

News media use in Germany on multiple media platforms: A Q-methodological analysis of news repertoires

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Abstract:

The news media environment has undergone quite a dramatic transformation in recent years. In the digital era, media users receive an overwhelming supply of news from multiple media. Moreover, online news presentation gives people more content choices, more control and the opportunity to customize their news consumption. This study investigates patterns of cross-media news consumption in Germany based on Q methodology. We were able to identify five different news repertoires: (1) the public service broadcasting omnivore, (2) the quality-conscious offline omnivore, (3) the ambivalent (online) traditionalist, (4) the professional commercialist and (5) the online localist. Across all repertoires, traditional regional and local news sources play an important role in German media usage, as for example social media services are not that common as news sources in Germany. Furthermore, Germans remain heavily attached to television news. Reasons for these special characteristics of German news media consumption may be that regional and local news are easy to access from many newspapers as well as from the public service broadcasters, who are also broadcasting on a regional level. Moreover, traditionally there is a great interest in local and regional news in Germany.

1. German society, culture and media

Population

According to the Federal Statistical Office, the current population of Germany (March 2015) is 81.3 million. A percentage of 20.3 of the whole population have a migration background. The highest number of people with a migration background lives in the cities of Bremen, Hamburg and Berlin as well as in the federal state of Baden-Württemberg (German Federal Statistical Office, January 2016).

System of Government

After the Second World War a parliamentary democracy with a multiparty system was established in Germany, first consisting of 11 federal states. After the reunion of the German Federal Republic and the German Democratic Republic in 1990 five more federal states were added. Each of these federal states has its own government. The administrative authorities are divided between the federal state governments and the federal government (Wilke 2008: p. 1960; 2015: p. 225).

Language

German is the only official language in Germany.

German Society and Culture

In the last 100 to 150 years the German society has been through many wars and changes. Because of these developments the borders of the country were moved several times. The state territory of present-day Germany is now limited to a German-speaking core with only few historical minorities. There are only two bigger groups with the Danes living next to the border to Denmark and the Sorbes living in the eastern part of Germany (Kleinsteuber 2004: p. 78). While the western part of Germany began to develop a new democratic system after the Second World War under supervision of the allied forces (USA, Great Britain, France), the eastern parts were living under a socialistic dictatorship until 1989/90 (Blum 2014: p. 210). The integration of the eastern territory in the political system after 1990 went quite well due to the federal system. Out of the new territory five additional federal states were formed, which could easily be included into the governmental system (Kleinsteuber 2004: p. 78). However, even if the formal integration seems quite successful, there are still many differences in society between the western and eastern parts of Germany, for example concerning wages and the economy (Damm et al. 2015: p. 26, 32).

Migration has played a significant role in German society since World War II. During the 1950s many immigrants came to Germany as migrant labourers and later on many people came as political refugees or for economic reasons. German society thus became very multicultural and was shaped by many different religions and cultures (Kleinsteuber 2004: p. 78). The phenomenon of migration shows another difference between eastern and western Germany. Even though most of the migration has taken place in the western part, the population in the east is more xenophobic than in the west (Damm et al. 2015: p. 14f).

The German media system: a comparative perspective

The media system of Germany belongs to the 'North/Central European or Democratic Corporate Model' according to the typology of Hallin and Mancini (2004: p. 143). This particular model implies, above all, reporting partisan and other social divisions, and a high level of professionalization in journalism. These aspects also include a strong mass-circulation press and an early development of press freedom. Hallin and Mancini describe

the German broadcasting system as a very complex one in comparison to the other countries in this particular model (Hallin & Mancini 2004: p. 143ff).

Despite the development of the media being closely related to the political system, the German media preserves its independence from politics despite attempts from the political realm to influence its work. Other European countries with public service broadcasting systems are for example not that independent from politics (i.e. Spain) (Ibarra 2015: p. 166).

