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Media Democratization:
Media Systems Twenty Five Years
After the Revolutions of 1989
Special Issue

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Četvrt stoljeća značajno je razdoblje za vrednovanje razvoja medijskih sustava i uloge medija u društvu, posebno ako je to razdoblje započelo revolucionarnim promjenama kakve su bile one iz 1989. godine. Riječ je o demokratskim promjenama koje su zahvatile tadašnje komunističke i socijalističke zemlje u Europi, a nastavile su se i u 1990-ima. Tranzicija iz jednog društveno-političkog i ekonomskog sustava u drugi, koji je težio biti demokratski, obilježila je i promjene u medijskim sustavima tih zemalja. Pritom, u tim složenim procesima, posebno je važna bila i ostala uloga medija. Naime, mediji su ponekad poticali razvoj demokracije, a ponekad su je sabotirali vlastitom šutnjom, cenzurom, manipulacijama i konstrukcijama. Te promjene nisu bile kratkotrajne. Dapače, još uvijek traju, a nazivamo ih tranzicijskim ili pak posttranzicijskim promjenama.

Tematski broj *Medijskih studija* koji je pred vama, čiji je naslov „Demokratizacija medija: medijski sustavi 25 godina poslije revolucija iz 1989. godine" (engl. *Media Democratization: Media Systems Twenty Five Years After the Revolutions of 1989*) uredile su Monika Metyková sa Sveučilišta u Sussexu u Ujedinjenom Kraljevstvu te Lenka Waschková Císařová sa Sveučilišta Masaryk u Češkoj. U ovom broju donosimo šest članaka. Prvih pet je o medijima u Češkoj, Bugarskoj i Estoniji. Autorice i autori u njima daju pregled ključnih promjena na tržištu čeških tiskanih medija, rezultate istraživanja o odnosu između lokalnih novinara i lokalnih političara u Češkoj, rezultate istraživanja svakodnevne građanske prakse Čeha u korištenju novih medija, rezultate istraživanja utjecaja bivše elite komunističke partije (nomenklature) na bugarske postkomunističke medije, ali i propituju ulogu novinara koji govore ruski jezik i medija na manjinskim jezicima na procese društvene integracije u Estoniji. Posljednji, šesti članak, daje pregled razvoja političke socijalizacije, političkog ponašanja i vjerodostojnosti medija u kontekstu medijskih sustava tranzicijskih zemalja u regijama središnje i istočne Europe, Latinske Amerike te Bliskog istoka i sjeverne Afrike.

Koristim priliku zahvaliti urednicama na izboru članaka te na profesionalno odrađenim svim koracima tijekom uređivanja ovog broja. Posao je to koji zahtijeva puno iskustva, strpljenja i predanosti. Uredništvo *Medijskih studija* zahvalno im je na inicijativi da i naš časopis ostavi pisani trag o istraživanju medija u postkomunističkim i postsocijalističkim zemljama Europe, 25 godina poslije velikih promjena iz 1989. godine, te time doprinese razvoju medijskih istraživanja u Europi.

Viktorija Car
glavna urednica

MEDIA DEMOCRATIZATION: MEDIA SYSTEMS TWENTY FIVE YEARS AFTER THE REVOLUTIONS OF 1989

Special Issue Guest Editors
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The twenty-fifth anniversary of the fall of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe prompted us to explore the current state of research on media and democratization in the region. It has been clear that some aspects of the media's role in these "new" democracies have been the subject of ongoing investigation – above all the transformation of state broadcasters into public service ones – and hence we decided to turn our attention to research on newly emerging phenomena – such as the relationship between new media and democracy or the emergence of domestic media moguls – as well as to questions that have been under-represented in international scholarly research.

This special issue links to ongoing studies and it comes at a time when scholarly attention to processes of democratization and their relationship to media seems to have shifted to other parts of the world (most notably to "Arab Spring" countries). While in the late 1980s and early 1990s much attention focused on exploring the so-called transition to democracy in East Central Europe and particularly on the role of media in this process, by the twenty-fifth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall academic literature on the subject has become scarcer and also more specialized, with little attention paid to the complexity of issues within the frameworks of individual nation states.

It may seem that there no longer remain pressing questions to be addressed in relation to media and democratization in East Central Europe. However, the establishment of democratic governments and the free market combined with the fact that some of the former communist countries joined the NATO and the European Union does not mean that in these countries we do not find phenomena or trends that question the extent to which media fulfil their democratic roles.

The collection of articles in this special issue does not by any means attempt to provide a systematic or thorough overview of recent thinking on media and democratization in the region, that would have been an over-ambitious task for an endeavour of this type. Rather, our aim is to alert to research that is little known internationally and that has potential consequences for our understanding of the complex issues of media and democratization beyond East Central Europe. Inevitably, a number of relevant topics and cases could not be covered in this special issue merely due to practical reasons.

In the opening contribution Lenka Waschková Císařová and Monika Metyková build on ongoing research to reconsider Czech journalists' understanding of the influence of a new breed of domestic media owner – the billionaire politician. Media ownership and journalists' views on it are also the focus of Lada Trifonova Price's article which explores the case of Bulgaria and the role of nomenklatura – the ruling elite of the communist past – in particular.

Roman Hájek, Jan Vávra and Tereza Svobodová consider changes in the relationship between Czech local politicians and local journalists in the light of the professionalization of political communication and their consequences for the democratic roles of journalism. The role of journalists in the integration of the Russian speaking minority in Estonia is the subject of Maria Jufereva and Epp Lauk's contribution.

The final two articles in the special issue raise more theoretical issues. Jakub Macek, Alena Macková and Johana Kotišová dissect the relationship between new media and political participation while Nael Jebril, Matthew Loveless and Vaclav Stetka map the emerging sub-field of media and democratization and suggest future avenues of research.

We hope that the special issue will stimulate debate on media and democratization not only in East Central Europe and we would also like to express our gratitude to the anonymous peer reviewers without whose contribution the special issue could not have happened.

PROMJENA MEDIJSKIH SUSTAVA

CHANGING MEDIA SYSTEMS

BETTER THE DEVIL YOU DON'T KNOW: POST-REVOLUTIONARY JOURNALISM AND MEDIA OWNERSHIP IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Lenka Waschková Císařová :: Monika Metyková

IZVORNI ZNANSTVENI RAD / UDK 070.11(437.1), 316.774:070.2(437.1), 316.772.5(437.1) / PRIMLJENO: 13.01.2015.

ABSTRACT *In this article we map some of the key developments on the Czech print media market following the fall of communism in 1989. We focus on ownership changes and their impact on the conduct of professional journalism. In the 1990s foreign media companies (dominantly German and Swiss) entered the Czech media market and brought with them a profit-oriented model of journalism. Our research in the mid-2000s explored these changes and their impact on journalists' professional conduct. At the time journalists stressed commercial pressures, however, in the mid-2010s with the departure of foreign print media owners (except for one) and the emergence of local ones, journalists voiced concerns about interference in content for political purposes. We also note that the journalists we interviewed did not reflect on the influence of government on the conduct of their profession, for example, through media regulation.*

KEY WORDS

CZECH REPUBLIC, PRINT MEDIA, OWNERSHIP, JOURNALISM, JOURNALISTIC VALUES

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INTRODUCTION

The 25th anniversary of the so-called Velvet Revolution that marked the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia prompted us to reconsider factors that Czech and Slovak journalists (the country split up in 1993) have identified as key influences on the conduct of their professional practice. Recent literature on changes in journalism and the broader media industries in post-communist countries is not extensive. The initial interest in these societies and their media in the 1990s and early 2000s somewhat subsided by the time the Czech Republic and Slovakia joined the European Union in 2004 (see Coman, 2000; de Smaele, 1999; Downing, 1996; Gulyas, 1998; Hankiss, 1994; Jakubowicz, 1999; Molnár, 1999; O'Neil, 1997; Petković, 2004; Sparks, 1998, 1999, 2000) and attempts have also been made to integrate developments in the so-called new European Union member states within a broader framework of media systems theory (see Dobek-Ostrowska et al., 2010, cf. Rantanen, 2013; Örnebring, 2009). However, most recent developments have received scant attention in English language media and journalism studies scholarship. This is despite significant shifts in political communication (see Szabó and Kiss, 2012; Bajomi Lázár and Horváth, 2013 on the revival of propaganda in Hungarian political communication under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán), government interventions in media independence (Shnier, 2014; Centre for Media and Communication Studies, 2012) and concerns over ownership and editorial independence following the departure of some foreign owners from the region and the entry of local oligarchs on the media markets (see Štětka, 2012, cf. Hanretty, 2014).

We build our arguments in this article on our ongoing empirical research on media ownership and regulation in the Czech Republic and Slovakia[1]. We do not intend to provide a comprehensive account of the most recent developments in the Czech Republic, rather, we offer an initial exploratory case study here. In the mid-2000s our research on Czech and Slovak journalism mapped key components of the 'new' professional journalistic culture and important influences that shaped it within a broader project on European journalistic cultures[2] (Metykova and Waschkova Cisarova, 2009; Metykova, 2008; Metykova and Preston, 2009). Here we compare some of our findings from 2007 particularly on expectations related to foreign media owners and their influence with more recent developments on the Czech media market with the entry of domestic media owners and the subsequent departure of some journalists and the founding of new media outlets.

THE CONTEXT OF TRANSITION – THE ENTRY OF FOREIGN OWNERS

The fall of communism in 1989 brought significant changes to the media landscape of then Czechoslovakia and also to the journalistic profession. A dual media market was established and state broadcasters were transformed into public service ones, these processes, however, were not straightforward or necessarily transparent. The independence of public service broadcasting has been the subject of much scrutiny

[1] We focus on the Czech Republic here as the scope of this article is not sufficient to discuss the case of Slovakia as well.
[2] EMEDIATE: Media and Ethics of a European Public Sphere from the Treaty of Rome to the War on Terror', project no. CIT2-CT-2004-506027.

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as well as popular protest (see Metykova, 2004; Šmíd, 2003 on the so-called Czech Television crisis of 2000) and the so-called privatization of newspaper outlets in some cases constituted more of a takeover by existing employees. Milan Šmíd (2004) links these aspects of privatization to the lack of political and economic reform prior to 1989 and a new focus on market economy with little state intervention. He also stresses the lack of a new legal framework for media, a 1966 press law was updated as late as March 1990.

The journalists – some of them newly media owners – however, lacked financial resources and this paved the way for the entry of foreign investors into Czecho/slovak media (see also Giorgi, 1995). We are concerned with developments on the Czech print market here – at the beginning of the 1990s German, French (Socpresse, Hersant group in Mafra or the French-German-American consortium Eurexpansion in Economia) and Swiss publishing houses invested in Czech print media, with the Swiss Ringier (which later became the Swiss-German company Ringier Axel Springer) most active on the national press market (Šmíd, 2004). The German publishing houses that invested in the Czech Republic were considered to be regional ones in Germany as

the major German publishers were hesitant to enter the Czech media market during the initial period of privatisation. They were looking primarily for national media, which in those days either were unprofitable, or already had an owner. Therefore, they were ready to enter only into alliances with the Ringier company, which was fast enough to establish itself as a national publisher. The small regional German publishers were ready to invest in regional press and in small markets. (Šmíd, 2004: 150)

The German publishing houses from Passau (Verlagsgruppe Passau, its Czech subsidiary Vltava-Labe-Press) and Düsseldorf (Rheinish-Bergische Verlagsgesellschaft, its Czech subsidiary Mafra) also had a direct cross-border connection with Czech media, which they used when expanding on the Czech regional market (see Waschková Císařová, 2013).

By the mid-1990s the Czech newspaper market was consolidated (see Sovová, 2001), national dailies – with a single exception – were all owned by Swiss and German companies and by the late 1990s the thus far competitors consolidated their spheres of influence. For example, the German publishing houses Verlagsgruppe Passau and Rheinisch Bergische Verlagsgesellschaft made an agreement according to which the former specialized in Czech regional and local print titles and the latter in national ones (see Waschková Císařová, 2013).

As already mentioned the reform of the regulatory framework was also a drawn-out process. Here we only focus on the main developments related to print media. In 1990 policy makers planned a comprehensive all-encompassing new media law and hence the press law was merely updated. It took until 2000 to pass a new press law and a law on radio and television broadcasting and the idea of a single law regulating all media was finally abandoned. It is important to note that neither the updated press law nor the newly constituted one introduced any restrictions on ownership although the issue was raised by a variety of stakeholders including The Syndicate of Czech Journalists, the Czech Parliament's media committee and the Ministry of Culture (for more see Waschková Císařová, 2013). Indeed the only law that restricts cross-media ownership is

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that on Radio and Television Broadcasting (Act no. 231/2001 Coll. on Radio and Television Broadcasting). It should also be noted that the ownership of media companies – similarly to other companies – is regulated by competition law and that both at national and European Union levels. The Czech Office for the Protection of Competition has repeatedly investigated concentration on the Czech print media market (for example, in years 1993 and 2001) and found no evidence of it (see Waschková Císařová, 2013). Apart from legal stipulations, it is also important to mention taxation rates, particularly of value added tax (VAT), that are set by the government and that impact on profit margins. In the Czech Republic print media pay a lower rate of VAT, however, this has grown threefold between 2004 and 2015 to the current rate of 15 %.

CZECH JOURNALISM IN THE EARLY 2000s

By the mid-2000s when we conducted research on Czech and Slovak journalistic cultures, foreign media owners were well established on the countries' print as well as broadcast media markets (see European Federation of Journalists, 2003, Šmíd, 2004). Also, after an initial 'revolutionary' phase of journalism, the professional values of objectivity, truth and impartiality became established as part of professional codes and practices (it is not our purpose to discuss the degree to which these complied with the Anglo American/liberal/professional model, on that see Głowacki et al., 2014). The gradual adoption of these values was reflected upon in interviews that we conducted with 14 Czech and Slovak journalists, one of whom said the following:

That was revolutionary journalism, it was frequently waving a flag belonging to this or that, often, and this lasted quite a few years, the journalists were like in the stadium watching matches, not just being objective observers but they [journalists] were wearing the colours of this team or that one. With time this changed, most of the journalists emancipated themselves […] and often, since everything is so new here, often they overdid it in the other direction. (a journalist working for the public service Czech Radio as quoted in Waschková Císařová, 2007)

The editor-in-chief of a Slovak national daily offered a similar reflection – in the immediate aftermath of the 1989 Velvet Revolution Czech journalists were citizens to a greater degree and journalists to a lesser degree, they expressed political stances, they supported the transformation. This, however, changed gradually and journalists became professionals covering events objectively.

Factors that influenced the independence of media and journalists were of particular interest to us in the course of the project and we asked journalists about pressures – political as well as commercial – that they experienced in the course of their work. As already mentioned above, in the field of print media the entry of foreign owners (above all German and Swiss) was perhaps the single most important development. In the Czech Republic concerns were expressed about concentration on the local and regional press market, aggressive competitive strategies (for example, denying competitors access to local print and distribution facilities which resulted in significant additional costs, see Klukan and Pilařová, 2002), content convergence (Waschková Císařová, 2013) as well

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as owners' interference in contents and some went as far as arguing that the entry of foreign owners on the Czech press market heralded the end of Czech press (Čelovský, 2001, 2002). Some of the Czech journalists we interviewed made a general distinction between political pressures in public service media (in our brief description of the context we already mentioned the crisis of Czech Television in 2000 which was perhaps the most known case but allegations of political interference in journalists' work have been ongoing) and financial pressures in privately owned media. As the interviews unfolded a more complex picture began to emerge, however. Journalists across the various media acknowledged either having experienced or having heard about politicians trying to 'buy' more favourable coverage, understood as something not surprising. One journalist in particular offered his views on owners' interference in contents, the interference was not direct but rather through the editor and a consultant on the newspaper who demanded changes in content in order to prevent a drop in circulation.[3]

FROM FOREIGN OWNERS TO DOMESTIC ONES

We can thus argue that in terms of influences on the journalistic profession and the conduct of journalistic practices by the mid-2000s the 'new' foreign print media owners introduced tabloid journalism in the Czech Republic (with a distinct agenda and – according to our interviewees – a distinct set of professional values) and an overall profit oriented approach to journalism which was also manifest in contents. This does not necessarily equate to an owner's direct intervention but it is certainly manifested in cost effective measures, including the centralized production of local and regional contents and the convergence of such contents. This contrasts with interference in the impartiality of Czech public service news and current affairs where allegations of political interference have been ongoing. For example, as recently as October 2013 twenty three news and current affairs staff at the public service Czech Television formally complained to the television's board about bias in news and current affairs, they argued that certain political currents benefited from coverage and this was due to internal interference in news and current affairs.[4] Interestingly, the role of the Czech government in setting a legal framework in which media and journalists operate did not figure in our interviews at all and neither did the role of professional journalistic bodies. This is striking, as the presumption that privately owned print media are regulated by the market rather than by government is false, as Robert McChesney argues "all media systems are the result of explicit government policies, subsidies, grants of rights and regulations. [...] Indeed, to have anything close to competitive markets in media requires extensive government regulation in the form of ownership limits and myriad other policies" (2003: 126).

Although Czech press titles have until recently been mainly owned by foreign media groups, some local owners started appearing in the second half of the 2000s, particularly the Czech businessman Zdeněk Bakala who bought a majority stake in the publishing house Respekt Publishing (the quality current affairs weekly *Respekt* is among its titles) in

[3] Circulation numbers were particularly mentioned in the case of tabloid journalism which was introduced to the country in the form of the Swiss owned daily *Blesk* (which remains the best-selling Czech newspaper).
[4] See http://www.praguepost.com/czech-news/27369-monday-news-briefing-nov-4 (09.02.2015).

