Perceived Effectiveness of Established and Innovative Media Accountability Instruments in Spain. Comparative Analysis in Andalusia, Euskadi, Catalonia, Galicia, Madrid and Valencia[1]

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Abstract. The perceived effectiveness of established and innovative media accountability instruments is analyzed in Andalusia, Euskadi, Catalonia, Galicia, Madrid and Valencia, and by means of a survey conducted among journalists, focus groups with media consumers in each community, and in-depth interviews with experts. Some differences are observed across professionals, citizens and experts and amongst the different autonomous communities. Audience participation in media accountability is the most controversial aspect.
Keywords: Media accountability; established media accountability instruments; innovative media accountability instruments; journalism ethics.

[en] Efectividad percibida de los instrumentos tradicionales e innovadores de rendición de cuentas en España. Análisis comparativo en Andalucía, Euskadi, Cataluña, Galicia, Madrid, y Valencia

Resumen. El presente artículo analiza la efectividad percibida de los instrumentos de rendición de cuentas tradicionales e innovadores en medios de comunicación en Andalucía, Euskadi, Cataluña, Galicia, Madrid y Valencia. La percepción de la efectividad de los mecanismos de rendición de cuentas tradicionales y los nuevos instrumentos se estudia mediante una encuesta a periodistas, focus groups con consumidores de medios en cada comunidad y entrevistas en profundidad con expertos. Los resultados de la investigación muestran diferencias tanto entre estos tres colectivos como entre comunidades autónomas. La participación de la audiencia en la rendición de cuentas es el aspecto más controvertido.
Palabras clave. Rendición de cuentas en los medios; instrumentos tradicionales; instrumentos innovadores; ética periodística

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1. Introduction

Multiple cases of disinformation, hoaxes and misleading information were reported in 2018 across the world. As an outcome, the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression and Opinion urged the Internet companies "to learn from self-regulation in the news media" and "to better align with UN standards on the right to impart, seek and receive information" in his annual report (Berger, 2018, p. 8).

The need for and growing interest in media accountability in the hypermediated digital universe and the post-truth era has been acknowledged (von Krogh, 2008, p. 12; McManus 2017, p. 221; Eberwein, Fengler and Karmasin, 2018; Ireton & Posetti, 2018). Eberwein, Fengler, Lauk and Leppik-Bork (2011, p. 20) have defined media accountability as "any informal institution, both offline and online, performed by both media professionals and media users, which intends to monitor, comment on and criticize journalism and seeks to expose and debate problems

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of journalism at the individual, media routines, organizational and extra-media levels". The interactive dimension of accountability has been stressed (Lee, 2000, von Krogh, 2012), although Groenhart (2012, p. 201) maintains that it is "problematic", because "the term interactive suggests a level of reciprocity that is unlikely in journalism."

In order to create a qualitative perspective on the state of media accountability across Europe, a team of mass communication and journalism researchers in 33 European countries has conducted desk studies in their respective countries (Eberwein. Fengler, Kaufmann, Brinkmann and Karmasin 2018, pp. 286-287). Heikkilä, Domingo, Pies, Glowacki, Kus and Baisnée (2012) underline that when studying the online media, it should not be done by ignoring the existence of offline media, since both forms of delivery are intimately inter-connected.

Advantages of online media accountability have been highlighted, such as digital platforms which are accessible to global audiences and can publish information immediately, multimedia format news presentation which may be more attractive to a wide audience, and interactive features of platforms which encourage audience participation (Acharya, 2015, p. 91). Nevertheless, the rise of online media has not deterred face-to-face relationships with the public (such as open editorial board meetings with readers): both online and offline mechanisms not only reinforce the media-user link, but also give readers a co-commitment in the carrying out of rigorous, quality journalism (Rodríguez-Martínez, López-Meri, Merino-Arribas and Mauri-Ríos, 2017). However, issues have been identified for both offline media and traditional accountability instruments and for innovative instruments. Cases in point could be quality control, as performed by the so-called "fifth state of bloggers" becoming a substitute for internal processes of quality control in traditional media (Berger, 2018, p. 10), or weak gatekeeping, hasty information updates, increased plagiarism and post-publication content moderation with online content (Acharya, 2015, p. 82).