The German media system has changed many times during the last 200 years. In parallel with political changes the freedom of press was sometimes limited or even abolished (Blum 2014: p. 213). Today – much like the system of government – the media is decentralised and mostly organised on the level of the federal states. This results in a high amount of local newspapers and the fact that public service broadcasting is mainly organised at the level of the federal states. A second aspect of decentralisation is that media organisations are located in many cities across the country, rather than in one media centre (Kleinsteuber 2004: p. 79). The Federal Constitutional Court is one of the most important actors in the German media system. In the past it has passed many verdicts, for example concerning the freedom of the press and the authorisation of private broadcasting. These verdicts were essential for the development of the mediascape existing today (Blum 2014: p. 214f; Hallin & Mancini 2004: p. 168).

The Media Outlets

Print Newspapers

The mediascape in Germany is characterised by a huge spectrum of print newspapers, which are mostly managed by private companies. A special characteristic of the newspapers in Germany is that there are many regional daily newspapers – typically with a large number of local editions – and only few national daily newspapers. In 2010 there were 329 regional and only 10 national daily newspapers (Meyn & Tonnemacher 2012: p. 59ff). A look at the German tabloids shows that most of them are of local or regional significance. The only exception is BILD. This tabloid is distributed nationally and has the highest circulation rate among all newspapers (Kleinsteuber 2004: p. 79; Wilke 2015: p. 226).

In recent years a problem has emerged on the newspaper market in Germany. In many local areas a monopolistic system developed. As a result, many readers can only get information about local events from one single newspaper. So the main characteristic of a commercial system is missing: competition. With a monopolistic system on local levels the control function of media concerning local politicians could be threatened (Meyn & Tonnemacher 2012: p. 65).

Electronic Media, Television, and Radio

The television and radio system in Germany is quite special. For a long time after the Second World War there was only public service broadcasting in Germany, which was modelled on the organisation of the BBC. At first there were many local broadcasters at the federal state level, which founded a consortium of broadcasting stations (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Rundfunkanstalten – ARD) in 1950 to form a common national television channel. This channel started broadcasting in 1954. About ten years later a second national public service television broadcaster (Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen – ZDF) came into existence. Since the 1980s private broadcasting has been allowed and a dual broadcasting system has developed. Today, there are numerous private broadcasters in the field of radio (about 280 channels) and television (over 400 channels); the biggest private program providers are RTL and Pro7/Sat.1. The private broadcasters are licensed by telecommunication agencies at the level of the federal states (Ibarra 2015: p. 157; Meyn & Tonnemacher 2012: p. 145ff; Wilke 2008: pp. 1962f; Die Medienanstalten 2015: pp. 59, 112).

As the public service broadcasters are organized by the principles of public control they are bound to provide basic services for the public. This includes serving the cultural and informational needs of the audience. Private broadcasters – as they are managed commercially – have no such regulations. This difference is reflected in the programming: the private broadcasters for example air many more informational contents concerning ‘human-touch’-topics, while the public service broadcasters set their focus on more ambitious topics (Ibarra 2015: p. 158; Meyn & Tonnemacher 2012: p. 125ff; Wilke 2015: p. 226).

Digital Media (Internet and social media)

In 2015, 80 percent of the Germans were using the Internet. Especially its use ‘on the way’ increased in recent years, from 20 percent in 2011 to 55 percent in 2015. The most commonly used online services are search engines like Google followed by instant messengers like WhatsApp and online encyclopaedias like Wikipedia (ARD & ZDF 2015). At least one smartphone is available in 61 percent of the German households (Engel & Breunig 2015: p. 311).

The media audience

Germans use media for about 9.5 hours a day. During this time the average German watches TV for more than three hours and listens to the radio for nearly three hours. Especially among the younger generation between 14 and 29 years the Internet is the leading medium with respect to the time used (an average use of 187 minutes per day). The younger generation on average spends only nine minutes per day reading a daily newspaper – among all Germans the average is 23 minutes per day (Engel & Breunig 2015: p. 312).

2. Method

After a pretest, the interviews for this study were conducted by two well-trained student assistants (one male, one female) in October-December 2014. They were conducted mainly in smaller and medium sized cities. The interviews took place at the interviewees' homes, at their workplaces or at another place of their choice. The interviewers were not allowed to recruit family members or friends. Each interviewer fulfilled a quota plan, which included requirements concerning the age, sex and education of the respondents. Overall 36 respondents were interviewed. **Table 1** shows the distribution of characteristic in our sample.