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2006, the publishing house Economia in 2008 (with the business daily *Hospodářské noviny* and the business weekly *Ekonom* in its portfolio) and Centrum Holdings in 2013 (with the online daily Aktuálně.cz). At the end of 2011 a new publisher appeared on the market – AGF Media – which introduced a free regional weekly *5+2 dny*. Four months after its first issue (published in March 2012), the weekly existed in 77 mutations in all districts of the Czech Republic. It is important to note here that its publisher AGF Media is part of the Agrofert Group owned by Andrej Babiš. It has been alleged that Babiš founded AGF Media as the German owners (Verlagsgruppe Passau) refused to sell him the regional publishing house Vltava-Labe-Press.[5]

A major shake-up of the Czech print media market, however, occurred in 2013 with two major sales: of the commercially most successful publishing house Ringier Axel Springer CZ (the publisher of the already mentioned tabloid daily *Blesk*) to Czech businessmen Daniel Křetínský and Patrik Tkáč and of the Mafra publishing house to the already mentioned Agrofert Group owner Andrej Babiš. Mafra is the country's largest publisher (its portfolio includes the quality dailies *Mladá Fronta Dnes* and *Lidové noviny*; online news servers idnes.cz, lidovky.cz; the free daily *Metro*; radio station Radio Classic FM and the music television station Óčko). It is the latter case that we turn to in the next section of the article. We should, however, conclude this section by pointing out that in 2014 there remained only one foreign print media owner on the Czech market – the above mentioned German Verlagsgruppe Passau – whose Czech subsidiary Vltava-Labe-Press has been suffering losses for years and speculations about its imminent sale have been circulating for a long time.

THE MAFRA CASE

In order to understand the unfolding of the events following Babiš's purchase of the Mafra publishing house from the German owners Rheinisch-Bergische Verlagsgesellschaft, we need to provide at least a brief background here. Andrej Babiš is the owner of the Agrofert Group and Forbes lists him as number 719 among the world's billionaires, his net worth is estimated at 2.6 billion USD (€ 2.39 billion).[6] It is not unusual for a businessman to diversify his portfolio, however, Babiš's purchase of the publishing house needs to be seen in the light of his entry into Czech national politics in 2011. In May 2012 – not long after his AGF Media started publishing – he registered his own funded political movement ANO (translates as YES) and three months later he was elected its leader. In the 2013 national elections ANO received 18.65 % of the vote and finished second. Following coalition talks it joined the Czech government and at the end of January 2014 Babiš was named the government's First Deputy Prime Minister for Economics and Minister of Finance. Hence, arguably Babiš – the billionaire businessman – transformed himself into a powerful media owning leading politician which has become a concern in terms of the democratic roles of media and journalists' professional ideology (Deuze, 2005).

[5] See http://www.mediaguru.cz/2012/07/koupit-vlp-ted-bych-asi-nedoporucoval/#.VPDbgSlxRSc (09.02.2015).
[6] For more detail see http://www.forbes.com/profile/andrej-babis/ (09.02.2015).

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Journalists' concerns became clear very quickly. Following the purchase of Mafra by Babiš's group, the editors-in-chief of the two quality dailies in its portfolio *Mladá Fronta Dnes* – Robert Čásenský – and *Lidové noviny* – Dalibor Balšínek – left the newspapers and founded their own media outlets. Čásenský's successor as editor-in-chief Sabina Slonková left her post six months into the job in September 2014, saying that it was impossible to work for a newspaper owned by a politician.[7] Interestingly enough, in October 2014 Babiš told the Czech News Agency that "looking back I see it [the purchase of the Mafra publishing house] as a mistake. My intentions were due to the experience I had, that they wrote lies about me". However, he was satisfied with the purchase in terms of profits, in 2013 the publishing house made a profit of 15 million Czech crowns (cca. € 545,000).[8]

In the following we explore the departure of the two editors-in-chief from the titles published by Mafra following its sale and their reflections on factors that influence Czech journalism.[9] Robert Čásenský resigned from his post as editor-in-chief of *Mladá fronta Dnes* in November 2013, six months later he founded his own company which publishes the monthly magazine *Reportér* (its first issue appeared in mid-September 2014). Dalibor Balšínek left *Lidové noviny* and the publishing house's board of directors at the same time. His company Echo Media was founded in January 2014 and since March of the same year it publishes the online news portal Echo24.cz, since July 2014 also the online weekly Týdeník Echo and since November 2014 also its print version. It is difficult to assess the readership of these media as they have not yet been part of the official circulation statistics. According to data made public by the two editors-in-chief the first issue of the monthly *Reportér* sold 32,000 issues (of these 9,000 were sold at newsagents, the rest were bought by strategic partners)[10] and the weekly *Týdeník Echo* sells about 5,000 copies a week.[11] In comparison, at the time of their departure from the two dailies, *Mladá fronta Dnes* sold an average 190,000 copies a day and *Lidové noviny* 35,000.[12]

When we asked Balšínek and Čásenský about the influence of the German owners of the Mafra publishing house they both came up with overall benefits of the arrangement. Not only were the German managers somewhere in Düsseldorf and difficult to reach, their only interest in the Czech media companies was monetary. According to Čásenský the foreign owners were actually a guarantee of impartiality and they "in my opinion, introduced here [in the Czech Republic] a really good publishing and journalistic culture and really if it had not been for them, the papers or the media would have been in a much worse state". Both interviewees thought that the German owners pulled out of the Czech market because of financial losses. We should, however, note that our interviewees did not deny having been exposed to pressures (economic as well as political) in their role of editors-in-chief but both insisted on not succumbing to those and being (eventually) backed up by the owners at crucial moments. In Balšínek's words: "That somebody called [...] or something like that, that never influenced me in any way. For me the criterion was

[7] See http://echo24.cz/a/ipV4i/pod-politikem-se-noviny-delat-nedaji-rika-slonkova (09.02.2015).
[8] See http://www.mediar.cz/babis-nakup-mafry-agrofertem-byla-chyba/ (09.02 2015).
[9] We interviewed Robert Čásenský in person on 22 October 2014, the interview lasted almost an hour and Dalibor Balšínek also in person on 6 November 2014, the interview lasted half an hour. All the quotes in this text are from these interviews. We should also clarify that these two interviewees were not interviewed for our project in the mid-2000s.
[10] See http://www.mediar.cz/prvniho-cisla-reporter-prodal-32-000-vytisku/ (09.02.2015).
[11] See http://www.mediar.cz/balsinek-bez-placeneho-obsahu-to-nepujde/ (09.02.2015).
[12] See http://www.abccr.cz/overovana-data/periodicky-tisk-1/?filterYear=2013&filterMonth=11 (09.02.2015).

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whether the paper made a mistake. [...] If we made a mistake, we corrected it." Čásenský recalled an exceptional situation when he clashed with two other members of Mafra's board of directors over their request that he fire an editor who wrote negatively about a company which wanted to pull their financial backing. When he challenged them to fire the editor and then face his resignation, they promptly relented. Čásenský also offered an observation on economic and political pressures – economic pressures grew in time (with advertisers becoming more powerful) while political ones were always linked to the actual personality of a politician.

The reasons for both editors-in-chief's departure following the acquisition of Mafra by Babiš's Agrofert group have been aired in Czech media at the time. Perhaps the best overall description for these is a conflict of interest, Balšínek was very vocal about why the mix of economic, political and media power is toxic when it comes to impartial media.

It is due partly to the fact that I know that in his case there is a conflict of interests in the business, investment area, because he receives European Union funding through the [Czech state] budget. His grip on business is huge because he is one of the biggest employers in the country. And, well, it multiplies at an unbelievable rate when he owns a political party, which oscillates between the first and second place in popularity polls. And I could not at all imagine that under the circumstances I could work for them, for this publishing house, because what actually occurs then is if not outright censorship then quite significant self-censorship. And it can actually be detected since Andrej Babiš owns Lidové noviny *or* Mladá fronta *[...]. For me the ideal ownership of media is such that the given person or owners work solely in publishing, the way it used to be. [...] Somebody gains an extraordinary competitive advantage here [with business interests across various industries].*[13] (interview with Dalibor Balšínek)

We were also curious to explore how these particular journalists understand the role of the government in enabling the conduct of their work, i.e. in setting a legal framework that promotes impartial journalism. As already noted we were struck in the mid-2000s that the Czech journalists in our sample ignored the role of government completely. This time around our interviewees were in full support of minimum regulation of press in the Czech Republic. They were not concerned about a lack of ownership regulation or regulation preventing media concentration as such, however, this lack of concern was not due to an ignorance of the role of regulation, rather – as Čásenský explains – it had to do with scepticism about the efficiency of such regulation: "I think that these types of regulation can be easily circumvented, if somebody really wants to do that so I think that there is no point in them."

There is, however, one area in which both journalists turned media owners see a strong role for the government and would like to see some change – value added tax. As we already mentioned the tax grew threefold in the past eleven years and this could have been one of the underlying reasons for the departure of foreign owners from the Czech print media market. According to Čásenský for the Mafra publishing house the gradual increases in VAT translated to roughly 40 million CZK (cca. € 1.5 million) annually.

[13] Although Balšínek did not provide actual examples in the interview, he could have referred to a pre-election advert that sparked complaints (see http://www.mediar.cz/rada-pro-reklamu-babisova-reklama-na-kure-s-jagrem-etiku-neporusuje/) or a remark by the Minister of Finance Babiš at a government press conference in which he accused an Echo24.cz journalist interviewing a member of his party ANO of being tendentious and provocative, more details available at http://www.mediaguru.cz/2014/03/babis-zautocil-na-echo24-cz-denik-odpovida/#.VO4JdfmsXz5 (09.02.2015).

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For Balšínek the issue is not only the rate of value added tax but also the fact that rates differ for the print version (15 %) and the electronic version (21 %) of the same contents. Although Čásenský and Balšínek have professional disagreements with Babiš, the Minister of Finance shares their views on VAT. In 2015 the Czech government introduced a new low VAT rate of 10 % for a special group of goods such as nappies, books or medicines and although the Minister of Finance (and owner of the Mafra publishing house) advocated the inclusion of press in this group, it did not happen.[14]

CONCLUSION

The Czecho/slovak media market and professional journalism underwent significant developments in the years following the Velvet Revolution of 1989. The larger ownership picture – particularly on the print media market – can be sketched out roughly as developing from the privatization of existing media outlets (in some cases a takeover by former employees is a more precise description) and the entry of foreign owners (who dominated the print media market) to the replacement of foreign owners by domestic ones and the founding of new media outlets. It is impossible to do justice to the various layers that these developments involved in an article of this length and that is why we aimed to discuss some of the more subtle changes. We focussed on two points in time: the mid-2000s and the mid-2010s. Our research conducted in the Czech Republic and Slovakia 15 years after the fall of communism explored the ownership structure but perhaps even more importantly it gave us insights into how practising journalists perceived these changes. Our interviewees – as well as available research – reflected on the establishment of post-revolutionary professional journalism, which was in line with the widely accepted values and practices of the so-called professional or Anglo/American model of journalism.

The foreign owners, however, introduced market competition and a form of journalism that some of our interviewees were uncomfortable with – the tabloid. Economic pressures and the competitive strategies of print media owners resulted in changes in contents (perhaps most notably the centralization of content production in local dailies manifested itself in content convergence) although these changes were not perceived as resulting from the direct interference of the foreign (German and Swiss) media owners but rather as a result of competitive pressure. Political pressures on journalists have been nothing new to those we talked to, this could either be due to having experience of a system with state owned media or even more likely to this simply being the nature of a journalist's job – there will always be those who try to influence how journalists write about them. Also, political pressures were perceived to be greater in public service media. What, however, somewhat surprised us at the time was the lack of a reflection on the role of the national government in setting the various regulatory frameworks that impacted on journalists' professional conduct. This could be explained by a prevalent free market orientation that followed the fall of communism.

[14] See http://zpravy.e15.cz/domaci/politika/od-roku-2015-se-snizi-sazba-dph-u-leku-knih-nebo-detskych-plen-1078478 (09.02.2015).

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Not long after we completed our research, the first domestic owner appeared on the Czech print media market, however, a significant shake-up followed in the 2010s. Some of the foreign owners of Czech media have been making losses even before the 2008 global financial crisis but the crisis may have been decisive in convincing them to sell and move on. When the largest Czech publishing house – the Mafra group – was sold to the billionaire politician Andrej Babiš, we expected a reaction from (some) journalists working for the titles in Mafra's portfolio. After all, similar developments were unravelling in other former communist countries earlier, particularly in Hungary. However, when the editors-in-chief of two prestigious dailies decided to found their own media we decided to revisit our earlier research and explore in more depth. We are aware of the limitations of a small number of cases but we believe that Robert Čásenský and Dalibor Balšínek offer unique insights as journalists turned owners who left prestigious positions in order to avoid working for an owner with (potentially) conflicting interests in business and politics. For them foreign owners who were concerned about financial profits only were a better guarantee of editorial independence. We plan to follow the cases of these two journalists turned media owners to see how the change in their professional position impacts on their professional journalistic ideology. We should also note that interestingly and similarly to the journalists we interviewed in the mid-2000s, they do not regard government regulation as of importance to impartial press – apart from one area – the regulation of the levels of value added tax.

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BOLJE DA NE ZNATE VRAGA: NOVINARSTVO NAKON BARŠUNASTE REVOLUCIJE I MEDIJSKO VLASNIŠTVO U ČEŠKOJ

Lenka Waschková Císařová :: Monika Metyková

SAŽETAK *U ovom članku dajemo pregled nekih od ključnih promjena na tržištu čeških tiskanih medija nakon pada komunizma 1989. godine. Fokusirale smo se na promjene vlasništva te na utjecaj tih promjena na profesionalno novinarstvo. U 1990-ima strane medijske kompanije (pretežno njemačke i švicarske) ušle su na češko medijsko tržište te donijele model novinarstva koji je orijentiran na profit. Naše istraživanje koje je provedeno prije desetak godina bavilo se tim promjenama i njihovim utjecajem na profesionalno ponašanje novinara. U to vrijeme mnogi su novinari bili pod komercijalnim pritiscima. Ipak, sredinom 2010-ih, odlaskom stranih vlasnika tiskanih medija (osim jednoga) te pojavom lokalnih vlasnika, novinari su izrazili zabrinutost zbog uplitanja vlasnika medija u medijski sadržaj u političke svrhe. Također naglašavamo da novinari koje smo intervjuirale nisu iznosili svoje mišljenje o vladinom utjecaju na njihovo profesionalno djelovanje, primjerice putem medijske regulacije.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

ČEŠKA, TISKANI MEDIJI, VLASNIŠTVO, NOVINARSTVO, NOVINARSKE VRIJEDNOSTI

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JOURNALISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF NOMENKLATURA NETWORKS AND MEDIA OWNERSHIP IN POST-COMMUNIST BULGARIA

Lada Trifonova Price

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ABSTRACT *This article discusses the role of the former communist party elite (the nomenklatura) in the Bulgarian post-communist media landscape in relation to media ownership and the origin of media outlets' capital. The spotlight is on Bulgarian journalists' perceptions explored in semi-structured interviews with media professionals from the capital city, Sofia. The findings indicate that Bulgarian journalists are strongly interested in, and concerned with, the influence of members of the former nomenklatura and their informal networks on the Bulgarian media landscape and particularly on the way Bulgarian media in Bulgaria have been owned and financed since 1989.*

KEY WORDS

BULGARIA, POST-COMMUNISM, NOMENKLATURA, MEDIA, OWNERSHIP, JOURNALISTS

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INTRODUCTION

Despite 25 years of transition and seven years of European Union (EU) membership, Bulgarian media and journalists have seen their freedom of opinion and expression gradually deteriorate with Bulgaria sliding further down the Reporters Without Borders World Press Freedom Index. As in other former communist countries, Bulgarian media ownership is strongly concentrated in the hands of powerful local media barons who see the media outlets they own as a convenient and relatively cheap tool for putting pressure on politicians and rivals with smear campaigns (*kompromat*) and blackmail. The effect on media outlets and investigative news journalism has been nothing less than catastrophic.

This assessment of the Bulgarian post-communist media and political landscape is based on the perceptions of several Bulgarian journalists from the capital city, Sofia. This article discusses findings from 31 interviews conducted in 2009 and 2010 with Bulgarian journalists on one particular aspect of post-communist transformation: the role of the former communist party elite, the nomenklatura[1], in the process of transformation of the Bulgarian media system, and its perceived impact on media ownership (for more see Trifonova Price, 2013).

Paolo Mancini and Jan Zielonka (2012) acknowledged the need for further research into phenomena that are not commonly found outside Eastern Europe. For instance, they note that oligarchs in post-communist countries appear to be different from well-known tycoons elsewhere but their influence has not been sufficiently examined. Similarly, there is an evident lack of academic research on the factors behind the meteoric rise in the economic and political fortunes of Eastern European oligarchs and media barons, including in Bulgaria. Several scholars (Hall, 1996; Letki, 2002; Horne, 2009; Ibroscheva, 2012) have suggested that this process was facilitated by networks of former members of the nomenklatura as well as by former secret service collaborators. Both were instrumental in the governing and functioning of the communist state. The existence of informal[2] yet powerful networks and their clandestine activities have allegedly shaped Bulgaria's post-communist political and economic development as well as the development of its media system. As the perceptions of journalists also suggest, the presence of informal networks, either remaining from communism or "upgraded" to include members of the new post-communist political and business elites, is an extremely problematic feature of the Bulgarian democratization process when it comes to unclear or hidden media ownership. The question about the origin of the funding with which media outlets were launched and financed after 1989 remains underexplored in the literature, and the views and perceptions of journalists add to our understanding of this complex issue. This article will attempt to answer the question: how, according to journalists, have nomenklatura networks, informal relationships and rules affected private media ownership in Bulgaria since 1989? To answer the question this article will outline the framework within which the nomenklatura functioned during communism, and explore its activities and behaviour post-communism.