Recent research has addressed the role of audiences in assuming these challenges and making online media accountable (Acharya, 2014, 2015) along with news media users' perception of media accountability (Groenhart, 2012), and the perception of European journalists' with regard to media self-regulation (Fengler et al., 2015). A typology for online media accountability practices, based on the analysis of 19 countries in Europe, the Arab world and North America, shows that only a few practices were widespread among online news organizations (Domingo and Heikkilä, 2012).

In Spain, Mauri-Ríos and Ramón-Vegas (2015) have categorized the new online accountability systems

that have emerged in the media landscape. The way in which Spanish journalists express, receive and value criticism has been analyzed (Rodríguez-Martínez, Mauri-Ríos and Fedele, 2017), along with their perception of the effectiveness of traditional self regulation mechanisms in comparison to new mechanisms (Herrera, Maciá and Luengo, 2018). Alsius, Rodríguez-Martínez and Mauri-Ríos (2018) have described both established and innovative media accountability instruments. However, the role of audiences regarding media accountability and news media users' perception of this issue have not been already examined.

2. Methodology

The objective of the research is to analyze the perceived effectiveness of established and innovative accountability instruments in the media in Andalusia, Catalonia, Euskadi, Galicia, the Community of Madrid and the Valencian Community. The research will focus on the perceptions of journalists (via a survey), media users (via focus groups) and experts (via in-depth interviews[5]).

The following research questions have been formulated:

- Q1: What media accountability instruments are considered by professionals, experts and citizens as more effective, the established ones or the innovative ones?
- Q2: Are there differences in how the accountability instruments are perceived by professionals, experts and citizens?
- Q3: Are there differences in how the accountability instruments are perceived by the Autonomous Communities?

2.1. Survey

The objective of the survey is to know the perceptions of Spanish journalists in relation to the effectiveness of the different media accountability instruments promoted internally and externally to the media, in order to systematize their advantages and disadvantages (Suárez-Villegas, Rodríguez-Martínez, Mauri-Ríos and López-Meri, 2017). Instruments include established mechanisms, such as ethical codes, style books, reader's advocates or letters to the editor, as well as innovative tools from the digital environment, such as editorial blogs, social networks or error correction buttons (Mauri-Ríos and Ramon-Vegas, 2015).

A questionnaire consisting of 29 questions was designed with a combination of dichotomous, multiple-choice and rating scale questions (Wimmer and Dominick, 2011). The informants were allowed to note freely other comments and relevant observa-

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[5] This methodology has been used in other research on journalistic ethics combined with quantitative techniques (surveys) and other qualitative ones (focus groups) (Figueras, Mauri and Pérez, 2014; Herrera, Maciá and Luengo, 2018).

tions on the issues addressed. Following the criteria indicated by Weischenberg, Malik and Scholl (2006: 227), later employed by the European project Media Accountability and Transparency in Europe (MediaAcT, EU SSH-2009-5.1.1), respondents should have the following characteristics: (1) Work for a journalistic media (professionals that perform public relations tasks are thus excluded); (2) Actively participating in journalism (thus excluding professionals performing technical or organizational tasks in the media industry); and (3) Hold a full-time post or earn at least 50 percent or more of their income as professional journalists (freelancers are also included if they earn 50 percent or more of their income with journalistic activities).

Unlike other countries such as France, Germany, Finland or Switzerland, in Spain there are no official data, nor a directory or census of the collective (Fengler et al., 2015; Rodríguez-Martínez, Mauri-Ríos and Fedele, 2017). Given this, within the context of the MediaAcT project, three criteria were used to estimate the approximate number of journalists in Spain (number of journalists from professional associations, different types of media and the approximate number of journalists per region) as around 25.000. A sub-sample of at least 100 participants was considered valid (Eberwein, Fengler, Philipp and Ille,, 2014, p. 72).

In order to obtain a sufficient number of valid answers, we sought the collaboration of professional institutions, which contributed to disseminate the survey through multiple channels. The questionnaire was also disseminated to contacts of the media listed in the 2017 Communication Agenda (Government Presidency, State Secretariat for Communication).

The questionnaire was administered online through the SurveyMonkey platform, being open for three months (October 17, 2017 - January 17, 2018). During this time period, the responses introduced were monitored weekly. The total number of responses obtained was 228 (N = 228). 52.2% (n = 119) of the informants were women and 47.8% (n = 109) were men. The majority of informants (71.1%) have a university education in journalism. 53.1% are part of a professional association or association of journalists. The number of answers is sufficient for understanding the perception of accountability among Spanish journalists, whilst updating and expanding the data obtained in the MediaAcT project (Fengler et al., 2015). Once the material was collected, a descriptive, monovarial and bivariate statistical analysis was carried out using the specialized software IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The resulting data was then triangulated with the qualitative information obtained from the focus groups with citizens and in-depth interviews with experts.