Table 1: Description of the sample

Gender	Male	18
	Female	18
Education	Prim./Secondary	12
	Intermediate	12
	Higher	12
Age	18-34	12
	35-60	12
	60+	12
Geography	Capital	0 ¹
	Large City	7
	Provincial City	29

On average the interviews lasted 63 minutes, the longest interview lasted 108 minutes and the shortest 34 minutes. Part of the interview consisted in completing a Q sort puzzle to rank 36 different news sources in order to identify the different news repertoires. This method has proven to be quite useful in the scientific field of news consumption.²

In a second part of the Interview the participants were asked to complete a questionnaire, which consists of five questions – one question allowed multiple answers, the other four questions are based on items, which are rated by the participants on a scale from 1 (=not at all important) to 5 (=very important). All of these questions aimed to get information about the informant's participation in the news coverage and the importance of political activities. With the help of the questionnaire we are later able to identify the political deliberation practices of the different news repertoires in Germany. The complete questionnaire is an appendix to the introductory article by the editors of this Special Section. The collected findings can be found in the Appendix to the present article.

3. Data analysis: Factor analysis and choice of typologies

In the process of analyzing and sorting the collected data we conducted a factor analysis of our 36 Q sorts. During this process a principal component analysis with a VARIMAX rotation was run. As a criterion for this analysis the eigenvalue above one was used. A factor-defining Q sort was defined as a sort that loads with at least +/- .43 on a factor on a one percent level. The aim was to keep to a minimum the number of confounding Q sorts which load with at least +/- .43 on more than one factor, and the number of Q sorts which do not load on any factor at all. To prevent a problem of interpretation, the factors should not include negatively loading Q sorts. All in all a factor should consist of as many Q sorts as possible. For details about the methodological design, see Kobbarnagel & Schröder (2016).

After reviewing the results regarding the explained principles, we decided in favor of a 5-factor solution. Compared to an 8-, 7-, or 6-factor solution, it has, overall, the soundest basis. The chosen 5-factor solution explains 61 percent of the variance and minimizes the number of confounding Q sort to 6. Further details about the different factor solutions are shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Results of the conducted factor analysis

	Solution			
	8-factor	7-factor	6-factor	5-factor
expl. var. in %	74	70	66	61
no. of confounding Q sorts	7	7	7	6
no. of Q sorts that do not load on any factor	1	2	3	2
nos. of Q sorts loading on factors	10, 5, 7, 2, 2, 4, 2, 3	11, 3, 7, 3, 5, 4, 1	11, 3, 7, 3, 5, 4	13, 3, 9, 4, 5
Ø no. of Q sorts loading on a factor	4	5	6	6

4. Findings: the five German news media repertoires

Analysing the given data, five news media repertoires were distinguished for the German sample. Each repertoire represents a different behaviour concerning news consumption. The repertoires found were: (1) the public service broadcasting omnivore, (2) the quality-conscious offline omnivore, (3) the ambivalent (online) traditionalist, (4) the professional commercialist and (5) the online localist. The names are defined by the most specific characteristics of each repertoire in the behaviour concerning news media consumption.

An overview of the characteristics of each repertoire is presented in **Table 3**.

Table 3: Media repertoires and thematic characteristics (based on Swart, Peters & Broersma 2016; Schrøder 2011)