[1] David Lane (1997: 856–857) defines nomenklatura as a "list of executive and authoritative posts in state socialist society for which the apparat of the Communist Party had the formal right of nomination, veto and dismissal".
[2] This article adapts Ase Grødeland and Aadne Aasland's (2007) definition of informal – something that is hidden and does not follow formal laws, rules or regulations.

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It will then present the methodology of the research, including participants' details and data collection methods. Finally, the article will discuss the findings in relation to the role of the former nomenklatura in the post-communist Bulgarian media landscape.

NOMENKLATURA AND INFORMALITY

The former nomenklatura and its informal and clandestine networks cannot and should not be examined in isolation from the societies that they function in. Scholars (Grødeland and Aasland, 2007; Roudakova, 2008; Örnebring, 2012) identify a common feature in the majority of post-communist countries: the existence of clientelism and clientelistic practices, patronage and informal networks/relationships in politics, business and the media. In countries like Bulgaria, for example, clientelism, patronage and informal relationships are understood by scholars and the society in general as a mix of several elements: features of national culture that existed before communism, habits acquired during communism and a set of practices that flourished during the process of democratization. However, the common concept of clientelism is useful only for painting a broad-stroke picture of the media-political nexus (Roudakova, 2008). Previous research (Örnebring, 2012) has concluded that the traditional political science definition of clientelism does not sufficiently explain the ambiguous and complex informal relationships characteristic of former communist countries. Henrik Örnebring (2012) proposes a broader understanding of clientelism, which includes the use of media as elite-to-elite and elite-to-mass communication tools, to establish the role of the media in the clientelistic post-communist systems of Eastern European countries. However, his study does not take into account the alleged problematic role that the nomeklatura and their informal networks have played in the post-communist media landscape with respect to how media are launched, owned, operated and used by the political and business elites.

Scholars have attempted to examine how former communist party elites and circles have "transitioned" and "adapted" to the post-communist media context in other post-communist countries such as Russia, Estonia, Poland and Hungary (Kryshtanovskaya and White, 1996; Borocz and Róna-Tas, 1995; Szelenyi et al., 1995; Steen and Ruus, 2002). However, there is an evident lack of academic research on the place, status and role of the former nomenklatura in Bulgaria and their informal power networks/relationships. To complicate matters further, Ase Grødeland and Aadne Aasland suggest that informal behaviour may not simply be a result of communism but "more deeply embedded in the national culture, shaped by historical events and social norms that are fairly resistant to change" (2007: 3). In other words, we must take into account the possibility that informal practices are a way of life rather than a coping mechanism adopted to deal with the restrictions of communism. Grødeland and Aasland (2007) argue that the presence of informality in post-communist countries can be explained by a combination of factors: national culture, old routines remaining from communism, and new practices adopted during the transition to democracy. Nevertheless, before exploring the status of nomenklatura after the end of the totalitarian regime in Bulgaria it is important to understand their place and role during communism.

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NOMENKLATURA AND PARTY MEMBERSHIP DURING COMMUNISM

The term nomenklatura evokes controversial meanings. Gil Eyal and Eleanor Townsley note that "the very word 'nomenklatura' evokes a host of dubious associations in East European political imagery: 'the ruling class of the USSR,' 'the new grand bourgeoisie,' 'counter-selection,' 'old corruption,' 'networks of patronage,' all signifying the continued existence, albeit covert, of the past within the present" (1995: 723). They attempt to find out if this notorious group has been able to reproduce itself after the end of communism and their line of inquiry relates closely to claims about the destructive impact of the nomenklatura on the process of democratization in all former communist countries. Despite the fact that in all countries members of the nomenklatura were officially known, their precise status was far from clear. According to Eyal and Townsley (1995: 723–724), under communism nomenklatura could be understood loosely as an "upper class" which is distinguished from other classes by its dominance and monopoly of access to elite positions[3]. According to Grødeland and Aasland (2007) one of the key features of communism was the organisation of society into two spheres: the formal, with its stringent rules and regulations; and the informal, essentially a circumvention of the existing laws and rules. Informality[4] also offered citizens a way of coping with the demands of everyday life through building social networks (social capital), including friendship ties and patronage.

In Bulgaria, communist party membership was very valuable, not only for acquiring a high status in the party hierarchy but also for securing privileges that were unavailable to most people (Crampton, 1994). For those who chose a career working for the party in a formal or informal capacity the rewards and benefits were considerable. The nomenklatura in particular were served by a comprehensive and multi-layered system of privileges (Kryshtanovskaya and White, 1996), allowing them to have a better quality of life. The world of this elite constituted a different reality from which ordinary people were excluded[5].

Olga Kryshtanovskaya and Stephen White note that during communism one of the significant privileges of the nomenklatura was "the granting of state property for private use, in money and special services" (1996: 717). Toward the end of the regime in the Soviet Union, for instance, members of this elite began to conduct, and make substantial profits from, activities that were strictly prohibited for others. Among those activities were joint enterprises with Western and other foreign companies, turning party assets into cash and foreign currency, the issuing of advantageous credit to members at low interest rates, and the lucrative sale of state property at nominal prices. In other words, the communist party made preparations for a market environment. Economic reforms before the collapse of the Soviet Union were completely under the control of the nomenklatura and to their

[3] For Lane (1997: 858) it is the dominant institution of authority: a governing elite, a social group holding positions of privilege and power, and a means of ensuring solidarity and loyalty. Lane, however, points out that the elite was fragmented and the nomenklatura was not a "unitary ideological class" (*ibid.*: 860), and the notion of nomenklatura is wide and ambiguous.
[4] Grødeland and Aasland (2007: 24) describe informality as "a set of unwritten rules subverting written rules and laws".
[5] Lane (1997: 857) notes that in the Soviet Union, for instance, the nomenklatura included all "leading" posts in the communist economic, political, scientific and cultural bureaucracy. It included posts in the industry, parliaments, police, army, foreign affairs, science and culture. Lane cites Willerton (1992) who estimates the number of such posts to be up to 3 million in the USSR in the 1980s. While party membership can be viewed as a milder version of support for the regime, being a member of the nomenklatura was a "very direct regime support activity" (Steen and Ruus, 2002: 231).

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direct material benefit. Despite their focus on Soviet Russia, Kryshtanovskaya and White's (1996) claims can be applied to most communist states, including Bulgaria. The authors assert that the revolutions of 1989 were, in effect, a change of actors, in which the younger generation of the nomenklatura simply ousted its older rivals. The change also involved a redistribution of political power to a group of more economically savvy and pragmatic nomenklatura members, many becoming prominent politicians, oligarchs and media owners throughout Eastern Europe. Where the transitions were peaceful, the former rulers easily converted their political capital into economic assets and social status (Steen and Ruus, 2002).

NOMENKLATURA AND NEW ELITES POST-COMMUNISM

Throughout Eastern Europe the demise of the communist system left an intricate, nationwide web of social relations that survived mostly as informal ties (Róna-Tas and Böröcz, 2000)[6]. During communism, the loss of a position in the ranks of the nomenklatura usually meant an end to a political career but this changed in the years after the transformations began; former members remained influential members of national elites. Eyal and Townsley argue that the new post-communist elites "are the inheritors of the social organization of the nomenklatura under Communism" (1995: 745). Eric Hanley, Natasha Yershova and Richard Anderson also note: "the power of these individuals appears to be rooted not in the institutions over which they preside but rather in the personal networks that link them to other members of the old nomenklatura" (1995: 662). It is well known that personal connections were vital for the operation of the socialist economy and society as a whole. More importantly, however, the links established during the communist regimes became extremely valuable in the post-communist era too. Ivan Szelenyi and Szonja Szelenyi (1995) observe a general agreement among scholars in the region that the process of privatization in Eastern Europe in the early 1990s benefited the communist political class most, which remained at the top of the class structure without many constraints. As they put it: the old guard was hardly in trouble in Eastern Europe (Szelenyi and Szelenyi, 1995)[7].

With regard to the former Soviet Union, Kryshtanovskaya and White (1996: 723), for example, compare the newly established Russian elite (by the mid-1990s) to a "three-layered pie". Politicians and their circles of allies are at the top, continuously competing for power; in the middle sit the businessmen who provide essential funds for electoral campaigns, lobbying, newspapers and TV. The bottom, but very important, layer consists

[6] Holders of Communist Party offices were much more likely to end up in the new business elite. It was the combination of high levels of education, managerial jobs under communism and their party membership that put functionaries ahead of others: what mattered were skills and networks. Those elites had a vital role in setting the informal ground rules of business while emerging as a "political force converting their money into political influence" (Róna-Tas and Böröcz, 2000: 224). Based on empirical evidence gathered in the early 1990s Róna-Tas and Böröcz (2000: 223) also state that "the business elite that emerged in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe are today shaping their countries' economies by wielding considerable power over the distribution of property".

[7] Jasek Wasilewski (1998) analysed large samples of elites to determine what happened to nomenklatura groups in Hungary, Poland and Russia. He established that nomenklatura elites largely survived the dramatic political crises and regime changes that occurred in those countries. Only a few suffered "serious social or political demotion" (Wasilewski, 1998: 166). In Slovakia loose networks of industrial managers and former nomenklatura members did "extraordinarily well in the privatization process" (Gould and Szomolányi, 2000: 54).

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of the former security services whose role is to "maintain order but also act as a means of influence and contract enforcement" (*ibid.*). Similarly, the Bulgarian former secret services ensured that the revolution of 1989 posed no threat to the former nomenklatura and especially not to those who had served as spies and agents. Unlike in other East-Central European countries, in Romania and Bulgaria the political transition has been marked by the active role of the former secret services and their foray into the ruling and opposition parties. In Bulgaria semi-mafia structures were endorsed by the secret services and the state has not been able to deal with this problem. The privatization processes were in both countries manipulated in favour of powerful local actors while foreign investors were kept at bay (Andreev, 2009). In the media sphere this is particularly visible: foreign investors did not arrive until the mid-1990s and a number of them have exited the market in recent years.

According to Elza Ibroscheva (2012) controversial figures that had collaborated with the communist regime own some of the most influential Bulgarian media outlets. The former spies' unique position in the media, for example, gave them unprecedented access to media resources like printing and broadcasting facilities, as well as access to substantial capital that was out of the reach of ordinary Bulgarian citizens. Cynthia Horne (2009: 349) notes the widespread cronyism of the former spy network and its continued influence on Polish society as highly problematic: the richest Polish businessmen today had extensive contacts with the security services prior to 1989[8].

It is important to stress that elite members of the communist nomenklatura controlled – either directly or indirectly – the vast majority of state property and enterprises as well as strategic government offices, at least at the start of the transition in Bulgaria. They operated personal networks that provided them with information, influence and resources resulting in a privileged access to the new market[9]. As Jozsef Böröcz and Akos Róna-Tas argue (1995: 755–756), the high degree of "informality-intensity" of East European post-communist economies makes informal social networks essential in determining economic outcomes. It was the existence of "widespread, extremely sophisticated and discriminating systems of informal networks of actors" that cut across the boundaries among formal economic institutions. Even if they were no longer active party functionaries, ex-cadres were said to reap the benefits of their insider knowledge and personal social networks by acting as intermediaries among key segments, institutions, and actors of the new market economy.

[8] Some notable exceptions to the general pattern of nomenklatura elite continuity can be found in the rise of Central European and Soviet dissidents. Poland's Solidarnosc (Solidarity) Movement, "a reform movement capable of destroying the totalitarian system" (Michnik, 1998: 97) produced the first non-Communist government of the Soviet Bloc. Its activists and charismatic leader Lech Walesa established themselves as a new opposition elite that came from "far down political and social hierarchies" (Hingley and Lengyel, 2000: 5) and was previously distant from elite positions. Robert Brier (2011) argues that dissidents such as Adam Michnik, Václav Havel, or György Konrád were members of communities of discourse that cut across the Iron Curtain. Many of those dissidents became prominent figures in the newly emerging democratic political landscape throughout Eastern Europe and did not belong to the ruling nomenklatura groups.

[9] Dobrinka Kostova (2000: 200) found that people who were "key players in the old command economy" belong to the new economic elite in post-communist Bulgaria. However, throughout a nine-year period (1989-1998) there was a noticeable shift from a dependence on party connections to a reliance on "more diffuse political and economic power networks" (Kostova, 2000: 204).

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Horne (2009: 349) argues that throughout Eastern Europe "informal understandings and unwritten agreements between current political elites and former elites in positions of economic power have created widespread perceptions that the transitions were unfair and incomplete". In Romania, for example, those perceptions are "fuelled by the pervasive belief that the people who contributed to the previous totalitarian regime continue to obtain legal and business advantages, with 80% of Romanians polled thinking that corruption levels grew or stagnated even after joining EU [in 2007]" (Horne, 2009: 363). Most of the research and literature discussing the transition and the influence of former nomenklatura networks on post-communist societies focuses on transitional justice (Welsh, 1996; Letki, 2002; Szczerbiak, 2002; Williams, 2003; David, 2004; Williams et al., 2005; Horne, 2009; Zake, 2010). The role of the former nomenklatura in the post-communist media landscape needs to be investigated, especially in relation to the origin of the funds with which private media outlets were launched or purchased. The majority of those who own media in Bulgaria, it is argued, consider it more important to own a media outlet as such rather than make a profit as this kind of media ownership is not profit-oriented but supports other political or corporate ambitions.

Vicken Cheterian (2009) and Martha Dyczok (2009) – among others – demonstrate that in many post-communist countries oligarchs, politicians and even notorious crime figures emerged as the dominant elites and media owners, ensuring the visibility in the media of certain issues, parties and leaders sympathetic to their goals of long-term survival in a highly volatile environment. Unclear, non-transparent media ownership has plagued the Bulgarian media landscape from the start of democratization and the true identities of the owners of most media outlets are yet to be scrutinized.

BULGARIAN JOURNALISTS' PERCEPTIONS

This article is based on the findings of a larger study, which examined the perceptions, opinions and understandings of a group of journalists who were asked to reflect on the changes that have taken place in the Bulgarian media system post-communism. The study relied on anonymous semi-structured face-to-face interviews with 31 journalists from the capital city Sofia, most of whom are considered to be influential figures in the media sphere (Table 1).

Table 1. **Sample of interviewees**

Broadcasting		**Press**			**Web/online**	**Freelance/Former/ Semi-retired**
Radio	TV	Daily	Weekly	Magazine		
6	6	6	5	1	2	5*

N = 31
* One interviewee was in a managerial position (media group) but is a former senior journalist at the Bulgarian National TV (BNT) and also worked freelance.

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The bulk of interviews (25) were conducted in 2010 after a pilot of 6 interviews took place in 2009[10]. The majority of the participants (27) had direct journalistic experience in the media prior to the end of the communist regime in 1989. The oldest nine interviewees began a career in the 1950s and 1960s while eight others started in the 1970s. 18 journalists embarked on a journalism career in the 1980s while the remaining four participants began working as journalists post 1990. A characteristic shared by the 27 participants is that they have worked continuously in the Bulgarian media since 1989 in positions ranging from junior reporters, editors-in-chief and senior TV/radio producers and directors (Table 2).

Table 2. **Age group and years of working as a journalist**

20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+	<10	10-20	20-30	30-40	40+
1	4	16	4	6	1	3	18	4	5

N = 31

The interviews comprised 22 questions examining journalists' views and opinions on issues that the literature on post-communist media systems observes as common limitations to Bulgarian journalism during the process of democratization. In the course of the research an unexpected gap in the literature emerged on the former nomenklatura networks and their role and influence on the Bulgarian post-communist media landscape. Nevertheless, the findings of pilot interviews suggested that the issues of nomenklatura/ former party elite as well as the problematic topic of the journalist-spy in the media appeared in answers to other questions. Using semi-structured interviews allowed a considerable degree of flexibility for both the researcher and the participants in exploring unexpected issues and angles that came up in interviews. One of the clear advantages of anonymous semi-structured interviews was that they allowed a wealth of information to be collected from a number of prominent figures in Bulgarian media without risking their identification. The protection of the identities of the 14 men and 17 women who took part in the study was unconditional.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The consensus among participants is that most Bulgarian media outlets were bought specifically to serve certain agendas and to represent particular political and business interests. Ownership of a media outlet is perceived as an important tool for exerting undue influence on politics, business and society. This is the main reason why non-transparent or hidden ownership is seen as hugely problematic by the majority of interviewees, who note the lack of an effective register of ownership for private media that clearly names the true owner of each media outlet. Several interviewees state matter-of-factly that the real owners of the bulk of private Bulgarian media are hidden behind offshore companies or behind "fronts", such as lawyers. Serious worries are raised not only about the hidden owners of media but also about the true origin of capital that has financed

[10] Subsequently, in order to validate the findings, 5 interviews with well-known Bulgarian media scholars were also conducted, although their views are not discussed in this article.

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new publications, cable and TV channels since the 1990s. There is a noticeable concern about the identities of the people who launch media companies, particularly about the "murky" and "dubious" role played by the Bulgarian Communist Party (BKP)[11] and the former nomenklatura, who are perceived as desperately trying to change their image and distance themselves from their repressive past.

