $F_{\text{style}}(1,37407) = 32.298$; $p < .001$.

The analysis results indicate that, in general, the news context is not a discriminating factor for different types of interventionism (Table 3). However, by looking in-depth into the analysis of individual countries, a more interventionist approach for both types is observed in the news taking place in foreign contexts (beyond the participation of local actors), seen particularly in the cases of Spain (content-driven interventionism reaches .20 and style-driven interventionism reaches .21), Switzerland (content-driven

Table 3. Presence of content- and style-driven interventionism on different news geographic frame (means).

		Geographic frame		
		Foreign	Domestic	Total
Austria	Content	.12	.12	.12
	Style	.09	.09	.09
Belgium	Content	.18	.14	.16
	Style	.17	.13	.14
France	Content	.14	.13	.14
	Style	.27	.25	.26
Germany	Content	.24	.27	.26
	Style	.24	.24	.24
Ireland	Content	.05	.09	.08
	Style	.20	.22	.21
Italy	Content	.14	.11	.12
	Style	.12	.08	.09
UK	Content	.19	.17	.18
	Style	.18	.16	.17
Spain	Content	.20	.16	.17
	Style	.21	.18	.19
Switzerland	Content	.25	.19	.22
	Style	.24	.17	.20
Total	Content	.18	.16	.16
	Style	.19	.17	.18

interventionism equal to .25 and style-driven interventionism equal to .24), and France (style-driven interventionism equal to .27).

Although, as mentioned above, these data are not particularly indicative of distinguishing one type of interventionism from another, an attempt has been made to reflect on the reasons why the subtle differences found in Table 3 mostly occur in relation to events or occurrences—and, therefore, news—taking place in a foreign country rather than the journalist's country of origin. In other words, one might expect that journalists' intervention is more influenced by participating in an internal national debate than an event or occurrence happening externally—although this can still have an impact domestically. The geographic frame data may suggest a likelihood that the space within which the facts that the journalist is reporting plays a role in the freedom the journalist perceives to be able to express. In other words, the journalist might feel freer to intervene on issues that do not directly concern his or her own country but rather concern others, albeit with domestic actors. This could decree greater and substantial freedom from interference and pressure that might instead be more likely to arise in the case of facts and events occurring on national soil. Although this is a point that needs further investigation and verification, the data can help with reasoning about those conditions and features within the news that would favour greater interventionism.

Moving on to analyse how the two sub-dimensions of interventionism manifest themselves based on the type of media, the Anova test shows some differences regarding the type of media and the content- and style-driven interventionism: $F_{\text{content-}}(3,37405) = 490.420$; $p < .001$; $F_{\text{style}}(3,37405) = 235.538$; $p < .001$. Table 4 presents the means for each country by type of media outlet and type of interventionism. The data varies across different countries, with some exceptions. In general, it is interesting to observe that, among all the different media outlets, the print press shows a higher overall mean for both types of interventionism. This indicates a type of journalistic

Table 4. Presence of content- and style-driven interventionism on different types of media (means).

		Media type				
		Print	Television	Radio	Online	Total
Austria	Content	.11	.17	.08	.10	.12
	Style	.12	.09	.06	.07	.09
Belgium	Content	.18	.11	.11	.20	.15
	Style	.13	.07	.10	.24	.14
France	Content	.17	.14	.10	.12	.13
	Style	.27	.31	.22	.20	.25
Germany	Content	.40	.34	.00	.27	.25
	Style	.31	.34	.01	.28	.24
Ireland	Content	.07	.15	.02	.05	.07
	Style	.22	.28	.10	.24	.21
Italy	Content	.16	.14	.08	.07	.11
	Style	.13	.11	.05	.06	.09
UK	Content	.13	.28	.09	.19	.17
	Style	.18	.27	.07	.15	.17
Spain	Content	.20	.15	.07	.25	.17
	Style	.21	.04	.25	.24	.18
Switzerland	Content	.30	.15	.18	.22	.21
	Style	.27	.16	.08	.27	.19
Total	Content	.20	.19	.08	.17	.16
	Style	.21	.18	.11	.19	.17