2.2. Focus groups

The methodology of focus groups was chosen for its appropriateness for generating qualitative data com-

plementary to that provided by the surveys and the in-depth interviews which will be discussed later.

A focus group was each carried out in six autonomous communities across Spain with members of the public. The issues which the six focus groups addressed were:

- A general assessment of ethics in current journalism.
- The instruments to guarantee the ethics of the media.
- Opinion on the ethics of journalists.

In order to define the script, topics were planned, questions defined to guide the discussion and these were structured into three main blocks:

- Ethics in journalism nowadays generally.
- Media accountability instruments.
- Opinions regarding the attitudes of journalists from an ethical point of view.

In order for the media context to be as similar as possible the period in which focus groups were undertaken could not exceed one and a half months. The first focus group was held in Barcelona, April 12, 2018 and the last one, held in Santiago de Compostela, took place on May 31.

38 people participated in the six focus groups, 22 women and 16 men. Age was distributed equally, with 42% of participants aged between 30 and 60. A group typically consisted of postgraduates, graduates and others from administrative or commercial backgrounds.

2.3. In-depth interviews

In-depth interviews were carried out with academics, journalists and members of regulatory bodies or self-regulators from the six territories analyzed in the project to know their opinion of the different instruments of accountability that exist internally or externally to the media. The in-depth interview is a qualitative methodology (Pont, Cortiñas, Mauri, Alonso, 2018) based on a questionnaire adapted to the profile of the interviewee, allowing them to answer spontaneously the questions raised (Alsius, 2010: 22-23).

The aim of the interviews is to reinforce and refine results obtained via these methodologies (Rodríguez, Figueras, Mauri and Alsius, 2013). To design the questionnaire for in-depth interviews, the survey questionnaire was used as a base, as well as the issues raised in the focus groups, which were adapted to a face-to-face interview format of about 12 questions per interview. As with the survey, dichotomous, multiple-choice, and scale-of-assessment questions were combined.

Taking as a guide the selection criteria used in the Ethics and Excellence project, members of five professional categories were chosen:

- Associations of journalists
- Media administration councils
- Self-regulatory entities
- Regulatory bodies
- Academics and researchers

In total, 18 interviews were conducted, three in each territory analyzed. All the interviews were conducted in person (occasionally by telephone) by members of the research team to guarantee the same criteria were applied. The interviews took place over the same period of time (April-June 2018). All the interviews were transcribed in their entirety by the same researcher.

3. Results

3.1. Professionals

The survey on accountability tools reveals that Spanish professionals do not trust in the effectiveness of

tools designed by the media for media accountability. Therefore, on a scale from 0 to 10, all the accountability tools submitted for their opinion obtained less than a 6, a low score.

When comparing innovative and traditional accountability tools, Spanish journalists value the latter slightly better, although some of the innovative ones are also positively considered. Traditional tools promoted by media as the style book (5,82), the inclusion of media corporative information (5,50) or the Ombudsman (5,35) are well valued by the professionals.

On the contrary, the most poorly valued accountability tools are those that involved the participation of the audience. In fact, a decreasing progression is noted in the appreciation of the professionals the more citizens become involved. The section for the inclusion of content produced by the public is the worst valued tool, with only 3,72 points. Correction buttons (4,67) and editorial blogs (4,61) also fail in the consideration of the Spanish journalists.

Table 1: Survey results of the assessment of the traditional and innovative accountability tools promoted by the media.

Traditional	Style book	Ombudsman	Corporative information	Media review section	Letters to the editor		
0-10	5,82	5,50	5,35	5,18	5,12		
Innovative	Digital chats with the audience	Comments in social networks	Blog of the ombudsman	Comments in the media web	Correction buttons	Editorial blog	Audience contribution section
0-10	5,43	5,32	5,09	5,00	4,67	4,61	3,72

Own preparation

In relation to the professional experience of the survey respondents, two paradoxical tendencies can be observed, although the range of values does not change significantly. Journalists with more professional experience value more positively the most innovative tools, whilst, on the contrary, the more junior journalists prefer traditional ones. The best considered tools by the professionals, the style book and the inclusion of media corporative information, also show the most divergent values when considered by experienced and junior journalists. Those with 16 to 20 years in the profession, value the style book at

5,96 while those with 5 years or less of experience give this tool 6,54 points. Furthermore, more experienced staff assessed media corporative information as 5,15 whilst the juniors gave 7,26 points, the highest value in the survey, to information relating to media economic results.