There is a belief that just like in the former Soviet Union, the Bulgarian Communist Party had made preparations for its future survival. This quote illustrates the view well:

It was clear that what happened on November 10, 1989 was "directed" by the leading party or actually certain people and fractions within the party, who wanted to transform their political power, which was not enough for them, into economic power. So somewhere in the "laboratories" of the Secret Services, they created the model of the Bulgarian transition, the Bulgarian "democracy", as we have seen it over those years. It was an orchestrated transition, which later impacted on the country's development and the model of democracy that was established here. (Senior producer at a private TV channel)

Several participants assert that in the final stages of communism, the former nomenklatura made preparations for change by siphoning party funds abroad to secret foreign bank accounts; this resonates with claims made in the literature. Following the collapse of the regime, those clandestine assets are believed to have been reinvested in private enterprises and used to purchase or finance media outlets. Many journalists claim that the capital illegally stashed away overseas was being poured back into new business opportunities in Bulgaria, especially in rigged state property privatization. These claims are supported by reports issued by organizations such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. At the time both organizations reported that Bulgaria's assets were being depleted systematically through dubious and non-transparent privatization deals (Everaert et al., 1999).

According to several journalists control over media was part of the nomenklatura's carefully designed strategy to remain in power after 1989. Some participants even suggest that by allowing unprecedented freedom of expression and a variety of new publications, the former communist leadership ensured that the public would have an outlet to express long-held frustrations and grievances toward the oppressive regime, thus preventing violent repercussions. While seemingly far-fetched, such claims were not completely unfounded, especially in the case of the former Soviet Union. The literature suggests (Kryshtanovskaya and White, 1996; Steen and Ruus, 2002) that the communist party nomenklatura did not simply vanish but secured the economic and, to a large extent, political survival of the majority of its members. This, however, was achieved at the expense of ordinary citizens and has, according to several journalists and scholars (Hellman, 1998), affected Bulgaria's process of democratization.

After decades of rumours, speculation about media ownership and half-hearted attempts at tracing the origin of the fortunes of some of the most notorious Bulgarian political and business figures with proven links to the communist regime, several participants express a strong desire for a thorough investigation. More importantly,

[11] Renamed Bulgarian Socialist Party (BSP).

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however, journalists want to know how those fortunes have been deployed in the media since 1989. One journalist sums up the prevailing attitude when saying that there are only three main questions that should be asked about Bulgarian media outlets: "Where does the money come from, are they complying with professional standards and is there a conflict of interests?" (Senior TV producer at BNT).

Interviewees are clearly convinced that such pressing questions will neither be asked nor answered by any Bulgarian government. Despite Bulgaria's obligation to fulfil its EU accession criteria, the prevalent secrecy and deception in media ownership have not been adequately addressed. The problem is exacerbated, according to several journalists, by the existence of complicated "networks of vested interests", which are concentrated and visible in the media. Several journalists claim that a number of media outlets were launched with the sole purpose of "laundering money" or "settling scores" with political and business rivals[12]. Other participants note that many newspapers do not follow the market logic in its usual sense (i.e. supported by income from advertising or a paying audience). However, such newspapers continue to be published year after year because informal political and business networks would like to have an outlet "just in case they need them at one point or another". Seemingly unlimited and highly dubious funding allows media to exist without making a profit, even if, as one participant notes, they are "haemorrhaging money".

The problem of unclear ownership and funding appears to have its roots in the early period of Bulgarian democratization. Journalists believe that in the early 1990s, despite some profound changes in the media landscape (such as the introduction of private ownership and a new language and style of press reporting), a clear continuity with the past existed, with senior media personnel retaining leadership positions. This, in turn, fuelled speculation by the general public and among journalists that they stayed in those positions to protect the former nomenklatura's interests and to facilitate its easy transition into capitalism. Such beliefs are supported by media experts. For instance, in one of its reports, the organization Reporters Without Borders states:

Bulgaria has evolved from a strong communist regime to a modern feudalism, but without any real change of actors. The former oligarchy invested massively in the privatisation of the Bulgarian economy at the start of the 1990s and took control of all the key sectors such as energy, construction, natural resource management, transport, telecommunications and real estate. (Reporters Without Borders, 2009)

The situation in the media is similar, and according to the report it is not uncommon to find former high-level party and security officials or former intelligence officers managing media outlets.

Informal arrangements remained intact and thriving, put in place solely with the purpose of advancing personal agendas. The continuity of actors in the media sphere, especially in the early years of democratization, combined with unclear press ownership

[12] This claim poses a number of important questions – how does this affect the day-to-day work of journalists, what was the role of interviewees in this process, what are the precise mechanisms of ensuring journalists' compliance in those media outlets? While all these questions deserve an answer they are not the focus of this article. The discussion of journalistic work conditions, ethics and practices was excluded for the purposes of this argument.

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created the perfect conditions for the nomenklatura to remain anonymous, yet powerful behind the scenes. Most media outlets in Bulgaria are perceived as "servants" or "weapons" with which to smear, attack, blackmail or intimidate opponents of the alleged owners and their informal political, business and in some cases criminal networks. This opinion illustrates the view well:

It's a major problem because when someone tells you something, you have got to see who's telling you this, and when the ownership of the media outlet is not clear, and when you see biased publications in them and specifically against someone, not following basic journalistic standards, then you can be sure that the media are used as weapons. (Newspaper reporter)

A similar trend is observed in Russia where, according to Cheterian (2009: 213), post-Soviet pluralism is the pluralism of the oligarchs and the media do not serve the public interest but instead act as the "voice of a very small fraction of the rich and politicized elites". While several journalists concede to a limited degree of media freedom in Bulgaria, most express serious concerns about the fact that the political, business and media elites understand media freedom as a carte blanche to employ any method, without any restraint or responsibility, to promote private, political and corporate agendas. The majority of participants point out Bulgaria's deteriorating media freedom rankings awarded by organisations such as Reporters Without Borders, Freedom House and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Despite the diplomatic language of the reports, the interviewees understand the rankings as a true reflection of the dismal state of media freedom in Bulgaria.

Journalists perceive Bulgaria, and especially the capital city Sofia, as a relatively small place with only "two degrees of separation" where politics and business are conducted on the basis of informal agreements and exchanges of favours. Media are an important part of this arrangement: they help the elites stay in power, some of the media that they secretly own include the most popular TV channels, such as bTV and Nova TV. Several interviewees insist that if the origins of the real owners' money were traced then it would become quite clear where and how they became so wealthy and could buy not only one outlet but, for example, a large chain of media outlets in print and broadcasting.

The questionable alliance between business, politics and crime figures has grown stronger over the years since the demise of the communist regime. The journalists believe that most oligarchs, wealthy entrepreneurs and politicians owe their vast fortunes and status to the former communist regime and its repressive secret service apparatus. The increase in clientelism in Bulgaria since 1989 shows that despite positive and constructive steps in the process of democratization, to a large extent the negative trends in the development of the Bulgarian media system are a result of political, economic and societal culture, deeply rooted in communism. Habits, informal rules and friendship networks are slow to change. However, it should be noted that despite a tendency to view this group as an ambiguous and faceless collective, journalists do not blame the former nomenklatura and party elite for all issues and problems that Bulgarian media struggle with. Far from making such claims, participants recognise that several factors, including newly emerging actors and trends in the post-communist media landscape, have contributed to negative

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developments in the Bulgarian media system. Anton Steen and Jüri Ruus (2002) suggest that communist ideology is history which will not re-surface and this view is echoed by Bulgarian journalists. However, the recent communist past and elites associated with it are still perceived as powerful undercurrents in the political and media spheres. The scarcity of hard evidence tying former regime supporters to new rulers after the end of communism and to specific issues that stem from this alliance does not render these perceptions credible. Nevertheless, those views should not be dismissed entirely as they indicate a problem that has not been adequately addressed for many years.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of journalists' perceptions indicates a problematic omnipresence of informal nomenklatura networks at the start of the Bulgarian transition. Participants believe that the "reformed" communist party elite that was privileged in the past preserved its immune status in the new post-communist political and business environment. To some extent scholars validate those perceptions[13].

The influence and power of such extended and fluid networks of political and economic actors, including semi-mafia organizations, is precisely what journalists are concerned about. What participants and scholars agree on is that the continuity of informality, including clientelistic practices, patronage and friendship networks have lasted despite attempts at transformation and establishment of democratic institutions. Most participants believe that the communist legacy has partly endured into post-communism through the still-functioning (yet sophisticated) covert networks of former party and secret service officials. This "unholy alliance" is seen as impacting adversely on the establishment of the post-communist Bulgarian media system straight from the beginning of the transformation. Hidden media ownership and the unclear origin of funding that was (and still is) used to launch and finance media outlets are especially problematic. The former nomenklatura are seen by many as being at the root of those problems.

The dominant model of governance, now firmly entrenched in Bulgaria, breeds nothing but disillusion, apathy and cynicism toward the state, erodes trust in institutions and crushes faith in the ongoing process of building a democratic society. Using interviews with Bulgarian journalists, this article has demonstrated an existing belief that nomenklatura networks are partly responsible for the bleak state of media freedom in Bulgaria.

At the onset of changes sweeping through Eastern Europe, Antony Levitas and Piotr Strzałkowski warned:

[13] For example, Kostova's (2000: 205) empirical evidence gathered from surveys and interviews with top members of the economic elite in 1990, 1994, 1998, reveals that "being employed in the public sector under state socialism while at the same time pursuing some private activity was a frequent path to business elite positions in the 1990s". In the 1990s property was redistributed among survivors of the old communist elite and those who entered the ranks of the economic elite post-communism. The 1990s were also marked by considerable changes in formal institutions but also a consolidation between the old and new elites. While party membership and involvement declined dramatically, participation in "diffuse political networks" occurred (Kostova, 2000: 207).

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The transformation of the nomenklatura *into a class of capitalist owners could be devastating for the prospects of Polish capitalism. As we have noted, there is little reason to overestimate the entrepreneurial talents of the* apparat*, and where there are talents, many of them have been used for years not to maximise on markets, but in the corridors of state power. Allowing the* nomenklatura *to acquire state property* en masse *makes it extremely likely that all the worst forms of socialist clientelism will be perpetuated within the framework of a very lopsided and stagnant capitalism*. (Levitas and Strzałkowski, 1990: 415)

When writing about the process of decommunization in Eastern Europe, including disqualification of actors complicit with old regimes, retribution and restitution, Claus Offe sums up a widespread argument for adopting transitional justice procedures such as screening laws. He argues that "the people in question, their attitudes and competence, and the networks of solidarity existing among them, would constitute a threat to the orderly functioning of the new democratic regime if they were allowed access to important political, administrative or professional positions" (1997: 93).

Needless to say, such warnings by scholars were disregarded. The process of decommunization and transitional justice was mostly slow and ineffective in Bulgaria. There is little doubt that most journalists perceive the members of former nomenklatura and their allies, the secret services, as a threat to the Bulgarian democratization process, as well as a corrosive influence on its media system. While those perceptions seem exaggerated at times and lack detail, the evidence presented by scholars supports the views of participants on the adverse impact that unaccountable forces such as the secret services and semi-mafia structures have on crucial democratic reforms (Andreev, 2009). Without any doubt, new "entrepreneurs-cum-mafiosi" have generated large private returns while maintaining partial economic reforms at a considerable cost to society (Hellman, 1998: 233). This negative influence extends to the Bulgarian media sphere. The pressing concerns expressed by journalists specifically about the media relate to: a) hidden media owners' unscrupulous use of their position to "launch assaults" and pose limits on media freedom in order to advance their personal, corporate and political ambitions and b) the origin of capital used to launch or purchase media outlets, especially by former nomenklatura members and their links with the secret services.

The evidence demonstrates that non-transparent media ownership is the result of the legacy of the communist past and of the lingering habit of directing and controlling the media, combined with the introduction of private ownership post 1989 and the effects of rampant, or so-called nomenklatura, capitalism. A mix of old and new political and corporate cultures manifests itself in sophisticated methods of employing media outlets as a vehicle for political and business agendas. According to participants, twenty-five years after the revolution of 1989, it is high time that questions about the origin of capital with which media outlets were founded, their owners and the role of the former nomenkaltura were addressed. Further research is urgently needed to explore the precise composition of old and new elites, taking into account the role of the former secret services, their informal relationships and the makings of the post-communist oligarch. In combination, these phenomena have proved lethal to Bulgaria's continued efforts at democratization and building a transparent media system.

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NOVINARSKA PERCEPCIJA UMREŽENOSTI NOMENKLATURE I MEDIJSKOG VLASNIŠTVA U POSTKOMUNISTIČKOJ BUGARSKOJ

Lada Trifonova Price

SAŽETAK *U članku se istražuje utjecaj bivše elite komunističke partije (nomenklature) na bugarske postkomunističke medije u kontekstu vlasništva medija i podrijetla medijskog kapitala. Kroz polustrukturirane intervjue s medijskim stručnjacima iz bugarske prijestolnice Sofije ispituje se prije svega što bugarski novinari misle o tome. Rezultati istraživanja ukazuju na to da bugarski novinari pokazuju veliki interes, ali i zabrinutost, za utjecaj članova bivše nomenklature i njihovih neformalnih veza na medijski sustav u Bugarskoj. Osobito su zabrinuti zbog načina na koji se bugarski mediji financiraju i u čijem su vlasništvu od 1989. godine.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

BUGARSKA, POSTKOMUNIZAM, NOMENKLATURA, MEDIJI, VLASNIŠTVO, NOVINARI

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PROMJENA ULOGE NOVINARA

CHANGING ROLES OF JOURNALISTS

THREATS TO MUTUAL TRUST: CZECH LOCAL POLITICIANS AND LOCAL JOURNALISTS IN THE ERA OF PROFESSIONAL POLITICAL COMMUNICATION

Roman Hájek :: Jan Vávra :: Tereza Svobodová

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ABSTRACT *The study discusses changes in the relationship between local journalists and local politicians in the Czech Republic as a consequence of the professionalization of political communications at national as well as local levels following the so-called Velvet Revolution of 1989. This phenomenon has been studied widely in Western democracies but is relatively new in the Czech Republic. Politicians' improved communication skills and the employment of communication professionals in politics influence trust – a key component in the relationship – between politicians and journalists. The article is based on semi-structured interviews with 10 journalists and 11 politicians from different Czech localities, which aim to explore how these actors understand and maintain levels of mutual trust. First we describe key components of trust and explain why in the era of professionalized political communication trust is perceived as more threatened than in the 1990s and we conclude by exploring the three most important threats to trust as identified by our interviewees.*

KEYWORDS

JOURNALIST-POLITICIAN RELATIONS, TRUST, SOURCES, LOCAL POLITICS, PROFESSIONALIZATION, CZECH REPUBLIC

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INTRODUCTION

Although extensive research on interactions between journalists and politicians and the quality of their relationship has been available, much of the literature focuses on national politics (Davis, 2009; Mancini, 1993; Pfetsch and Voltmer, 2012; Volcic and Erjavec, 2012) with the politician–journalist relationship usually institutionalized or at least based on sophisticated rules which shape the field and favour certain forms of behaviour. In comparison, when it comes to local politics, these rules are less rigid and the quality of the relationship – which can significantly affect political reporting – depends more on actors' personal characteristics and hence mutual trust becomes highly relevant. Local politicians' knowledge of media logic, along with awareness of its inherent normative categories (e.g. objectivity), also raises the issue of trust in the context of desired standards of journalistic work.

Although almost all previous studies mention "trust" as an important element in the politician–journalist relationship, they do not pay significant attention to strategies for constituting and maintaining trust and potential threats to it. The lack of detailed attention to these strategies that characterizes existing studies prompted our research question. Based on semi-structured interviews with 10 journalists and 11 politicians from different municipalities in the Czech Republic, this paper analyses how trust is understood by both groups of actors and which strategies are implemented for its reinforcement. We show that in the Czech Republic there is a strong feeling of nostalgia for the past when journalist–politician relations were less formalized and the professionalization of political communication (Negrine, 2008) was not as advanced as in the mid-2010s. Both groups of actors expressed a desire for fewer strategically planned meetings and more spontaneity, which is in line with some academic critiques of political PR practices that have become an inevitable part of politicians' and journalists' daily routines. The professionalization of political communication – which is inevitably a two-way process influencing politicians as well as journalists – is understood as an ambiguous development by those who actually "live it".

JOURNALISTS, POLITICIANS, THE CONCEPT OF TRUST AND POLITICAL PR

Like in every journalist–source relationship, the interplay between journalists and politicians functions on the basis of mutual dependence. While the former control the information flows and are in charge of news selection and framing, the latter hold the information necessary for journalists' work (Sigal, 1973). Putting aside tabloid press practices, the politician–journalist relationship is usually considered to be symbiotic with advantages for both parties, although the actors pursue divergent purposes (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1981: 479). This need for cooperation is aptly emphasized by various "dancing metaphors" (Gans, 1979; Ross, 2010; Strömbäck and Nord, 2006). However, there is no agreement on who leads the "dance" and thus is more powerful in the relationship. On the one hand, sources are considered more influential because of journalists' lack of

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time and dependence on editorial routines (Gans, 1979: 116; Manning, 2001: 55). On the other, primacy is attributed to journalists (and media as such) as in Jesper Strömbäck's (2008) fourth phase of mediatization of politics or other studies that critically evaluate media influence on politics (Louw, 2005; Dörner, 2001). Nonetheless, other studies (Reich, 2006; Strömbäck and Nord, 2006) suggest that determining the primacy of journalists or politicians is not so simple and it is important to distinguish between the agenda setting process and the subsequent production of media outputs (in Zvi Reich's (2006) terms between the "discovery phase" and the "gathering phase"). While sources can lead the dance in the process of news gathering, this may not be true about the treatment of content (Strömbäck and Nord, 2006: 149).