	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
News repertoire	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5
Characteristics	Public service broadcasting omnivore	Quality-conscious offline omnivore	Ambivalent (online) traditionalist	Professional commercialist	Online localist
5 most important news media	National TV news bulletin on a public service channel; Local/regional daily newspaper (print); TV current affairs, light; Radio news as part of a general public service radio channel; Read national or regional public service broadcaster's online news	National TV news bulletin on a public service channel; Local/regional daily newspaper, print; regional/local TV news bulletin; News on Text-TV; Radio news as part of a general public service radio channel	TV current affairs, light; National or regional tabloid newspapers, online; National TV news bulletin on a public service channel; National TV news bulletin on a commercial channel; National news magazine or weekly quality newspaper, online	Radio news as part of a general commercial radio channel; Professional and party-political magazines; TV news and/or current affairs on national 24-hour TV news channel; Local weekly/bi-weekly/monthly news publication, print; News on Facebook	National TV news bulletin on a public service channel; Local/regional daily newspaper, print; News on Text-TV; News from 'the news media' distributed by online video sharing media; News as you know it from 'the news media' received by email or SMS
5 least important news media	National or regional daily tabloid newspaper, print; national or regional tabloid newspaper online; News on Text-TV; News on Twitter; Blogs with news	TV news and/or current affairs from foreign/international providers; Read international news providers' online news; National or regional tabloid newspaper online; Local weekly/bi-weekly/monthly, online; News on Twitter	Radio current affairs as a part of a general radio channel and/or 24h radio news/information channel; Local weekly/bi-weekly/monthly news publication, print; TV current affairs, serious; Local weekly/bi-weekly/monthly, online; Blogs with news	TV news and/or current affairs from foreign/international providers; News on Text-TV; Read international news providers' online news; News on Twitter; News on other social media	Radio current affairs as a part of a general radio channel and/or 24h radio news/information channel; National or regional daily tabloid newspaper, print; TV news and/or current affairs from foreign/international providers; National news magazines or weekly quality newspaper, print; National or regional tabloid newspaper online
Political deliberation /engagement	low / low	low / moderate	low / moderate	low / low	low / moderate
Technological preference	uniform traditional (print and broadcast)	uniform traditional (print and broadcast)	versatile platforms	tendency towards versatile platforms	versatile platforms
Demographics	female, higher education	35-60y, 61+, intermediate and lower education	18-34y, higher education	18-34, male, lower education	35-60, female

In the following descriptions of each repertoire, the results of the questionnaire about forms of democratic participation are also included. On the whole, *deliberative activities* were found to be of low importance for people within all media repertoires and within the last month before questioning, *cultural and social activities* are of moderate importance for all repertoires. *Political activities* within the last year are of low or moderate importance to the different kinds of repertoires. Compared to the importance of deliberative activities, the importance of political activities falls at least within the same range of importance or in the next higher range in every formed repertoire.

Repertoire 1: Public service broadcasting omnivore (13 informants)

The 'Public service broadcasting omnivore' prefers news from public service broadcasting channels and from print-editions of local or regional daily newspapers. The Top-10 also includes print-editions of national daily quality newspapers. The Top-15 includes three online media: national quality newspaper sites (rank 12), free daily newspaper sites (rank 4) and public service broadcaster's online news (rank 18). The selection of these online media supports the traditional orientation of the 'Public service broadcasting omnivore' as they are online versions of traditional news media providers. Commercial broadcasting channels (rank 23) as well as social media sources play a minor role in the news selection. Tabloid newspapers, irrespective of print or online-editions, are of least importance in the repertoire.

This repertoire has the largest number of participants in comparison to the other repertoires. The demographics of those participants show no tendency towards a specific age. However, most of the participants in this repertoire are female. Informants who were sorted in this repertoire are characterized by a rather passive behavior towards participative forms of news media usage. On the aggregate level, informants who constitute this repertoire find voting in media-invited polls to be most important to them (with regard to deliberative activities). Of all the deliberative activities in the questionnaire, this is the least 'active' activity – informants just have to press a button or click with their computer mouse. The second most important deliberative activity is the expression of opinions in social media. Concerning political activity the most important one for people in this repertoire is joining petitions, which is again a low-level activity. The second most important political activity for this group is the membership in an activist group (which of course does not need to mean that the informants are *active* members). Overall, the 'Public service broadcasting omnivore' seems to neither value deliberative nor political activities. Across all five repertoires, political activities are of least importance for this repertoire. The use of information media, as described for example by informants 11 and 17, also shows a rather passive behavior in the consumption of news media:

The radio informs me along the way, I don't have to read actively or something like that. [informant 17, 18-34 years, male, high education, provincial]

Then the TV is switched on again and news is consumed while doing other things. [informant 11, 35-60 years, male, high education, large city]

Repertoire 2: Quality-conscious offline omnivore (9 informants)

All in all the 'Quality-conscious offline omnivore' prefers national, regional or local quality news in the traditional broadcast media as well as in quality print media. In the Top-15 there is just one online news source: news aggregators, personalized news services or news portals (rank 14). All media that are of lesser importance consist of either online media or international news providers. On the other hand, regional and local news play a significant role: local/regional daily newspaper, print (rank 2); regional/local TV news bulletin (rank 3).

The informants in this repertoire are all found to be older than 35 years and show a tendency towards intermediate or lower levels of education. On the aggregate level, the most important deliberative activity is writing letters to the editor of a print newspaper. The second most important deliberative activity is taking part in open radio discussions, tied with taking part in media-invited polls. This fits very well with the tentative label 'Quality-conscious offline omnivore'. For this type of media users, deliberative activities are mediated via the traditional mass media. Regarding political activities, they value above all the joining of petitions, followed by the membership in activist groups. These are the least 'active' political activities, as compared, for example, with protesting in public. Overall, the 'Quality-conscious offline omnivore' makes use of deliberation options in the offline world and is politically rather non-active. Based on the statements of participant 28 we see a strong tendency towards traditional news channels of the 'Quality-conscious offline omnivore'. For example, she sees the subscription of the daily newspaper as an expense factor. However, reading the newspaper is so important to her that the price is not a sufficient reason for unsubscribing, since reading the newspaper is a stable habit. The same participant also underlines the difference of reading something on paper or on a (smartphone) display:

I don't even look for my regional daily newspaper on the Internet because I read it and for me that is ..., I like reading better. I wouldn't even buy an audio book because I need it, I have to read it, I want to hold it in my hands and also when I read the daily paper... [informant 28, 60+ years, female, low education, provincial]

This shows – as in the first repertoire – a tendency towards a traditional selection of news channels. But in comparison to the 'Public service broadcasting omnivore' the 'Quality-conscious offline omnivore' is more engaged in political activities. The use of online media is

of very low importance to this repertoire. For example informant 4 states that she does not use any online news websites and just uses the Internet for other reasons like online banking services.

Repertoire 3: Ambivalent (online) traditionalist (5 informants)

The news media selection of the 'Ambivalent (online) traditionalist' contains both light and serious news channels, both print and broadcast. He also uses websites of traditional media. International news plays a less important role and social media news outlets are also of lesser importance. The informants see the advantages of the Internet over more traditional news sources – which are advantages concerning the time spent to acquire information. Apart from these general tendencies, the Top-10 and Top-15 media give a rather ambivalent picture. The Top-10 media consist of 3 online media (all print titles online), 5 broadcast media, and 2 quality print media. Stepping up to the Top-15 media, there are 3 more online outlets of traditional media, plus news aggregators, as well as the local/regional daily newspaper in its print-edition.

The demographic structure shows that this repertoire is constructed by a disproportionately high number of younger people. However, it also includes participants who are over 60 years old. Differences concerning other demographic characteristics could not be observed. On the aggregate level, this repertoire values voting in media-invited polls highest within the range of deliberative activities. Second most important they consider participating actively in groups on the web. While the importance of deliberative activities is low for all media repertoires, it is most appreciated by the 'Ambivalent (online) traditionalists'. With regard to political activities, they also value joining in petitions and membership in activist groups – just as those informants who make up repertoires 1 and 2. The crucial difference in comparison to the first two repertoires is the third repertoire's affinity to online media. This is reflected in the online groups in which the informants participate. Overall, the 'Ambivalent (online) traditionalist's' media use is echoed in the way he takes part in political deliberation.