voice that tends to find more space in traditional media formats offering a media logic (Altheide and Snow 1979) that better aligns with the journalistic need to intervene using their own voice. Furthermore, the data seems to be consistent with the expectation that traditional print media are more inclined to support the political parallelism that finds expression there, representing the diverse subcultures within each country. It is worth noting that television, another traditional medium alongside print, also shows significant averages—second only to print. However, this does not mean that new online formats do not support an interventionist approach, as evidenced by Table 4, where online media records significant averages distributed in a greater number of countries. On the other hand, radio appears to be the media outlet with the least present journalistic voice, regardless of the dimension of interventionism. This is likely due to the brevity of most news items broadcasted on the analysed radio stations, which does not allow journalists to adequately find space to intervene and express their opinions and their stance on the topics and events they report on. The only exceptions to this trend are observed in France (.23) and Spain (.25), where style-driven interventionism finds more space in radio.

In the case of the UK, it is worth noting that the highest averages—significantly higher than the others—are found in relation to television (content-driven .28 and style-driven .27). As shown in Hallin and Mancini (2004), in contrast to continental European systems, television in the UK represents a classic case of a professional model of television management linked to extensive journalistic autonomy from political control. Our data highlight that the type of media outlet is a significant factor, especially in the UK, in the presence of both types of interventionism. In the case of Switzerland, it appears that the written format, representing both print and online media, is more inclined towards an interventionist approach to journalism. Specifically, for the print press, there are higher averages in both content-driven interventionism (.30) and style-driven interventionism (.27). Similarly, for online media, there are

Table 5. Presence of content- and style-driven interventionism on different media ownership (means).

		Media ownership		
		Private	Public	Total
Austria	Content	.11	.12	.12
	Style	.10	.07	.09
Belgium	Content	.16	.13	.15
	Style	.16	.09	.14
France	Content	.14	.12	.13
	Style	.26	.24	.25
Germany	Content	.34	.10	.25
	Style	.31	.10	.24
Ireland	Content	.06	.09	.07
	Style	.17	.25	.21
Italy	Content	.12	.09	.11
	Style	.09	.08	.09
UK	Content	.16	.19	.17
	Style	.16	.17	.17
Spain	Content	.17	.13	.17
	Style	.20	.03	.18
Switzerland	Content	.20	.23	.21
	Style	.21	.16	.19
Total	Content	.17	.13	.16
	Style	.19	.14	.17

higher averages of .22 for content-driven interventionism and .27 for style-driven interventionism.

Continuing with the analysis of indicators based on media outlet features, Table 5 presents the averages related to the presence of content- and style-driven interventionism for different media ownerships. The type of media ownership, whether private or public, may contribute to an understanding of to what extent journalists, under different pressures and logic, are more or less inclined to express their opinion, intervene and, therefore, make their voice heard in the presence of different ownership structures. The Anova test shows that media ownership is a significant factor in the presence of both types of interventionism: $F_{\text{content}}(3,37407) = 221.938$; $p < .001$; $F_{\text{style}}(3,37407) = 291.655$; $p < .001$.

In general, privately owned media outlets tend to be more inclined towards an interventionist journalistic approach. In the case of the UK, however, as previously discussed, both dimensions of interventionism are present in the context of public media ownership, although with non-significantly different averages. This data becomes even more interesting when compared to that of Ireland, which is also included in the liberal model of journalism (Hallin and Mancini 2004)—which, as we have seen, shows predominantly style-driven interventionism—and presents a significantly higher level of style-driven interventionism in the presence of public media ownership, as shown in Table 5. Conversely, in the case of Spain, higher averages are observed in relation to private media ownership (.20 for style-driven interventionism).