The opposite was found with regard to innovative instruments. Senior professionals valued them positively, though less than traditional tools. Digital chats with readers, the Ombudsman's blog, and correction buttons obtain a better valuation from the more experienced journalists than from their younger colleagues.

Table 2: Survey results of the assessment of the traditional and innovative accountability tools promoted by the media depending on professional experience.

Traditional and innovative tools	Professional experience (in years)					
	Less than a year	1-5 years	6-10 years	11-15 years	16-20 years	More than 20 years
	Media	Media	Media	Media	Media	Media
Style book	6.75	6.54	5.10	5.42	5.86	5.96
Ombudsman	6.00	5.58	4.10	5.17	5.70	5.58
Blog of the ombudsman	6.50	5.08	4.17	4.72	5.62	5.25
Editorial blog	5.75	5.08	3.93	4.53	5.08	4.51
Media review section	5.75	6.00	4.23	5.86	5.16	4.99
Comments in the media web	5.50	5.13	4.07	4.36	5.19	5.39
Comments in social networks	5.50	6.29	4.17	5.17	5.70	5.34
Letters to the editor	5.50	5.00	4.50	5.11	5.49	5.20
Digital chats with the audience	5.25	5.50	4.63	5.44	6.16	5.39
Correction buttons	5.00	4.33	3.83	4.72	4.95	4.89
Audience contribution section	4.00	4.75	2.50	3.25	4.05	3.88
Corporative information	7.50	7.26	5.33	5.44	5.31	5.15

Own preparation

Important differences were not found in the assessment of the traditional and innovative tools depending on the territory in which the journalists work[6]. The style book was positively valued in all the autonomous communities, whilst two of the innovative tools -the editorial blog and the section with the contribution of the audience- were negatively valued in all of them. As was found in the general results, tools which involved audience participation are the most negatively valued by professionals in Catalonia, Madrid, Galicia, Valencia and the BAC.

Nonetheless, tendencies do appear across territories in relation to tools for accountability designed by the media. Professionals from Catalonia, Madrid and the BAC are positive towards such accountability tools, while journalists who work in Valencia and Galicia present a clear mistrust of most instruments. The greatest contrast is found between professionals from Madrid and from Galicia: the former value positively 10 out of 12 tools, whereas for the latter only one instrument, the style book, obtains more than 5 points.

[6]   The number of valid answers to the survey in the autonomous communities were as follows: Catalonia, 53; Euskadi, 31; Galicia, 45; Valencia, 31; Madrid, 30.

Table 3: Survey results of the assessment of the traditional accountability tools promoted by the media in the different autonomous communities

Traditional tool	Better valoration → → Worst valoration				
Style book	Cataluña	Madrid	Euskadi	Valencia	Galicia
	6,25	5,87	5,68	5,61	5,11
Ombudsman	Madrid	Euskadi	Cataluña	Galicia	Valencia
	5,97	5,68	5,26	4,91	4,65
Media review section	Cataluña	Euskadi	Madrid	Galicia	Valencia
	5,79	5,42	5,10	4,93	4,35
Letter to the editor	Madrid	Euskadi	Cataluña	Valencia	Galicia
	5,90	5,29	5,04	4,50	4,13
Corporative information	Euskadi	Cataluña	Madrid	Valencia	Galicia
	6,24	5,70	5,57	5,17	4,82

Own preparation

Table 4: Survey results of the assessment of the innovative accountability tools promoted by the media in the different autonomous communities

Innovative tool	Better valoration → → → Worst valoration				
Ombudsman blog	Madrid	Euskadi	Cataluña	Galicia	Valencia
	5,60	5,16	5,15	4,80	4,32
Editorial blog	Cataluña	Euskadi	Madrid	Galicia	Valencia
	4,91	4,58	4,43	4,32	4,32
Comments in website	Valencia	Madrid	Euskadi	Galicia	Cataluña
	5,29	5,27	5,10	4,67	4,49
Comments in social networks	Valencia	Euskadi	Madrid	Cataluña	Valencia
	6,06	5,52	5,43	4,92	4,91
Digital chat	Madrid	Euskadi	Valencia	Cataluña	Galicia
	6,03	5,52	5,42	4,98	4,91
Correction buttons	Madrid	Euskadi	Cataluña	Valencia	Galicia
	5,37	4,77	4,67	4,65	4,51
Audience contribution	Valencia	Cataluña	Madrid	Galicia	Euskadi
	4,03	3,72	3,63	3,58	3,52