The quality of journalist–politician relationships is also influenced by political institutions and political culture (or the polity – see Esser, 2013), as well as by the character of the media system (Hallin and Mancini, 2004, 2012). These features emphasize the degree of journalists' (in)dependence on politicians with some studies arguing that political communication culture has a decisive influence as well; and in some countries routines considered usual in Western Europe have not been developed (Pfetsch and Voltmer, 2012; Volcic and Erjavec, 2012). Some scholars also point out journalists' influence on politicians and political practices, and the reflexive nature of their relationship (Davis, 2002, 2009; Deacon and Golding, 1994).

At the individual level the relationship is affected by actors' personal characteristics. At this point interpersonal trust acts as a prerequisite for a functioning relationship (Blumler and Gurevitch, 1981; Mancini, 1993). Interpersonal trust is usually defined as a feeling of security based on certain expectations of another person's future behaviour (Kassebaum, 2004: 21; see also Burt and Knez, 1995). These expectations are based on previous social experience in addition to subjective evaluations of the other's trustworthiness regarding his/her institution/social group (Berger and Calabrese, 1975; Möllering, 2005). Trust is thus permanently accompanied by a certain level of uncertainty about the future development of a relationship (Luhmann, 1979; Rempel et al., 1985). Trust can also be understood as expressing the character of a relationship or of an attitude. As such, it influences behaviour and feelings (affective dimension) as well as beliefs (cognitive dimension) (Fazio and Olson, 2003: 141).

The professionalization of political communication has become important – particularly recently – in explorations of the relationship between media and politics. It is manifested in the employment of media professionals in political communication and also by the professionalization of politicians' communication as they develop their media skills and literacy (Negrine, 2008). The rise of political public relations has attracted scholarly attention in particular and there appears to be a general academic consensus that practices of political public relations have an influence on the news coverage of politics (Larsson, 2009; Lewis et al., 2008). However, opinions about the extent of this influence differ. As a result of professionalization of politics, contemporary politicians use a wide range of methods to manage their media coverage according to what they consider appropriate. Politicians have a variety of ways for developing elaborate communication

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strategies, such as favouring certain journalists (giving the most interesting information only to the most favourite journalists), distribution of press releases, and organization of press conferences or less formal press meetings (Ross, 2010: 280). Nevertheless, these practices linked to the professionalization of political communication are sometimes criticized for their "media salacity" which, according to journalists, can potentially damage mutual trust (Brants et al., 2010).

LOCAL POLITICS AND LOCAL MEDIA IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Although the journalist–politician relationship shares many characteristics at local[1] and national levels, there are also significant differences. Mats Ekström et al. (2006: 256) explore different forms and conventions of mutual communication which develop under local conditions and are not mirrored at other levels. The relationships between journalists and politicians are much closer in the local context because they meet each other more frequently, often informally, and sometimes they have known each other before taking up their current professional positions. This can lead to quite familiar relationships, which tend to be avoided in national politics because at this level, an overly familiar journalist–politician relationship can lead to a lack of caution (Ross, 2010: 279). Journalists can also feel embarrassed if they address political issues, which involve friends or acquaintances and therefore try to find strategies for overcoming such dilemmas (Larsson, 2002: 25). This crucial difference is reinforced by other aspects of local media and politics.

Firstly, there are limited information sources in many localities and this is especially important in the Czech case as the sector of local media is not well developed. The term local media here refers to the press, which is geographically strictly limited to larger cities and their surroundings. This media space is occupied by two titles – *Deník* and *5plus2*. *Deník* is a nationally published daily, but it has a dense network of small local newsrooms which provide contents for its 72 local mutations (Waschková Císařová, 2009); the weekly paper *5plus2*, established by a billionaire Czech businessman, leading politician and media mogul Andrej Babiš in 2012, is organized on a very similar model, with 77 local mutations in early 2015. A considerable limitation of these publications, highlighted by representatives of civil society actors, is their distance from legitimately defined local affairs and concerns have been raised since – despite their proclaimed local orientation – the majority of their content is devoted to information of national importance (Hájek, 2013).

The second important aspect of the relationship between local – as opposed to national – media and politics involves individual journalists and their daily routines (see Franklin, 2006), with jobs in Czech local media considered less prestigious than in national ones. As a result, local newsrooms are staffed with journalists with lower levels of education – usually high school graduates with no academic or vocational specialization in journalism or media. Employees' fluctuation is also more pronounced in local titles,

[1] The notion of local is highly context dependent. When referring to "local politics" we mean politics at city level. The case of "local media" is slightly more complicated; these are media based in cities with the city being the most important frame of reference; however, their area of coverage (as well as readership/viewership) also includes surrounding smaller towns and villages.

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where we find young people with quite low levels of media professionalism more often (Volek, 2007). Moreover, recent reductions in editorial staff and technological changes – combined with pressures to cover more issues quicker, for both the online and print versions of the paper – may increase journalists' vulnerability to political and corporate public relations and soften their watchdog role (Ekström et al., 2006: 259; Harrison, 2006).

The third factor that impacts on the journalist–politician relationship particularly at the local level is the specific character of local politics. In the Czech setting, ideological issues and partisanship play a less important role at the local than at the national level (Čmejrek et al., 2010). Local political conflicts more often focus on specific topics and tend to be temporary (Oliver et al., 2012: 7). Local democracy is thus described as less polarized, more open, and since local elected representatives are very often not full-time/professional politicians, political communication also tends to be less formalized and professionalized.

The specific historical circumstances of the Czech Republic resulted in a later professionalization of political communication in comparison with Western democracies. The first decade after the fall of the Communist regime in 1989 was turbulent in politics as well as in media. The first years after the so-called Velvet Revolution were characterized by an enthusiastic atmosphere in which journalists and politicians were often considered to be partners, with both groups pursuing essentially the same goal – a free, developed and democratic society. However, changes occurred with the spread of commercial media when many politicians realized that they no longer shared values with journalists (Jirák and Köpplová, 2009). Consequently, at the beginning of the new millennium politician–journalist relationships settled into patterns commonly found in Western Europe and political communication became professionalized – first at the national and later also at the local level (see Matušková, 2006). One of the most obvious features of professionalization at the local level is the constitution of press offices, especially in larger cities (Larsson, 2002). Concurrently, a great number of local politicians receives advanced media training which allows them to communicate with journalists competently and effectively (Negrine, 2008; Louw, 2005).

Against this background, the aim of this study is to explore how local journalists and local politicians perceive the impact of the recent professionalization of political communication on the quality of their relationship. We are particularly interested in the transformation of their understanding of mutual trust and the strategies they implement for its maintenance or reinforcement.

METHOD

The study reflects on the experiences of local journalists and politicians in the Czech Republic. Since we sought to explore the essence of their mutual relationship, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 local journalists (5 men, 5 women; 8 of them working in daily newspapers, one in a local weekly and one in radio) and 11 local politicians (7 men, 4 women; 5 mayors and 6 representatives). When selecting

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interviewees, we used pair design, i.e. we attempted to pair a journalist with a politician from the same locality, or a journalist who is covering the locality (this did not work with one locality). The purpose of the pair design was to compare the perspectives of the two types of actors as well as to gain a more detailed understanding of the specific situation of a given locality. We could thus compare the experiences of politicians as well as journalists in a specific locality and more easily identify problematic issues in their relationship. Since the Czech Republic is characterized by relatively high levels of social homogeneity and the local media space is effectively occupied by two titles, when selecting the sample we paid particular attention to the length and diversity of interviewees' professional experience rather than the variety of geographical areas. More than half of our interviewees (12 of 21) had more than ten years of professional experience. The most experienced journalist has worked in the media for 26 years, the least experienced had only 1 year of professional journalistic experience. The politicians' careers spanned 3 to 24 years. Hence the interviewees were capable of describing the shift in shared values, the reinterpretation of ethical standards in journalism and the changing nature of their relationship.

Our research included large cities as well as smaller municipalities, four of which were districts of Prague, the country's capital, five were mid-sized cities with 22 to 50 thousand inhabitants situated in different regions, one was a large city with more than one hundred thousand inhabitants, and we also included a small city with only 5 thousand inhabitants. We decided to research different localities in order to investigate whether the general characteristics of the journalist–politician relationship are consistent across different local contexts.

The data were collected by 11 interviewers (graduate students of communication) who were informed about the research and were specially trained. We used qualitative content analysis as the study's method and we employed open and axial coding when grouping the data into general categories (Saldaña, 2013; Schreier, 2012).

FINDINGS

First of all, when evaluating the impact of the professionalization of local political communication on trust between journalists and politicians, we assessed how both groups perceived recent changes. We then focused on how trust was understood and maintained by the different actors. We explored three main threats to trust that are related to professionalization. This allowed us to unravel discrepancies in the expectations of both parties that are linked to the normative requirements of a democratic society and the everyday reality of work.

Nostalgia for the 1990s

It is evident from the interviews that the development of the journalist–politician relationship was an important issue for our interviewees. Since the majority of them were very experienced practitioners working in politics and journalism for over ten

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years, they often tended to reflect on changes over time. In these comparisons between now and earlier times, they often expressed a sense of nostalgia for the 1990s which were described as an exceptional period in which journalists and politicians did not co-exist in a (forced) symbiotic relationship but rather in a partnership. In this glorified era, journalists and politicians were portrayed by our interviewees as cooperating on the common "project" of the democratization of society. Moreover, since they had not had previous conflicts or negative experiences with each other, they were less cautious about the other's profession. Mutual trust was a natural component of the relationship, which was not bound by any formal or semi-formal rules. This mutually beneficial relationship presented in participants' narratives underwent an apparently radical shift in the late 1990s when the stable environment was disturbed and later irreversibly damaged which led to journalists and politicians being more careful and suspicious of each other. They no longer saw each other as colleagues but rather as opponents who were forced to tolerate each other. Consequently, politicians professionalized their behaviour and implemented new conventions for their everyday meetings with journalists. In the case of politicians, new actors (mostly press officers) mediated their relationship with journalists and disrupted the familiarity between politicians and journalists. Although mutual trust was not compromised completely (it was necessary because the actors continued to depend on each other), it is now more fragile and threatened. The current state of trust is therefore determined as damaged in comparison with earlier historical periods:

The trust is broken on both sides and the state of affairs will culminate in a fight. By the way nobody can win it but everybody has much to lose. (Politician 9)

A politician is an opponent and a partner at the same time. Even though he is more of an opponent because of the escalating tensions between media and politicians; in general nothing good comes from being in close contact with them. (Journalist 10)

Interestingly, the fact that the relationships used to be more personal and less formal is mentioned not only by very experienced actors but also by those who have only limited work experience. As such, it becomes a common story and a professional mythology – as defined by Roland Barthes (2000). In some aspects it is reminiscent of the myth about the expulsion from Eden; from a secure and ideal environment to a more dangerous and threatening life on Earth.

Appropriate Relationships: An Unattainable Ideal?

A more in-depth exploration of the quality of the journalist–politician relationship following this change shows that, contrary to the dramatic description above, both groups quickly found ways of co-existing amicably, whilst simultaneously incorporating communication professionals into the relationship.

Although the mutual trust between journalists and politicians is no longer a matter of course, an appropriate relationship still requires a certain level of it. Several journalists mentioned that their newsrooms have implemented strategies for developing a trusting, appropriate relationship with politicians. If a new journalist joins a local paper, an effort

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is made to "introduce" him/her to politicians, which means sending him/her to press conferences or important local events. At the very beginning of a journalist's career in the locality, (s)he is usually discouraged from getting into conflicts with politicians, hence (s)he publishes positive materials which in turn helps gain politicians' trust and makes access to municipal representatives easier. Only when the relationship is established can journalists afford to criticize politicians without "slamming the door in their face" (Journalist 2, Journalist 5). Furthermore, the established relationship and mutual trust between the actors are constantly tested in new situations and if some limits are transgressed, they can be damaged. In the following we present three important threats which interviewees identified as the most important ones: a) when a journalist–politician relationship develops into a friendship, b) when there is a conflict of interests and finally c) the "over-professionalization" of political communication.

Threat no. 1: Is Friendship Dangerous?

As already noted, the relationship between journalists and politicians at the local level is often complicated by the fact that the actors know each other from earlier times when they had different occupations (either schoolmates or co-workers) and thus developed friendships. The actors admit that at the local level they get closer to one another. Even though a friendship is unavoidable in many cases, it is considered unwanted since it can both damage their public image and complicate their work when it comes to professional norms. In general, the interviewees were anxious about damaging previously existing friendships when they became journalists or politicians. The interviewees also mentioned that when journalists and politicians are friends, the relationship is characterized by trust but this trust is constantly contested. In such cases, journalists tend to be highly suspicious a priori since they cannot be sure if their acquaintances or friends have honourable intentions or are trying to use a friendly relationship for their own political goals. As one journalist summarized:

When a friend stops you and says he has never taken bribes, you start to think why the hell he tells you that. In such situations, you tend to be maybe more distrustful than necessary. (Journalist 4)

For these reasons both types of actors try to find solutions to this dilemma and reduce a potential threat. There are two different strategies that help our interviewees cope with potential friendships between journalists and politicians. Firstly, they attempt to keep their professional contact to a minimum and thus keep their personal and professional lives clearly separated. Journalists claim that they try to refuse work on topics, which concern particular areas in order to avoid contact with local politicians who they have become friends with. The most common reasoning for such an action is that contact in such cases would violate journalistic ethics and thus jeopardize their professional approach as well as the relationship. We should mention that journalists believe that having no connection with local political representatives is ideal for safeguarding independent journalism:

I am convinced that journalism works best if a journalist arrives from another town. He is a stranger and, ideally, he is so busy that he does not have any time to establish personal relationships because he would become biased eventually. (Journalist 8)

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In contrast, the second strategy does not attempt to avoid the interconnectedness between the actors' personal and professional lives. Here, the influence of journalist–politician friendships on the parties' professional lives is admitted, although the actors try to minimize their impact on their everyday work. Avoiding contact completely is, from their perspective, not a good solution. Interviewees tended to refer to public oversight and common sense exercised by individual journalists or politicians; after all it is in their own interest to ensure that their work will not be publicly questioned due to their friendships. Therefore they emphasized their professional approach and the shared rules on which the relationship was based:

I do not offend them, I do not comment on their work much. However, sometimes it is also necessary to tell them that they exaggerated or wrote something different from what I had said. (Politician 9)

There was, however, a different view also expressed by a group of interviewees who found friendship to be a distinct advantage, which they would try to utilize in their work. This pragmatic approach suppresses ethical questions and focuses more on personal interests. Friendship between journalists and politicians is thus understood as a tool for gaining exclusive information (for journalists) or for presenting the information to the public more easily (for politicians).

Threat no. 2: Conflict of interests

Essentially, there are strong differences between the professional interests of journalists and politicians. In the traditional normative understanding, journalism should play the role of the watchdog, keeping a check on politicians' behaviour and protecting the public interest (Habermas, 1999; McQuail, 2013). Therefore it is obvious that under certain conditions the interests of the two groups may be contradictory. Journalists usually see these contradictions as a part of their daily routine and they do not pay much attention to it. As a result of these everyday clashes they express a degree of cynicism towards politicians but generally they try to show an understanding of their situation. Although their work is criticized quite frequently, this is perceived more as a common ritual and a mandatory part of the relationship, which does not affect their trust in politicians.

However, the situation is much more complex for politicians. They also expressed a desire to understand the difficulties of journalists who often have to do their job in adverse working conditions, but at the same time they are very critical and often object to their work. These objections sometimes lead to breaking the rules of acceptable behaviour and result in a loss of mutual trust. This is repeatedly due to the fact that politicians have very high normative requirements on media work. In general, politicians complain about the tabloidization and omnipresent negativity in published materials but they also have very specific opinions on what journalists should and should not do and what the newspaper should look like. In their view the main goal of media should be to educate the public and remain objective. The interviewees believed that if these four issues were addressed and changed (tabloidization and negativity decreased, media respected the value of objectivity and played the role of an educator), the relationship between journalists and politicians could improve and the degree of mutual trust could increase.

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Moreover, politicians also demanded that the media cover fewer rare events as this happens at the expense of information about the everyday life of their locality. Politicians think that information provided by news media should not be excessively guided by the news value of negativity, which they consider over-emphasized in Czech local media. They stress that this can spoil the work of journalists because the public is not provided with information about positive or ordinary events taking place in their town:

The negative characteristic of media is that they make people wilder and angrier. They tell them that all the politicians are bad and the people believe this because they hear it on the television, the radio and read it in the newspaper. (Politician 2)

According to the politicians, the nature of media content is strongly related to media's focus on commerce and profit and this business-oriented nature of the media is described as undermining mutual trust. Since commercial interests force journalists to seek the widest possible audience, the politicians we interviewed raised questions about the real reasons for covering certain issues.

Threat no. 3: Professionalized and therefore suspicious: From dancing to a game of chess

As we discussed above, the relationship between journalists and politicians is currently described mostly as appropriate and professional; the values of "correctness" and "professionalism" serve as normative ideals for both parties. Unlike in the past, both parties voice requirements about how the interaction between journalists and politicians should be conducted. For instance, meetings should be formal, more attention must be paid to the use of voice recorders, and politicians often ask for journalists' questions in advance. Nonetheless, professionalization is related mostly to politicians' behaviour towards media, contemporary politicians are expected to be able to communicate with journalists smoothly and in line with the specific practices of professional journalistic work, for example they are expected to give clear and short statements about public affairs. Communication skills and the ability to interact with media in a non-conflictual manner are understood as necessary in a politician's job – and this was argued by journalists as well as by politicians. A basic level of professionalization is required even from representatives of small municipalities who get in contact with journalists only rarely.