Greater differences are observed in the case of Germany, which, as highlighted in the above data, shows a particularly interventionist tendency in both content-driven and style-driven approaches. In Germany, media outlets with higher levels of interventionism in both types are mostly those with private ownership (content-driven .34 and style-driven .31), meaning that a private form of ownership may favour a more prominent journalistic presence when compared to a public form of ownership.

Concluding Remarks

Within an established and long-traditional theoretical framework (Benson and Hallin 2007; Cohen 1963; Donsbach and Patterson 2004; Esser and Umbricht 2013; Hallin and Mancini 2004; Janowitz 1975; Mellado et al. 2017; Salgado and Strömbäck 2012; Thomson and White 2008; Weaver and Wilhoit 1991), the present study has sought to contribute to revealing further evidence that may offer reflections on the factors that may play a discriminating role in the exercise of more interventionist journalism or, in contrast, more detached journalism.

Moving within the more general framework of the JRP project (Mellado 2015; 2020; Mellado et al. 2017), this study aimed to replicate an analysis previously conducted in part by colleagues working on the project's first wave (Stepinska et al. 2020). Doing so allowed for broadening the analysis spectrum by incorporating a greater number of variables at its disposal, such as different types of media platforms (including television, digital news and radio) previously not analysed as the first wave was exclusively focused on print news. The intention that led this study was to show that, by analysing different periods of time and, above all, media outlets with profoundly different characteristics, far different interventionism dynamics could be detected.

To achieve this and with the aim of ensuring greater internal consistency, the research focuses on a group of countries within the same geographic area: Western Europe. This specific geographic area then becomes of particular interest for examining and updating findings that have already been noted by scholars who have, over time, privileged the study of Western European countries to measure journalistic cultures in the presence of a variety of political and institutional contexts. At the same time, this choice inherently implies a substantial homogeneity of cultures, which does not allow for the observation of significantly diverse dynamics that would occur if countries with very different institutional and political structures were considered (such as established democracies versus regimes), as suggested by the majority of studies that have investigated this topic (Hughes et al. 2017; Márquez-Ramírez et al. 2020). This suggests that observing the differences between the countries considered involves examining values that may be less pronounced but nonetheless significant, within the framework proposed by Hallin and Mancini (2004). In this regard, although the data presented in this study are not sufficient to question the validity and robustness of the models developed in the literature—which is not the research objective—this work aims to stimulate discussion on how journalistic voices are either present or absent in news coverage in the presence of different factors. On the merits of the study, an attempt was made to test a more or less interventionist type of journalism—content- and style-driven—in relation to the characteristics of the media outlets and the news analysed to determine if these factors play a significant role in determining both types of interventionism.

To briefly summarise the study's main results, generally speaking, they present a rather fragmented picture lacking evidence of interventionism being widespread. Within this, however, the data confirms the expected presence (Stepinska et al. 2020) of a more content-driven than style-driven type of interventionism. As expected, in almost all the countries considered, when journalists intervene with their own voice, they predominantly do so through rhetorical devices of interpretation and by expressing their own

point of view. Within this content-driven type of interventionism, less space is given to a type that also includes a call to action by the journalist and, ideally, relates to interpretive journalism connected to the journalist's advocacy initiatives—as suggested by the previous literature in this field (Himmelboim and Limor 2005; Janowitz 1975). In the context of this study, the focus on explaining the causes and effects of a particular event or fact appears to prevail over the journalist's intention to promote or encourage a specific action by the public, consistent with findings from other studies (Stepinska et al. 2020).

A higher level of interventionism, particularly content-driven, is mainly found in Central and Northern European countries, instead of in countries belonging to the polarised pluralist model theorised by Hallin and Mancini (2004). In particular, Germany and Switzerland demonstrate a higher tendency for journalists to intervene through interpretation and by expressing their own viewpoints. However, the specific finding for Germany is not surprising when considering other studies that have already detected this type of dynamic (Stepinska et al. 2020). Among the countries of Mediterranean Europe, France and Spain stand out as being the more interventionist within those of the same journalistic model. In fact, Italy is notably absent from the dynamics of journalistic voice presence. Contrary to expectations for a country traditionally characterised by a high level of political parallelism (Hallin and Mancini 2004), the data reveal that Italian journalists tend to intervene less—at least in relation to the devices analysed.