Own preparation

3.2. Citizens

In contrast to professionals, the citizens who participated in the six focus groups value those accountability instruments that take their participation into account. Scarce knowledge of accountability tools was evident, whether traditional or innovative, or via regulation systems and media self-regulation. Less well-known traditional tools such as the Ombudsman, media review sections or the sectorial magazine are not used or read by the audience, as neither are innovative tools such as media observatories or editorial blogs. The public would like these instruments to be made more visible to them by the media. One of the participants misses "visibility because it is important to have an Ombudsman but you should put it on the front page, and the same applies to the code of ethics" (GD06-H).

Among the tools perceived as more efficient by the audience are the comments on the media website, comments on social networks, and the letters to the editor.

Many of the participants in the focus groups consider the spaces for comments on websites as a meeting point for the completion of news and for the stimulation of debate. Although they doubt that journalists read their comments and they consider that the media use them to extend the reach of their pieces, participants value them as a space for democratic participation in which they frequently take part.

Comments on social media, however, are associated with the development of discussions opposed to the editorial line and they allow, according to the participants, more interaction than comments on media websites.

The most valued traditional tool is the letters to the editor section. Participants in the focus groups believe that the letters to the editor allow for reflection

as they require a certain amount of time for writing and meeting certain rules for publication.

Finally, the most innovative tools such as digital chats and correction buttons stimulate interest in the audience but, in general, they consider that the task of correcting the news should be performed by the professionals and not by the audience.

Table 5. Main result of the focus groups with the citizens

General perceptions about media	Perceptions about accountability tools
Mistrust about media in general	Poor knowledge about accountability tools
Journalism turns into entertainment	Less use of traditional accountability tools
Difficulties for media to be objective	Demand for more visible tools
Freedom of press is questionable	Participatory tools are the best valued
Influence of politics in the media discourse	Social media are the most used tools
More freedom for publishing in digital press	Letters to the editor is the best valued tool
More bidirectional communication in digital press	Corrections are duties of the editor

Own preparation

3.3. Experts

Academics and members of professional associations interviewed for this research show a certain disparity when considering the efficiency of traditional and innovative accountability tools, although all of them agree that social media has brought complexity to the relationship between journalists and citizens and created a new arena for putting the ethical code into practice. Experts such as Begoña Zalbidea (University of the Basque Country), maintain that the new tools developed for the Internet have improved since an initial disarray via the introduction of filters to moderate public participation.

Experts coincide in pointing out that public participation is still low and not always positive. Interviewees such as Roger Jiménez, president of the Catalan Council of Information, understand that participation through social media is a remarkable accountability tool. On the other hand, Lorena Mejías Castaño, member of the board of directors of the Journalist Association of Andalusia, and María José Gómez-Biedma, journalist and scholar, consider that the dark side of social networks is the disinformation that generates "too much noise", as Mejías Castaño maintains.

Overall, experts show two tendencies with regard to the efficiency of accountability tools. On the one hand, some continue to trust traditional tools and distrust innovative ones, particularly those that involved participation via the internet; on the other, the rest valued innovative instruments more positively, and considered that traditional ones would lose their relevance, becoming obsolete in the current media environment.

In the first group, Nemesio Rodríguez, first vice-president for professional affairs on the Madrid Press Association, and Arturo Maneiro, president of the Galician Press Association, consider tools like the style book as effective and those like correction buttons as not effective. Within the second group, other experts as Luis Menéndez, Spanish representative of the European Federation of Journalists, and Xosé Manuel Pereiro, vice-dean of the Association of Galician Journalists, prefer cutting-edge accountability tools such as correction buttons, and point out the loss of effectivity of traditional instruments as style books and the letters to the editors. Regarding the readers' letters, Luis Menéndez regrets their limited effectiveness because "it was a very interesting genre".