However, the professionalization of political communication can also have negative consequences for the mutual trust between politicians and journalists and therefore it is perceived rather ambivalently – professionalization is useful only to a certain extent. On the contrary, in some larger cities politicians' conduct is described as "over-professionalized" which can complicate the relationship significantly since journalists state they do not want politicians who parrot phrases from marketing handbooks. This raises the question of spontaneity, which is considered to be a necessary, though slowly disappearing part of the relationship. In some cases, professionalized behaviour can be even counter-productive. Journalists in our sample suggested that sometimes, if possible, they preferred to contact politicians with worse media communication skills because although they give less comprehensible answers, they can actually provide more specific

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and useful information. If communication training shows too obviously in a politician's behaviour, (s)he is perceived as less trustworthy by journalists.

I am not very interested in what somebody told him [a politician] that he is supposed to say. I want to know what he thinks and why. And usually you don't get such information at a press conference. (Journalist 7)

At the same time, being professional all the time is in some cases not suitable even for politicians:

One has to be able to not always provide a direct and perfect answer. I know it makes a bad impression that a politician is hesitating, but few people know how it works in politics. (Politician 11)

Politicians' "over-professionalized" behaviour is not the only potential barrier for maintaining journalists' trust. Other aspects of the professionalization of politics must also be considered, the role of a spokesperson is criticised in particular. Local journalists consider spokespersons useless mediators and prefer to talk to politicians directly and while spokespersons are identified as useful in specific situations, for instance verifying factual information, in most cases they are perceived as a constraint. However, in local conditions politicians also tend to prefer direct contact with journalists and they use spokespersons only in exceptional cases.

I have the contact details of the most important politicians and I go straight to them. It does not happen too often that they want to communicate through the press office. The press officials are the ones who are not able to comment on the topic extensively. (Journalist 5)

This emphasizes the general feeling of both groups of actors that the professionalization of politics complicated what was once a cleaner cut and amicable relationship. Since there are other actors and institutions involved in the relationship, a greater degree of caution (if not suspicion) is needed. A metaphor of marriage provided by some of the interviewees is suitable here: "it is much harder to trust the other person when you know that there is someone else who aspires to be part of the relationship" (Politician 8, but also Journalist 5).

CONCLUSION

Despite the fact that journalists as well as politicians are often sceptical about their co-existence due to personal experiences as well as different professional aims, the relationship between the actors continues to be based on mutual trust. Unlike in the 1990s, this trust is no longer a natural part of the relationship but rather a fragile, vulnerable quality, which is constructed over a significant period of time and consistently threatened by both external and internal factors. This article identified and analysed three threats which journalists and politicians considered the most important – the danger of friendships between journalists and politicians, the possible conflict of journalists' and politicians' interests and the professionalization of political communication.

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In line with other studies (Franklin, 2006; Larsson, 2002; Ross, 2010; Sigal, 1973; Strömbäck and Nord, 2006) of the journalist–politician relationship, we have demonstrated that it is influenced by many factors and that the field is ruled by a complex set of conventions. However, taking into account the specific history of the Czech Republic, our analysis revealed some interesting issues. Although in the 1990s some patterns of behaviour were acceptable or even desired, they are no longer eligible in current condition(s) of professionalized politics. For instance, a friendship between journalists and politicians is currently considered a potential threat to mutual trust. Moreover, professionalization itself is sometimes perceived as a negative feature for the relationship since it leads to higher levels of suspicion about the 'real' intentions of the actors.

Conversely, the development described in this paper can be seen as a separation of the fields of politics and journalism. As normative media theories suggest, a certain level of distance between journalists and politicians is essential for a functioning democracy (McQuail, 2013). Our findings suggest that although there is such a distance between Czech local journalists and politicians, its establishment did not take into account these normative ideals. However, there are certain normative expectations from the journalist–politician relationship, shared by representatives of both professions, which are linked closely to the issue of mutual (mis)trust.

Finally, analysis at the local level provides new insights into the current processes of political communication. Whereas at the national level journalists and politicians seem to continuously adapt to changes in political communication, trying to benefit from these without questioning change itself (see Strömbäck, 2008), at the local level perceptions seem to be more critical with other values playing a role – notably the quality of interpersonal relationships and the notion of journalists' and politicians' co-operation for the benefit of the local community. This belief, which is related to the reasoning that journalists and politicians are all part of the same community that they should work for, may form part of local politicians' and journalists' identities and may influence their willingness to trust each other (although more research is required in this respect). What distinguishes the Czech case, is the idealization of the short lived post-Velvet Revolution era as a time when journalists and politicians did not need any formal procedures to guide their relationship.

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PRIJETNJE MEĐUSOBNOM POVJERENJU: ČEŠKI LOKALNI POLITIČARI I LOKALNI NOVINARI U DOBA PROFESIONALNE POLITIČKE KOMUNIKACIJE

Roman Hájek :: Jan Vávra :: Tereza Svobodová

SAŽETAK *Studija se bavi promjenama u odnosu između lokalnih novinara i lokalnih političara u Češkoj kao posljedicom profesionalizacije političke komunikacije, kako na nacionalnoj tako i na lokalnoj razini, nakon takozvane Baršunaste revolucije iz 1989. godine. Taj je fenomen već istraživan u zapadnim demokracijama, a u Češkoj je relativno nov. Unaprijeđene komunikacijske vještine političara te zapošljavanje komunikacijskih stručnjaka u politici utječu na povjerenje – temeljnu komponentu u odnosu političara i novinara. Članak se temelji na saznanjima iz polustrukturiranih intervjua s 10 novinara i 11 političara iz različitih mjesta u Češkoj, kojima je cilj istražiti na koji način oni shvaćaju i održavaju razine međusobnog povjerenja. Najprije smo opisali ključne komponente povjerenja te objasnili zašto se povjerenje smatra ugroženijim u doba profesionalizirane političke komunikacije nego što je bilo tijekom 1990-ih. Naposljetku zaključujemo članak istraživanjem triju najvažnijih prijetnji povjerenju koje su identificirali naši ispitanici.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

ODNOSI IZMEĐU NOVINARA I POLITIČARA, POVJERENJE, IZVORI, LOKALNA POLITIKA, PROFESIONALIZACIJA, ČEŠKA

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MINORITY LANGUAGE MEDIA AND JOURNALISTS IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIETAL INTEGRATION IN ESTONIA

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ABSTRACT *The article focuses on the role of Russian-speaking journalists and the potential of Russian-language media in advancing societal integration in Estonia. As a consequence of socialist colonization during the Soviet regime a quarter of Estonian population today is Russian-speaking. The two main language communities have different informational spaces separated by a language barrier. Integration can only be successful if there is unhampered communication between minority and majority groups, and equal opportunities for individuals and groups to participate in the public sphere. First, we discuss the concept of minority language media and the position of Russian-language media in the context of societal integration in Estonia. Using a quantitative survey we depict the current professional status of Estonian Russian-speaking journalists, and display their perceptions about their role in integration. We conclude that Russian-speaking journalists perceive themselves as mediators between Estonian and Russian communities, but are not positive about the possibilities of Russian-language media to fulfil their task as representatives of the minority.*

KEY WORDS

MINORITY LANGUAGE MEDIA, ESTONIA, SOCIETAL INTEGRATION

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INTRODUCTION

Many European countries currently experience an increase in ethnic minority populations as a consequence of immigration from other parts of the world. Estonia's Russian ethnic minority population emerged differently: through Soviet colonization in the post-WWII era. The integration of this minority into Estonian society became a socio-political challenge since the country regained its independence in 1991. During the period of radical political, social and economic reforms in the 1990s, the status of the large, mostly Russian-speaking non-titular population (in 1989, 38.5 %) had to be determined. During Soviet rule, there was no need for integration between Estonian-speaking and Russian-speaking populations, a single citizenship existed in the Soviet Union – the Soviet one – with Russian as a shared official language throughout the Soviet empire. Soviet migration policy resulted in Estonian and Russian-speaking communities living side by side, using different information channels and having little in common.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russophone residents of Estonia and Latvia (unlike those of Lithuania) were not granted citizenship but were offered passports of non-citizen residents. Furthermore, the first Citizenship Act in 1992 reinforced the division of society along ethnic lines: all ethnic Estonians became citizens, while 85 % of the Russophone population were non-citizens (for more see Lauristin and Kallas, 2008). In the 1990s integration policy focused primarily on increasing the knowledge of Estonian among the non-titular population but failed to address many other problems. Only as late as 1998, was the first minority policy document issued (for more see Lauk and Jakobson, 2009). Although the knowledge of Estonian has remarkably improved, 16 % of the Russophone population still claim that they do not understand any Estonian (Vihalemm T., 2011: 115). Research has repeatedly confirmed that the main sources of information for non-Estonian speakers are Russia's media channels (Kirch M., 1997; Jakobson, 2002; Hallik, 2006; Vihalemm P., 2004, 2008, 2011; Lauristin et al., 2011). However, up to 71 % of Russophones also regard Estonian produced Russian media as important sources of information on Estonian issues (Vihalemm P., 2011: 159). Therefore, the state integration strategy document for 2008–2013 (EL 2008–2013) specifically emphasized the significance of media and journalists as agents of societal integration in Estonia. The first state integration strategy *Integration in Estonian Society 2000–2007* defined integration as harmonisation of society and as an opportunity to preserve ethnic differences offering ethnic minorities "opportunities for the preservation of their cultural and ethnic distinctiveness" (Riiklik Programm 2000–2007: 5). To diminish the gap between the two language and cultural communities, the promotion of "linguistic-communicative integration in society" was strongly emphasized, meaning "the re-creation of a common sphere of information and Estonian-language environment in Estonian society under conditions of cultural diversity and mutual tolerance" (*ibid*.: 6). Integration is regarded as a two-way process that requires efforts on the part of the majority and minority alike, and is based on the mutual acceptance and respect of various social groups (Integration in Estonian Society, 2014).

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Sara Signer et al. (2011: 421–422) argue that although mass media cannot be considered a core agent of integration on par with the educational system, the media still contribute to intercultural integration in two important ways: 1) minorities working in journalism contribute to media diversity by introducing minority-specific issues; 2) the use of mainstream media by minorities is considered important for their intercultural integration.

By increasing the availability of information on Estonian issues and events in Russian and providing more of the same information in Russian that is provided in Estonian, Russian-speaking journalists may potentially bridge two informational spaces and thus, contribute to integration and societal coherence. Agreeing that the key aim of the media in a minority language is cultural and political self-representation (Cormack, 2007:10), we suggest that Russian-speaking journalists have a potential to express the views and expectations of the Russophone minority. Therefore, it is important to explore Russian-speaking journalists' professional attitudes and aspirations and their position in the context of societal integration in Estonia.

So far, only one – unpublished – study exists that deals with these questions (Jufereva, 2006). Overwhelmingly the studies dedicated to media and integration issues focus on media contents in both Russian and Estonian, and on the coverage of interethnic relations and political inclusion/exclusion (Kirch A. et al., 1993; Jakobson, 1996, 2002; Kirch M., 1997; Vetik, 1999; Kõuts, 2004; Hallik, 2006; Pettai, 2006; Vihalemm P., 2008, 2011; Lauk and Jakobson, 2009; Vihalemm T. and Jakobson, 2011; Aidarov and Drechsler, 2013; Jõesaar et al., 2014).

In contrast, our study focuses on Russian-speaking journalists' perceptions of their role in the context of societal integration in Estonia. The main research questions of this study are: 1) How do Russian-speaking journalists position themselves as professionals in the media field? 2) What are Russian-speaking journalists' perceptions of their role as agents of integration? We also discuss some contextual aspects: the concept of minority language media and the place of Russian-language media in societal integration in Estonia. We conclude with analysing the intersection of Russian-speaking journalists' professional values with the contextual conditions of their media environment.

CONCEPTUALISING MINORITY LANGUAGE MEDIA

In this study, we use the term minority language when speaking about Russian in Estonia, referring to the definition given in the *European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages* (1992). According to the Charter, minority languages are "traditionally used within a given territory of a State by nationals of that State who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the State's population". The Charter distinguishes among five categories of minority languages. Russian in Estonia represents the fourth category: "languages spoken in communities constituting a minority in the nation state where they live that are majority languages in other countries". Mike Cormack (2007) fairly criticizes

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this definition as inadequate. As he claims "the concept of a linguistic minority is essentially a political one" – it is the nationalism of the majority group that creates the situation where "one community is constructed by the other as a minority" (Cormack, 2007: 1) and marginalized by the majority community. The Russian language is not threatened with disappearing in Estonia because of a large number of native speakers, the geographic proximity of Russia and easy access to Russian language media both locally produced and from Russia. The Russian-speaking minority forms a distinct minority language community in Estonia. There also seem to be strong links between citizenship and the sense of belonging to Estonia: 80 % of Russian-speaking Estonian citizens and two thirds of all Russian-speaking residents regard themselves as being Estonian people (Vihalemm T., 2011: 134–156).

Various labels are used in scholarly literature for the media produced in minority languages: minority media, ethnic media, diasporic and minority language media. A common consensus does not seem to exist about the meaning and use of these attributes. For example, Anne-Katrin Arnold and Beate Schneider (2007) use the terms ethnic media and ethnic journalists to distinguish the media of large immigrant communities from mainstream media. Matthew Matsaganis et al. (2011: 8–9) define ethnic media as media produced by and for (a) immigrants, (b) ethnic, racial, and linguistic minorities, and (c) indigenous groups living in various countries across the world. Mark Deuze (2006: 262) does not distinguish between ethnic and minority media, he understands ethnic or minority media as media produced by and for minority groups, living in the host country. Valeria Jakobson (2002) who studied the Russian-language media's role in societal integration in Estonia used the terms ethnic minority media and Russian language media. We use the term minority language media adopting it from Cormack who argues that the status of a language in a state is crucial in forming identities and values, and also that official languages of one state may be minority languages in another, such as Russian in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, or Arabic in France (*ibid*.: 1). In Estonia, we find media and journalists that belong to and work for the Russian-speaking minority community and also a huge range of easily accessible Russian media produced in Russia. This situation is complicated in terms of societal integration and the coherence of Estonian society, as Russian media largely serve the Russian state's policy of "protecting Russian minorities abroad", even at the expense of aggression. This situation clearly makes the role of Estonian produced Russian-language media even more important in supporting integration and social cohesion.

In his seminal article *Minority Language Media in Western Europe* (1998) Mike Cormack suggested seven conditions necessary for the successful emergence and development of minority language media: number of users of the language; mass campaign for media; leadership and organization; political culture; political weakness of the central government; symbolic status of the language and international trends. Cormack restricted his study to the Western European minorities of Celtic languages and the regional languages of Spain. Later, he further developed minority language media studies (Cormack, 2004, 2005, 2007) defining, among other issues, their core concerns such as the status of media in the context of a specific language and culture, and the economic basis of minority language media.

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Enrique Uribe-Jongbloed (2014) critically examined Cormack's seven conditions within the non-European context of Colombia and concluded that with slight modifications, the factors proposed by Cormack are also applicable in (comparative) research on minority language media outside Europe. However, we do not attempt to make another test of Cormack's seven conditions by examining them in the context of Estonia's Russian-language media. Instead, we use this framework for explaining the media environment in which Estonian Russian-speaking journalists operate. As Cormack argues, "in any discussion of minority language media careful attention needs to be given to the specific context", and that "central to any discussion to these media must be consideration of the political environment" (1998: 48–49).

RUSSIAN-LANGUAGE MEDIA AND TWO INFORMATIONAL SPACES

The historical and political contexts of Russian-language media in Estonia differ from those of Western European countries that are discussed more frequently in literature. During Estonia's independence between 1918 and 1940, only 8.2 % of Estonia's population were ethnic Russians. The Russian-language press emerged in Estonia in the 19th century, and in the inter-war period, over 100 titles of newspapers and magazines existed for shorter or longer time. However, during the nearly five decades of post-WWII Soviet regime, the proportion of Russians increased to 30.3 % and that of other minority nationalities to 8.2 %. The shared language of those of non-Estonian origin was Russian as this was the only language in which they were educated in Estonia. In addition to the Russian-language newspapers and broadcasts produced in Estonia, media existing throughout the Soviet Union were widely distributed and consumed.

After Estonia regained its independence in 1991, Soviet subsidies stopped along with changes in media ownership, and the Russian-language media of the Soviet period did not survive. The new private investors faced economic difficulties, which led to the dramatic decline of Estonia's Russian-language press during the economic recession of the late 1990s and to its eventual collapse in the economic crisis of 2008–2011. While in 2001, 17 Russian language dailies existed, by 2011 only one daily newspaper and nine weeklies survived. Even the single remaining Russian language daily (*Postimees na russkom jazyke*) reduced its appearance to three times a week in June 2013.

The emergence of news portals to some extent compensates for the lack of available newspapers in Russian. Since 2005, several on-line versions have been created on the basis of surviving newspapers (*Postimees na russkom jazyke, Den za Dnjom, Delovyje Vedomosti, MK-Estonija, Stolitsa*). The first Internet portal in Russian (*Rus.delfi*) emerged in 1991 and now has 200,000 unique readers per week, followed by *Rus.postimees.ee* with 90,000 weekly readers (Современные русскоязычные СМИ Эстонии). In addition, the public service broadcaster *Eesti Rahvusringhääling (ERR*) launched the internet-portal *Rus.err.ee* in 2007. The Tallinn city government has run their Russian language portal *Stolitsa.ee* since 2008.