Repertoire 4: Professional commercialist (3 informants)

The 'Professional commercialist' prefers news from commercial broadcast media, both online and offline. In the Top-15, there are just two newspapers: the national or regional tabloid daily (rank 6), and the local or regional daily (rank 14). The only more important print publication is the local weekly/bi-weekly/monthly news outlet (rank 4). In contrast to all other media repertoires, professional and party-political magazines are of highest importance (rank 1). In contrast, serious TV news formats (rank 30) and all quality newspapers are of minor importance. The informants state that they prefer commercial TV broadcasters over the public service broadcasters because their news formats are too boring. For example one informant states that:

I normally don't use ARD and ZDF [largest public service broadcasters in Germany]. I'm not interested in them because the channels are – in my opinion – futile. Apart from that I use news on ProSieben [commercial broadcaster in Germany] or similar programs. [informant 27, 35-60 years, male, low education, provincial]

Also, with the exception of news on Facebook, other social media news outlets play a less important role in the repertoire.

All participants in this repertoire are male, between 18 and 60 years old and have low or intermediate levels of education. On the aggregate level, the 'Professional commercialist' favors, among the deliberative activities, expressing opinion in social media. There is no clear second-place activity. Instead, four activities share the same second highest mean (2,0): taking part in radio open discussions; voting in media-invited polls; participating actively in groups on the web; active participation in the production of community/alternative newspaper/radio/television/internet channels. Despite this plethora of comparatively high-ranking activities, the overall importance of deliberative activities is low. With regard to political activities, the 'Professional commercialist' shows the same pattern as repertoires 1, 2, and 3: membership in activist groups, and joining of petitions. Overall, the 'Professional commercialist' shows a rather broad, but everything but intense interest in deliberative and political activities.

Repertoire 5: Online localist (4 informants)

Eight out of the Top-15 media in media selection of the 'Online localists' are online news outlets. The only newspapers in the Top-15 are the local or regional dailies, both print and online. The importance of regional and local newspapers is demonstrated by the following statement made by one of the informants:

The regional newspaper is really interesting because it shows you what happens in the local area etc. [informant 35, 35-60 years, female. Intermediate education, provincial]

The demographic characteristics give a hint why local news may be of such an importance to this 'Online localist'. Further demographics show that people in this repertoire are mostly female and between 35 and 60 years old.

With regard to TV, national news on a PSB channel (rank 2), and regional or local news bulletins (rank 11) play the most important roles. On the other hand, national and international news outlets play only minor roles, so do most of the social media news outlets, among them the most prominent (Facebook: rank 17; Twitter: rank 25). Although online news sources play an important role, these are not social media sources. The 'Online localist' is the only repertoire which has online video sharing media (like YouTube) in the Top-5 of the most important media.

Of all the repertoires, the 'Online localist' shows the lowest interest in deliberative activities. His mean scores of importance do not exceed 1,5 on the scale from 5 (most important) to 1 (least important). The three activities he values most are writing letters to the editor in a print newspaper, creating (as initiator) content on social issues on the web, and participating actively in the production of community/alternative newspaper/radio/television/internet channels (all with a mean of 1,5 on the aggregate level). The political activities give us a different picture. Here, the 'Online localist' has the highest mean of all repertoires (3,0) with respect to joining petitions and membership in a political party. His second most important political activity is the membership in activist groups. Overall, the 'Online localist' is the most disparate type. On the one hand, he does not care for deliberation; on the other hand he values political activities very highly – at least in comparison to the other four repertoires. Also cultural and social activities within the last month are valued most by the 'Online localists' in comparison to the other repertoires.

5. Conclusion

From the analysis of the given Q-sort data collected from 36 informants we were able to identify five different news repertoires in Germany. In comparison to other countries five news repertoires must be considered average. This leads to the conclusion that many Germans have similar patterns concerning the usage of news media. Every identified repertoire has at least one traditional news source (print or broadcast) in their Top-15. That shows the general importance of this news source. Even the 'Online localist', who is considered to get most of its news from the Internet, uses local or regional dailies to stay informed about events in the vicinity. This indicates a traditional usage behavior in Germany, where local and regional news media are very important to the people. This can be explained by looking into the special characteristics of the German media landscape. The existence of a large number of daily newspapers – local, regional and national – has ensured a stable supply with news for many years. Another characteristic is that the public service broadcasters are also partly broadcasting their programs on a regional level, and their purpose is to provide basic information services to the public. This behavior to use many local and regional news media has been long established in Germany and can be seen as a traditional habit (Hölig & Hasebrink 2017: p.14). The results of this study that traditional media is very important in Germany is also supported by the result of the survey-based Digital News Report by Hölig and Hasebrink (2017). They show that only 28 percent of the Germans see the internet as their main news source (p. 20).