In the changeable scenario of the media, most experts seem not to be optimistic about the efficiency of many media resources for accountability and feel that the audience is changing its participatory attitudes. In view of this, Begoña Zabildea establishes a distinction between older and younger users. Young people are technologically literate, which enables them to participate through innovative tools, whilst the "older consumers of traditional media, where possibilities for feedback may be available, do not use them".

4. Discussion and conclusions

In a dynamic media scenario, the possibilities to develop new accountability tools have multiplied. However, professionals, citizens and experts do not appear to show much confidence in either traditional or innovative accountability tools.

There are clear disparities between professionals and citizens, while experts share an intermediate position. The main issue for professionals, experts and citizens is related to the accountability tools that involved direct audience participation. While traditional tools are seen as reliable but somehow obsolete by the audience, innovative ones are considered a relevant platform for public debate. For their part, professionals show some suspicion about new tools such as digital chats and comments on the websites

of media and social networks. In general, journalists believe that accountability tools in which they can exert some control are far more effective. In this vein, traditional tools that depend on newsrooms, such as style books or an Ombudsman, are seen as more useful, just as previous research has shown (Alsius, Rodríguez-Martínez and Mauri Ríos, 2018).

Citizens and experts, although more favorable to participation, understand that the expression of the audience through the accountability tools proposed by the media is necessarily limited. Furthermore, they acknowledge the need for common ethical principles to reduce noise in public conversation.

In spite of resistance by journalists to including the audience in monitoring accountability via innovative tools, accountability on digital platforms still remains more convenient and accessible to global audiences (Acharya, 2015).

The most controversial topic in the research is the inclusion of a section for audience contributions. This accountability tool is clearly rejected by professionals and experts, whilst the public consider that audience participation is an unstoppable process that feeds the media with content. There is some contradiction on this point between the media's dependence on the intervention of the audience for some events and their clear rejection of this for others. Although professionals use the contribution of witnesses or their publications from social media, nonetheless they do not consider that such material could constitute a section per se. On this point, experts underline the role of journalists as gatekeepers.

With regard to the possibility of the audience having the chance to correct the published news, professionals are more inclined to consider the contribution of readers in correction buttons while citizens believe that this task should be exclusively performed by journalists. This would confirm that the Spanish media has rapidly adapted to digital platforms and social networks (Alsius, Rodríguez-Martínez and Mauri-Ríos, 2018). Some of the participants in the focus groups warned that it could endanger some jobs in the newsrooms.

The results of the survey to journalists in the different autonomous communities also show some disparities in the perception of the accountability tools. While three of these territories, namely Cataluña, Madrid and Euskadi, value tools better, Galicia and Va-

lencia clearly mistrust accountability instruments. As Rodríguez-Martínez, López-Meri, Merino-Arribas and Mauri-Ríos pointed out when analyzing the cases of Madrid, Catalonia, Galicia and Valencia (2017), the journalistic profession developed distinctly in each community. Furthermore, this evidences an absence of a strong and homogeneous development of media accountability in Spain, which is reflected in the perception of professionals, experts and citizens.

It is also interesting to note that the journalists that more strongly advocate the efficiency of accountability tools are more confident with traditional tools, whilst those that were less favorably disposed towards accountability gave better scores to the innovative tools. To summarize, some symptoms have manifested an exhaustion of traditional mechanisms (Herrera, Maciá and Luengo, 2018: 228); however, with regard to "the convenience of completing the current repertoire with the latest tools" (Herrera, Maciá and Luengo, 2018: 228), there are different points of view concerning audience participation. This is associated with the difficulty to achieve a sufficient level of reciprocity in media accountability in order to guarantee interactivity, as pointed out by Groenhart (2012).

The central recommendations of the EU High-Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism (Eberwein et al. 2018: 299–300) point out that in those countries which are in the middle of a transformation process, media policies should incentivize and monitor media accountability to support media pluralism and responsibility. The disparity of opinions regarding established and innovative media accountability, the scarce knowledge of the citizens about media accountability instruments and the different development of these instruments in the analyzed autonomous communities show a scenario of media accountability in transition. This leads us to conclude that the aforementioned recommendations should be taken into account when designing media policies in those autonomous communities.

With a view to the future, it would be interesting if this study could lead to parallel studies in other areas of Europe and the world, to be able to compare the results, and also to consider it longitudinally. The ultimate goal is to replicate this study in a few years, in order to analyze to what extent the perceptions of the different groups explored have changed.

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