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According to Cormack (1998), the number of language speakers is one of the factors for assessing the potential success of minority language media. He suggests that one million could be the minimum size of a population to maintain the full range of modern media. The overall estimated size of the Russian-language media market in Estonia is about 300,000 people. According to *Integration Monitoring 2011*, 71 % of Russophone population listened to the Estonian public service channel Radio 4 (Vihalemm P., 2011: 162) and over 80 % of the Russophone population regularly watched PBK (*Pervyi Baltijski Kanal/ First Baltic Channel*), which is available in all Baltic states. In addition to re-transmitting government controlled Russian TV channels (NTV-Mir and REN-TV), PBK also produces a daily newscast in each country. Along with PBK, other Russian TV channels are the main information source for 75 % of the Russophone population (*ibid*.: 165). These channels are also deemed most trustworthy by Estonia's Russian-speaking population. Estonian media channels are regarded as much less trustworthy by the majority of their total Russian-speaking audience (Vihalemm P., 2011: 162). There is very little interest in newspapers, the circulation of the most popular Russian-language national weekly *Postimees in Russian* is about 8,000 to 9,000 (EALL, 2014).

As the Russian-speaking audience has always been more oriented towards Russia's media channels rather than those of Estonia there has not been a "mass campaign for media" (Cormack, 1998). Although some Russian politicians have raised the issue, no substantial pressure exists from the audience for establishing and maintaining the full range of Russian-language news media in Estonia. However, the development plan *Integrating Estonia 2020* identifies the Estonian public service broadcaster (ERR) as an important actor in promoting a common media field (Report, 2014: 16). After a long and lively debate in the media and among politicians the government decided to launch a Russian-language television channel as a part of ERR at the end of 2014. This is not a sign of the "political weakness of the central government" and willingness "to concede power to regions" as Cormack's fifth factor declares (Cormack, 1998: 41), but an additional attempt to expand the common informational space. The channel will begin broadcasting in autumn 2015. According to a survey, about 66 % of Estonia's Russian-speaking population are potentially interested in watching the new channel (Kuul, 2014).

The results of a range of national studies (Kirch A. et al., 1993; Jakobson, 1996; Kirch M., 1997; Vetik, 1999) have demonstrated that Estonian and Russian language media produce different and separated semantic fields and informational spaces. In her study on Russian-language media and integration Jakobson concludes that in the 1990s, the Russian-language press mostly performed as a constructor of social barriers between the Russian population and Estonians, as well as a creator of distrust towards the Estonian state and societal institutions (Jakobson, 2002). As several studies confirm, no significant progress has yet been achieved in developing a common informational space for the two linguistic groups (Vihalemm P., 2008; Vihalemm T. 2011; Vetik, 2012). Therefore, producing and distributing information on Estonian affairs in Russian and through Russian-language media continues to be very important. An experienced journalist interviewed by the authors of this article (male, 56) emphasized this:

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The two communities live separate lives. I think the Russian community is better informed but not about the life of the Estonian community but about Estonian political life. The Russian community knows very little about the lives of ordinary Estonian people. And Estonians know nothing about how the Russians live. They cannot even name the top ten celebrities of the Russian community.

Arnold and Schneider point out some important interrelations between media consumption and integration, such as "diffusion of information and knowledge about values, meanings and identity […] and reduction/ alteration of social distances and cultural prejudices" (2007: 119). Hence, "an essential part of the study of any minority language media is the role of intellectuals and cultural producers" (Cormack, 1998: 49), which journalists certainly are. By supplying the discourse through which the world is understood and defining the world in the minority group's terms they contribute to "empowering the group and its identity" (*ibid*.: 45).

DATA AND METHOD

A survey, using a standardized questionnaire was conducted among Estonian Russian-speaking journalists in January and February 2011 – the year of the latest integration monitoring report that was used to prepare the new *Strategy of Integration and Social Cohesion in Estonia* (for 2014–2020). In 2011, more than half of Russian-speaking journalists worked in online outlets. Most of them worked in the capital of Tallinn (where the majority of Estonian mass media are concentrated) and in northeast Estonia, where 78 % of the population is Russian-speaking. The questionnaire was hand-delivered to all 140 journalists who worked full time in the editorial offices of Russian-language media outlets (the press, news portals, radio and television) with a 71 % response rate. The SPSS programme was used for data analysis. For comparison, some results of a 2006 survey of 120 Russian-speaking journalists are used. Additionally, from January till March 2012, in-depth interviews were conducted with 11 journalists with different work experiences and lengths of careers.

STATUS OF RUSSIAN-SPEAKING JOURNALISTS AS PROFESSIONALS

The majority (52 %) of Russian-speaking journalists are in their 30s or 40s, with careers spanning less than 20 years, which reflects the generational shift among journalists that took place in the early 1990s (cf. Lauk, 1996). Only 17 % of them have experience of working as journalists in the Soviet period and their number is decreasing. The younger generation is better professionally educated than the older one, about one third of them have a university degree in journalism. Also, female journalists are generally educated to higher levels than male journalists: 24 % of women have university education in journalism compared to 10 % of men, and 30 % of women hold a non-journalistic university degree as opposed to 20 % of men. Overall, the Estonian journalistic field seems to gradually feminize: currently there are 58 % female and 42 % male journalists. While in 2006,

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parity existed between male and female journalists in Russian-language media, by 2011 the proportion had remarkably changed in favour of women (62 %). Interestingly, more women than men work in online media (22 and 12 %, respectively), and more men than women work in broadcasting (41 and 36 %, respectively).

The greater feminization among Russian-speaking journalists is probably one of the consequences of the economic hardships of the past six to seven years, which hit Russian-language media even harder than Estonian ones. As the Russian-language press has dramatically shrunk there are fewer well-paid jobs, and the majority of incomes after tax remain below €800 (75 %). More men have, probably, left the field because of low salaries. The salaries of Russian-speaking journalists are clearly lower than those in Estonian media. According to a survey of all Estonian journalists carried out in 2012–2013[1], the proportion of those paid less than €800 is considerably lower than in Russian-language media (39 %), the share of those paid between €800 and 1,200 is 45 %.

Professional self-identification and commitment to the profession are relatively weak among Russian-speaking journalists. Many (36 %) see their journalistic job as temporary, only as a stage in their careers. Only 14 % of respondents answered a decisive "no" to the question whether they have considered switching to another field, while nearly one fifth answered a clear "yes" and another 21 % had seriously thought about it. About the same number of journalists thought they could easily lose their current job and only a little more than a third (36 %) had a more positive view of the future. The majority of Russian-speaking journalists (83 %) are not members of the Estonian Journalists' Union, whereas those who are, belong to the generation aged 50 and above. Perhaps, the fact that the Union does not have much authority among Estonian journalists in general (Harro-Loit and Loit, 2014) partly explains this situation. However, Russian-speaking journalists have not established their own organisation either.

A code of ethics is another important element of journalists' professional self-identification. However, nearly one third (30 %) of Russian-speaking journalists are not familiar with the Code of Ethics of Estonian Journalism. Another indicator of professional identity is a certain responsibility for one's professional community and for one's own actions as a member of a "guild". For the majority of Russian-speaking journalists, personal ambitions and loyalty to their employers seem to be more important than any sense of membership of a profession and responsibility for its operations (see Figure 1). Similar attitudes are also observed Europe-wide, in a survey of journalists in 14 countries in 2011–2012[2], 95 % of respondents stressed responsibility for their own actions and conscience, and over 80 % for their publisher.

[1] The survey was part of the global project *Worlds of Journalism Study:* http://www.worldsofjournalism.org/.
[2] Online survey conducted in 2011–2012 as part of a EU-funded research project "Media Accountability and Transparency in Europe (MediaAcT)" among journalists in 12 European countries (Austria, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Spain, Switzerland) and two Arab countries: Jordan and Tunisia; with a total of 1,762 respondents. The project's homepage: www.mediaact.eu.

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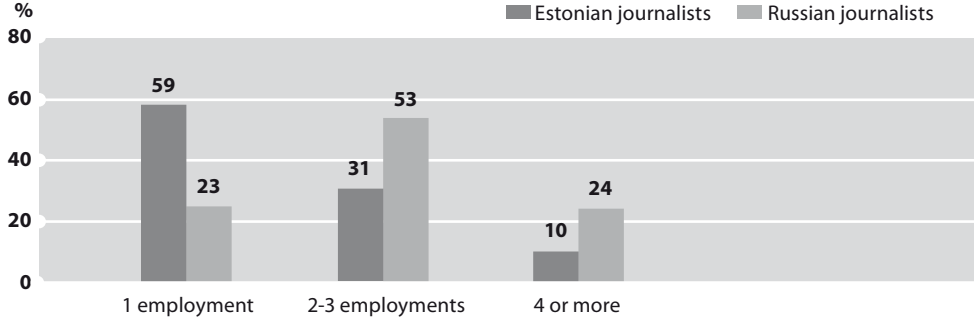
The instability and economic difficulties of the Russian-language media sector have an obvious impact on journalists' job security. Job insecurity is reflected in journalists' mobility on the job market (see Figure 1): almost a quarter (24 %) of journalists had been employed in four to nine different newsrooms, whereas 53 % had had two to three jobs during their careers. It also appears that men change their jobs more often than women – among those with four to nine employments, 36 % were men and 19 % were women.



▲ *Figure 1.*
Job stability among Russian and Estonian journalists
(% of respondents)
$N_E = 278$, $N_R = 100$

The mutual comprehension of the other group's language forms the basis of interethnic communication. For Russian-speaking journalists, knowledge of Estonian is an indispensable skill, as the majority of their sources are Estonian. Indeed, 92 % of the respondents admitted that Estonian is very important or quite important in their work. Although Estonian is the official language of the country and its everyday linguistic environment, only a quarter of the respondents stated that they were completely fluent in Estonian. Another 54 % said they could understand and speak Estonian. Journalists in their 30s and 40s have the best Estonian skills (67 and 89 % of the respective age group are good or fluent in Estonian). In comparison, 72 % of respondents declared they are sufficiently good in English (see Figure 2). The younger generation's command of English seems to be even better than that of Estonian (89 % of those in their 20s and 71 % in their 30s reported being good or fluent in English). One can speculate that the quality of English language teaching in Russian language schools has been higher than that of Estonian (which is true at least for the Soviet period). However, it also seems to be a matter of attitude and motivation – knowledge of Estonian is not valued as highly as that of English.

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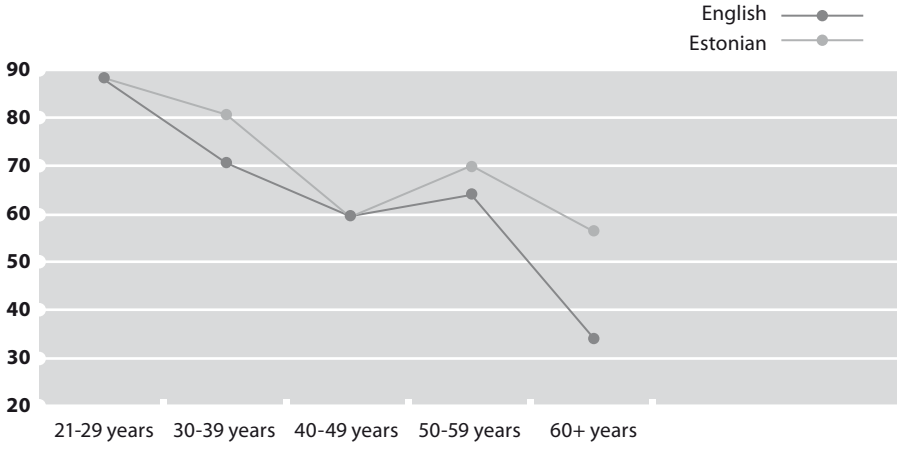

▲ *Figure 2.*
Command of Estonian and English in different age groups
(% of the age group)
N = 100

There was, still, a substantial group (19 %) of those whose knowledge of Estonian was passive (understanding to a degree but not speaking) or non-existent. This group has diminished since 2006, when about a third of Russian-speaking journalists did not communicate in Estonian.

It seems, however, that the self-assessment of knowledge of Estonian is somewhat misleading. When asked additionally about the root of difficulties in their work, 31 % mentioned insufficient knowledge of Estonian (as the fourth difficulty after lack of time, insufficient knowledge of the topic and high levels of stress).

RUSSIAN-SPEAKING JOURNALISTS LIAISING BETWEEN ESTONIAN AND RUSSOPHONE COMMUNITIES

Journalists in Estonia had to redefine their professional roles and tasks after the cessation of censorship and ideological surveillance over the media. Russian-speaking journalists had been in the position of the "official voice" of the ruling power even to a larger extent than Estonian journalists, as they represented the media in the language of pan-Soviet communication. The transformation from an ideological opinion-maker to an information provider occurred quite quickly in the early 1990s. Russian-speaking journalists have clearly adopted the role of information transmitter (98 %) and did that to a greater extent than the role of a "watchdog" (77 %). They regard the role of a mediator between the two linguistic communities as even more important. They emphasize discussing and explaining the problems of Estonian society in Russian-language media (94 %), reporting on Estonian culture and history (84 %) and helping the Russophone

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population to feel that they are part of Estonian society (83 %) as the most important tasks for them as journalists. One of the interviewees, a former editor of a weekly (female, 32) expressed it in following way:

The task of a Russian journalist is to identify the problem, to make the ethnic majority aware of it, to explain what its essence is and its possible consequences for Russian-speakers, and to suggest a solution or a compromise. Journalists should invite experts, public opinion leaders and people from different sections of society to a public discussion.

The journalists mentioned economic difficulties and unemployment (95 % in both cases) as the most urgent problems of the Russophone population, which, although common throughout Estonian society, have a greater impact on the Russophones. As specific problems of minorities, 86 % of respondents mentioned unequal job opportunities and 75 % unequal treatment by officials in state institutions. The journalists also pointed out the importance of the Russian-language media in publicly discussing and interpreting these problems but they were dubious about the media's ability to improving the existing situation. Furthermore, 88 % of respondents thought that Russian-speaking journalists and media have no influence whatsoever on political decisions that are made in Estonia. In 2006, during the implementation of the first *Integration Programme* (2000–2007), more journalists (14 %) believed that they could influence politicians' actions and decisions. Indeed, the degeneration of the Russian-language news media in Estonia since the mid-2000s and the fact that the Russian-speaking population prefers watching Russia's television channels, plays a role here. Journalists do not think that local Russian-language journalism can substantially support integration and social cohesion in Estonia, and this attitude has not changed since 2006 (48 % of respondents of both surveys thought Russian-language media do not promote integration). On the other hand, 85 % of them believed that people generally trust Estonia's Russian-language media, although sociological studies do not support this optimistic view.

Interestingly, the level of knowledge of Estonian plays a significant role in how journalists see and interpret the integration process. 80 % of those completely fluent in Estonian supported the idea that local Russian-language media should help Russian-speaking people to integrate into Estonian society. The majority (71 %) of those able to communicate in Estonian regarded reporting about joint integration activities and projects involving both Estonians and Russians as important.

Also, education seems to influence attitudes towards the potential of Russian-language media in promoting integration. Journalists with a non-journalistic university degree were the most sceptical (53 % declared that the media do not promote integration). The most positive attitude appeared in the group with university degrees in journalism, 45 % of whom believed that Russian-language media support integration. However, another 45 % of those in the same group were of the opposite opinion.

According to Arnold and Schneider (2007: 118), the "representation of ethnic minorities in the media points to mass media's ability to influence integration through the way it portrays social groups". Russian-speaking journalists feel a strong affiliation with the

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Russophone community: 78 % of them see expressing and defending the interests of Russian speakers as very important or important in their professional work. This attitude has actually strengthened since 2006, when only 38 % emphasized this task as important. Journalists try to reduce tensions in society by informing both their audiences about Estonian issues, and the Estonian-speaking audience about the issues of the Russophone community.

67 % of surveyed Russian-speaking journalists regarded the translation of websites, television and radio programmes and other media material into Russian and English as important. Our survey results reflect Russophone journalists' positive attitudes to their role in building social coherence in Estonian society and bridging between the two communities. The same attitude appears in some of our interviews. A television journalist with 20 years of professional experience (male, 53) put it in the following way:

Our apparent role is to connect the two communities. We are sitting on two chairs simultaneously. On the one hand, we have to keep an eye on what is going on in Russia, and we should tell people about that. On the other hand, it is necessary that we observe how the Russian-speaking community interacts with the Estonian speaking one. How realistic this role is, is another issue.

The 2011 Integration monitoring report confirmed that the majority of both Estonian and Russian-speaking people expected Russian-language media to cover life in Estonia in more depth and breadth and to better explain the context of events (Vihalemm P., 2011: 166). However, the interviewed journalists did not see the picture as encouraging and pointed to several disturbing moments, such as insufficient communication between Estonian and Russian-speaking journalists; the attempts by both sides to cover up negative facts about the other; lack of interest in each other's culture or history etc.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Both Cormack (1998, 2005, 2007) and Uribe-Jongbloed (2014) emphasize the relevance of political culture as a condition for the development of minority language media. In addition to everyone's right "to freely disseminate ideas, opinions, beliefs and other information by word, print, picture or other means" (Art. 45), the Estonian Constitution provides minority groups with the right "to establish self-governing agencies under such conditions and pursuant to such procedure as are provided in the National Minorities Cultural Autonomy Act" (Art. 50). Estonia's Public Broadcasting Act defines transmitting "programmes which […] meet the information needs of all sections of the population, including minorities" (Art. 5 (8)) the task of the public service broadcaster ERR. No legal act or procedure exists to prevent the development of minority language media, neither are there any restrictions on access to various media. However, Russian-language media are not typical minority media which aim to maintain the language and cultural traditions of a minority, since Russian is the official language spoken by millions right across the border, and satellites make a variety of Russian television channels available. In addition to the economic problems of Estonia's Russian-language media, the audience's consumption habits weaken the opportunities that Russian-speaking journalists have to influence

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the process of integration. Estonia's Russian-language media are unable to compete for an audience with the flow of information and entertainment from Russia, including propaganda that is hostile to the Estonian state. As our research indicates, within the existing Estonian media environment Russian-speaking journalists have difficulties in positioning themselves simultaneously as professionals and as representatives of the Russophone community.