Finally, the research provides evidence that the characteristics of analysed news and media outlets are not always able to discriminate per se between one type of interventionism or another. Looking at the overall data, this appears to be relatively consistent for both. However, some interesting differences emerge when considering the data from individual countries. For example, regarding the type of media outlet, these proved to influence a higher level of interventionism, providing interesting insights compared to what was observed in the JRP project's first wave, which did not consider the different types of media outlets. Overall though, the print press exhibits a greater level of interventionism for both types. This trend is also observed, albeit to a lesser extent, in television, indicating that these traditional media outlets tend to facilitate a higher level of journalistic interventionism.

Moving forwards to consider the “big picture”, we consider the present study, although partially, does contribute to showing how the existence of reliable models in the wake of what has been elaborated in the literature—cannot always explain the current dynamics of journalistic work. Specifically, regarding the capacity of journalists to intervene within the news, if Southern European countries were expected to exhibit a higher level of interventionist journalism, characterised by strong interpretive and commentary-driven news reporting at the expense of a more detached and fact-based narrative (Benson and Hallin 2007; Esser and Umbricht 2013; Mellado et al. 2017), then this was not actually recorded by the results, which partially confirms what has already emerged from Stepinska and colleagues' work (2020). In contrast, European countries with a democratic-corporate tradition, which were expected to present a more information-oriented approach (Esser and Umbricht 2013), are shown to feature journalism with a certain type of interventionism.

In order to reflect on the factors that may play a discriminating role in the exercise of more interventionist journalism or, on the contrary, a more detached one, the results of

the present study, going beyond Stepinska and colleagues' work (2020), call for a focus on some specific variables found to be more significant here. Related to this, the literature on media systems has already hypothesised that the most recent technological developments—and, thus, the advent of digital—might constitute a turning point in the work of journalists and journalistic cultures (Brüggemann et al. 2014; Herrero et al. 2017; Mattoni and Ceccobelli 2018; Norris 2009). In this regard, the article gives evidence of how media considered more traditional may lead to different journalistic practices related to the presence of journalists' voices.

Nevertheless, although this study opens up numerous areas for reflection and insight, there are several limitations that need to be taken into account. Focusing on a single role and its related subdimensions through some specific variables is the main factor among them. Hence, the reflection that has been proposed here is to be considered one-dimensional. Along with this is the fact that observing a specific geographical area—that of Western countries that are culturally, politically and institutionally rather homogeneous among themselves—only returns a partial picture. This certainly has consequences for the possibility of observing substantially different values and dynamics.

Possible future research developments may, therefore, be first of all directed at broadening the factors and variables to be considered in addition to those already selected, in order to further investigate dynamics regarding the presence of journalistic voices in the news. Next, to expand the investigation, further work will do well to consider the different roles that the journalist may perform. Finally, researchers may also consider countries belonging to different geographical areas; first, by expanding to other Western countries, then by including non-Western countries to achieve further insights.

Notes

1. <https://www.journalisticperformance.org/the-project>.
2. For more information on news outlets by media type and country look at supplementary materials.
3. According to JRP project strategies, we conducted a content analysis for Italy. The data on the other countries included in this study were analysed by other JRP national teams.
4. Based on Krippendorff's alpha (K_a), the intercoder reliability per country was: Austria .88, Belgium .76, France .76, Germany .76, Ireland .74, Italy .85, Spain .80, Switzerland .78, United Kingdom .80.
5. For more details on the type of analysis conducted, please refer to the JRP project's methodological note available at <https://www.journalisticperformance.org/contentanalysis>.

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