The rather traditional media usage behavior of Germans in general can also be spotted when you take a look at the on- and offline behavior. Studies conducted in recent years show that Germans adopt new media and technologies more slowly than people in other countries. In 2016 only 25 percent of the Germans state that online sources – including social media – are their main source for information. This number is much smaller than the average numbers in other countries (Hölig & Hasebrink 2016: p. 536).

Nonetheless in one repertoire – the ‘Public service broadcasting omnivore’ – smartphones or tablets are at least somewhat established for the usage of news media. Every repertoire values face-to-face communication over the sharing of information online. For example sharing articles happens more likely in an offline context than via social media. To define a repertoire it is important not only to look at the most important news media but to also consider which news media is not important to the informants. Except for the ‘Online localist’, every repertoire sees Twitter as an insignificant source to get informed.

The importance of deliberative activities is low for all media repertoires. It is the lowest for the ‘Online localists’ and the highest for the ‘Ambivalent (online) traditionalists’. Cultural and social activities within the last month are of moderate importance for all repertoires. They are of least importance for the ‘Professional commercialists’, and of the most importance for the ‘Online localists’. The importance of political activities within the last year is low or moderate. Political activities are of least importance for the ‘Public service broadcasting omnivores’ and of greatest importance (albeit still within the moderate range) for the ‘Online localists’. None of the collected dimensions in the questionnaire were considered high within any of the five German news repertoires.

In the 36 Q-card puzzles there are five news media which are mentioned ten times or more. These can be considered the core of the German news media selection. The news media are (1) National TV news bulletin on a public service channel, (2) Local/regional daily newspaper, print, (3) Radio news as part of a general public service radio channel, (4) Regional/local TV news bulletin and (5) Radio news as part of a general commercial radio channel. Overall, the leading news media in the German universe of news consumption is characterized by serious broadcasting media, local print media and an almost complete absence of online media. In the context of the structure of our sample, which included mostly people from small towns and rural areas it has to be mentioned that there might be a slight bias towards local and regional news usage. Online media might be seen as a more important news sources in capital cities. Additionally, ‘old habits’ like reading the newspaper at breakfast or listening to the radio while taking a shower in the morning contribute to the German media usage.

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Appendix:

Table I: Results of the questionnaire with respect to the five news repertoires

	Social media in Top-5	q2 <i>Importance of deliberative activities</i>	q3 <i>Cultural and social activities (last month)</i>	q4 <i>Political activities (last year)</i>	Salient pattern of q2 vs. q4
Repertoire 1	--	1,57 (L)	3,32 (M)	1,77 (L)	L/L
Repertoire 2	--	1,54 (L)	3,12 (M)	2,50 (M)	L/M
Repertoire 3	--	2,29 (L)	3,58 (M)	2,35 (M)	L/M
Repertoire 4	Facebook	1,95 (L)	3,00 (M)	2,00 (L)	L/L
Repertoire 5	YouTube	1,21 (L)	3,64 (M)	2,63 (M)	L/M

Likert scale from 5 (very important) to 1 (not at all important).

H: High (3,68-5,00), M: Moderate (2,34-3,67), L: Low (1,00-2,33)

Notes:

¹ The German study deviated from the other country studies in the project by not including interviews with inhabitants in the capital city.

² The German study is part of a cross-national research project and the method and the research instruments are standardized for the use in every participating country. More details about the work of the research group and the methods used in this particular study, including the list of news media platforms used in the Q-sort, can be found in the introduction to this Special Section by Nossek, Adoni, Perusko and Schrøder.