According to our results, journalists working in Russian-language media are not too positive about their ability to promote the interests of the Russophone minority. Instead, they are more oriented towards general professional standards and their role as mediators between Estonian and Russian communities within existing possibilities. However, Estonia's Russian-speaking journalists are aware of their audience's needs for more information on everyday life in Estonia. They are also aware of the importance of diminishing the distance between the two linguistic communities and contributing to the development of a common information space for both communities. As professionals, Russian-speaking journalists do not have a strong professional identity, they are not organized and are therefore more exposed to unfavourable employment conditions. In addition, a limited command of Estonian by many of them restricts their range of sources and possibly, their ability to explain issues facing the Estonian society to their audience. We can conclude that professional qualities and contextual conditions that are necessary in order for minority language media to represent a minority's needs and interests and to contribute to their integration in the host society, are only partly present in the case of Russian-language media in Estonia.

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MEDIJI NA MANJINSKIM JEZICIMA I NOVINARI U KONTEKSTU DRUŠTVENE INTEGRACIJE U ESTONIJI

Maria Jufereva :: Epp Lauk

SAŽETAK *U fokusu ovog članka jesu uloga novinara koji govore ruski jezik i potencijal medija na ruskom jeziku u unaprjeđivanju društvene integracije u Estoniji. Posljedica socijalističke kolonizacije za vrijeme sovjetskog režima jest ta da četvrtina estonskog stanovništva danas govori ruskim jezikom. Te dvije glavne jezične zajednice (estonska i ruska) imaju različite informacijske prostore koje dijeli jezična barijera. Integracija može uspjeti samo ako postoji nesputana komunikacija između manjinskih i većinskih skupina te ako pojedinci i skupine imaju jednaku mogućnost sudjelovanja u javnoj sferi života. U članku se prvo bavimo konceptom medija na manjinskim jezicima te ulogom medija na ruskom jeziku u kontekstu društvene integracije u Estoniji. Koristile smo metodu ankete kako bismo doznale kakav je trenutačni profesionalni status estonskih novinara koji govore ruski jezik te kako oni percipiraju svoju ulogu u procesu integracije. Zaključile smo da novinari koji govore ruskim jezikom sebe doživljavaju kao posrednike između estonske i ruske zajednice, ali i da nisu sigurni da mediji na ruskom jeziku mogu ispuniti zadaću da budu predstavnici manjine.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

MEDIJI NA MANJINSKIM JEZICIMA, ESTONIJA, DRUŠTVENA INTEGRACIJA

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IZAZOVI ZA MEDIJE I DEMOKRATIZACIJU

CHALLENGES OF MEDIA AND DEMOCRATIZATION

PARTICIPATION OR NEW MEDIA USE FIRST? RECONSIDERING THE ROLE OF NEW MEDIA IN CIVIC PRACTICES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Jakub Macek :: Alena Macková :: Johana Kotišová

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ABSTRACT *The article discusses qualitative research on the mundane civic practices of some Czechs, with a specific focus on the role of new media. It works with a context-oriented approach in order to avoid media-centrism. Our research is focussed on the ways in which civic practices are structured by immediate and wider social and political contexts and how they are experienced by post-socialist citizens from villages and large cities. The role of new media and the place of civic practices in everyday life is analysed with respect to these contexts. The research based on semi-structured in-depth interviews with 22 politically and publicly active citizens indicates that Czechs experience a similar crisis in relation to institutional politics as their counterparts in long established democracies and it reveals tell-tale differences between the social spaces of villages and cities both in participatory practices and in civic uses of new media. However, the study does not indicate a radical, new media-driven transformation of citizenship, rather it suggests subtle shifts in practices and a pragmatic mixing of face-to-face communication and traditional media (print, public address systems, noticeboards) with new communication technologies.*

KEY WORDS

CIVIC PRACTICES, DIFFUSED AUDIENCE, NEW MEDIA, TRADITIONAL MEDIA, CZECH REPUBLIC

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INTRODUCTION

The "new" Czech democracy has in the 25 years of its development effectively caught up with Western democracies in terms of discontent with politics, distrust of political institutions and media and a continual decline in political participation (Linek, 2013). In general, these developments can be framed as a crisis of legitimacy of institutionalized politics and since the 1990s it has been expected that new – digital and networked – media will play a role in resolving this crisis (see Dahlberg, 2011; Macek, 2013a).

It is apparent that such a general impact of new media is illusory and that the logic of a straightforward and readily available "technical fix" is, as Kevin Robins and Frank Webster (1989) argued already over two decades ago, just an offspring of the seductive modern meta-narration of universal and instrumentally rational progress. Existing – mostly quantitative[1] – research on the topic has become more nuanced (compared particularly to the 1990s when the influence of new media on politics was understood in a more straightforward manner) and addressed questions such as: What role do new media play in political participation? Do they broaden the repertoire of participatory practices? What are the differences and relationship between online and traditional participation? (see Tang and Lee, 2013; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2012; Gil de Zúñiga et al., 2010; Gil de Zúñiga and Valenzuela, 2010; Zhang et al., 2010) However, answers to these questions are hardly satisfying yet. Why?

Firstly, the field is inconsistent in conceptualizations of basic terminology. Lincoln Dahlberg's remark that democracy or e-democracy is "often talked about as though there was a general consensus about what it is" (Dahlberg, 2011: 855) is plausible even in relation to participation. Nico Carpentier (2011) and Peter Dahlgren (2011) note that the term participation is usually treated in an open, vague way, while Maria Bakardjieva stresses that political participation is dominantly researched and theorized in relation to institutionalized politics although civic practices should actually be studied also in the context of mundane everyday life and the private sphere (Bakardjieva, 2009). Secondly, as we have already argued elsewhere, existing research on the phenomena related to new media tends to be media-centric, understanding new media as a central, specific focus (cf. Macek, 2013a: 67–94, 95–106). However, this understandable reduction could be misleading. When holding a hammer, everything seems to be a nail; when focusing on new media, everything seems to be related to new media. Therefore, civic practices – the particular agencies of citizens related to public and political issues[2] – should be the main character in the story. And related uses of new media should be analysed with respect to immediate and broader contexts surrounding and structuring civic practices (Bakardjieva, 2009; Bentivegna, 2006; Dahlgren, 2011, 2013; Macek, 2013a; Macková and Macek, 2014).

[1] There are, of course, also some qualitative studies on new media and politics, see Huang et al., 2014; Nilsson and Carlsson, 2014; Warren et al., 2014; Bakardjieva, 2009.
[2] Public issues are here understood as issues located beyond the private sphere, as issues related to events and relations in the public space. The practices then, as we show below, vary from seemingly non-political collective (public) activities such as organizing concerts for local children or attending a beekeepers' club to (explicitly political) activities such as participating in local municipal politics or in elections.

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Dahlgren (2011, 2013), Carpentier (2011) and Bakardjieva (2009) address the problem within a theoretical frame and a context-oriented approach underlines the necessity of an ongoing and careful reconsideration of actual participatory agency. We take up this challenge and confront our theoretically informed understanding with the lived and contextualized experiences of 22 politically or publicly active Czech citizens: we decided to ask them in qualitative interviews about (1) how they relate to politics and to the public sphere in general, (2) what they actually do or do not do in relation to public and political issues and how they conceive their activities and (3) how and why they use media in this regard. Moreover, our previous research on city-based online activism suggested that uses of new media for political participation in cities are probably influenced by the specific characteristics of urban social relationships (Macková and Macek, 2014). Therefore we decided to take a closer look at (4) whether and how the activities and related uses of media differ in rural and urban environments and what they have in common. The first two questions explore the role of the broader contexts of national politics and of links between how citizens see and experience the political and public spheres and how they experience and understand their own particular civic practices. The third question then takes into account communication technologies and the fourth one the role of rural and urban social contexts.

BEYOND A MEDIA-CENTRIC LOGIC, TOWARDS GREATER COMPLEXITY

Although our ambition is to understand how our interviewees engage in actual civic practices and hence we build on their understanding of what constitutes these practices and on the local and national contexts, it is necessary to clarify our conceptual apparatus. When talking about new media and participatory agency, Carpentier makes a conceptual distinction among access (to technologies), interaction (about public and political topics) and participation (see Carpentier, 2011: 28–30). For our purposes and also in line with the findings of our previous research (Macková and Macek, 2014) we have modified this typology. We decided to distinguish between access (as a contextual condition for uses of media) and agency. And since access was one of the sampling criteria, we focus only on agency here.

Furthermore, in relation to agency we have made a distinction between communicative practices of reception and interaction and conative practices of engagement and participation. The reception of mediated contents and information (produced both by individual actors and professional media) and interaction with others (including both mediated and face-to-face communication) are essential conditions for engagement (as an expression of interest, as taking part in events, community, associations, clubs etc.) and participation (Carpentier, 2011) definition practices aiming at co-deciding, participation in decision-making processes). These four (Weberian ideal-typical) forms of politically and publicly oriented practices – we refer to them by the umbrella term civic practices – enable us to work even with interviewees' subtle understandings of their engagement with public and political issues. The distinctive focus on the communicative

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practices of reception and interaction enables us to concentrate on reception and interaction as practices conditioning engagement and participation and linking civic practices in general to media uses. In addition, the distinction between engagement and participation helps us to tell apart participation in events and decision making on these (or at least aiming to do so).

When approaching new media and civic practices we knowingly avoid the simplistic media-centric logic with new media conceived as a more or less central or even primary source of current social and political change. As Scott Wright suggests: "The revolutionary potential [of technology] lies [...] in how technologies are designed, exploited and adopted (or not) by humans in particular social and political contexts." (2011: 246) Therefore we focus on immediate, everyday contexts directly surrounding and structuring civic practices (including the private sphere, work, social ties) as well as on the broader political, social and economic contexts of the locality and of the nation state.

With the former we specifically focus on forms of locality and forms of local relationships, as research question 4 indicates. We are, in other words, interested in how community–based local contexts typical of villages (though possibly existing in cities as well) differ from urban contexts in shaping civic practices and uses of new media. In this regard, we understand "the village" and "the city" as ideal-typical constructs (see below).

Last but not least, it is worth stressing that our approach does not neglect technology as a formative material and symbolic force structuring agency or shaping larger contexts. On the contrary, it does explicitly explore the role of media (as technologies and texts) in relation to civic practices and to broader contexts. This approach appears to be useful specifically in a situation when changes in the studied phenomena are in many aspects subtle, contradictory and more colourful and difficult to track than originally expected – as with political practices (Dahlgren, 2013; Bakardjieva, 2009) – and when understanding media as a central problem could jeopardize more nuanced interpretations of the transformation of the political (Wright, 2011). Therefore, we take into account that the political sphere is constantly changing both in terms of institutionalized politics but also in its perceptions by citizens. Also, we are aware that civic practices keep transforming and that the term covers a wide range of specific practices (cf. Ester and Vinken, 2003; Lievrouw, 2011) and finally that the affordances of new media play a role in these changes as they meet particular needs and structure particular practices and can set up new contexts for interaction and power relations.

METHODS

We have focused on broadly conceived expressions of civic practices in cities, on the one hand, and small towns and villages on the other and the role that various media play in these practices. We expected that these practices could differ according to constraints and opportunities that particular social spaces (e.g. social ties and involved collective identities) offer.

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We worked with a qualitative research design based on broadly conceived semi-structured interviews with 22 interviewees, aged 15–60 years (mean age for villages and small towns was 32, for cities 25)[3]. The interviews were collected in April 2014 in 22 distinct places across the country; eleven interviewees live in bigger Czech cities (over 100 thousand inhabitants)[4], one in a mid-size town with 37 thousand people, two in small towns (15 and 6 thousand inhabitants), one in a bigger village with 3 thousand people and seven in small villages with fewer than a thousand inhabitants. The sample was homogenous in terms of interviewees' social status and media skills – all of them could be characterized as middle class, routine users of traditional and new media. Our choice of the sample was intentionally limited to people who proclaimed some kind of political or public engagement, participation in local politics, local cultural and community events or associations, volunteering, etc. Our interviewees include university and secondary school students engaged in volunteering (working with homeless people, active at school assembly, doing theatre etc.), teachers, two mayors of small villages (209 and 586 inhabitants), a former teacher and a current deputy mayor in a town with 37 thousand people, a former journalist, a businesswoman restoring a chapel in a small village, a woman working at a youth centre, a citizen journalist from a big city, a communal politician and sacristan from a small town and a designer, a freelancer and a MA student working for NGOs.

The analytical process actually began already during the work on the research design and the interview guide (see Arksey and Knight, 1999) while reflecting on our previous empirical and theoretical work on the topic. The main part of the analysis then started with a systematic reading of the interviews and with an initial comparison of a few selected interviews conducted in large cities and smaller settlements when we established categories that appeared to be identical or symmetrical for cities as well as towns and villages. We understood differences in categories or in actual interview contents as an analytical opportunity to understand the differences between the two types of settlements and interviewees living in them. Finally, before writing this article, we identified the categories central for the analysis while the remaining categories were treated as contextual.

Our research is inevitably limited due to sampling and the constraints of qualitative research design. The article addresses a very specific segment of the Czech population due to our intention to interview politically and publicly active individuals of middle-class origin. Moreover, the division of the sample into inhabitants of "the village" and "the city" creates a strong dichotomy revealing the specifics of opposite types of social spaces. However, despite the inclusion of three interviewees from smaller towns, the study does not address more complicated situations in towns where the social characteristics of villages and cities overlap. In line with the logic of qualitative research, we note that our findings should be interpreted as evidence-based theoretical suggestions, not as authoritative generalizations. Hence, data collection and analysis were – as parts of a

[3] The interviews were – under the authors' supervision – conducted by MA students at Masaryk University specifically trained for this purpose. The duration of the interviews varied between 60 and 120 minutes.
[4] Namely in Prague (the country's capital city), Brno (a regional administrative centre) and Zlín (a regional administrative centre).

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broader research project – intended as a pilot study preceding a quantitative survey of the Czech population conducted in December 2014 (Macková and Macek, 2015; Macek et al., 2015).

SMELL THE CRISIS: DISENCHANTED CITIZENS AND PARTICIPATION AS DUTY

When talking about the political and public spheres in general, our interviewees are disenchanted, dissatisfied with the way national institutionalized politics developed following the Velvet Revolution of 1989. They express an increasing distrust and decreasing interest in democratic institutions, they consider politics cynical, unable to deal with problems. In other words, our interviewees have experienced a similar crisis of trust in the political as documented in other democratic countries (Dahlgren, 2013).

We have identified four dimensions of this crisis in our interviews. Firstly, our interviewees are sceptical about the possibility of a fully functioning democracy. They characterize the external efficacy (responsiveness) of the political system as very low and they are not convinced about the meaningfulness and efficiency of standard democratic tools. At the same time, they perceive national politics as alienated, evil, corrupt and difficult to influence. Hence participation (as co-deciding) is experienced as distant and pointless. Secondly, in relation to the reception of political news, interviewees talk about the failure of traditional media. The nature of national politics and politicians' media-discursive (rhetorical) strategies discourage our interviewees from actively watching and reading media coverage of national politics. Moreover, our interviewees are critical of media as such: they think that national media have lost their independence, have become politicized and corrupted, and therefore they often talk about finding information "on their own" (in face-to-face interactions, on social networking sites – SNSs).

Thirdly, our interviewees perceive others' apathy and lack of concern as well as politicians' obscurantism. They believe that apathy leads to corruption and polarization of society. And politicians' obscurantism is seen as preventing citizens from knowing what really is going on in national politics and how it affects them. The perceived apathy is not limited to national politics. Our interviewees see apathy as permeating the whole public sphere. A student talks about her secondary school student council as being not "a seedbed of democracy" but "a seedbed of indifference" (Student, female, 17). Where does this apathy come from? Some interviewees linked it to political elites' obscurantism, some to the communist past when people "were passive". The second reason is particularly interesting as it can be understood as a distinct feature of the Czech post-socialist political culture – interviewees see the communist past as a historical burden, a source of passivity. "And I think it's still connected to the past because everyone's just waiting that something's going to happen," suggested a 31-year-old designer living in a large city. "That someone instead of them... that someone's going to give them something." (Designer, male, 31) Importantly, our interviewees repeatedly stress that the problem is not just historical or systemic, in particular those from small places think that in the

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local context "it's more about people". However, the implicit link to the communist past is ubiquitous. Fourthly, despite discontent with institutionalized politics, our interviewees considered participation as a norm and a duty: it is right and necessary to participate, even in national politics, and apathy is a sign of others' irresponsibility, in the words of an interviewee "it's maybe sad when someone politically active says he hates politics totally. On the other hand, it [politics] is a necessity. It bothers me that people are so indifferent about politics. [...] It's about Czech people's lack of responsibility." (Sales representative, male, 24) The sense of an obligation to contribute to the system, is – as a crucial motivation for democratic agency (Amnå, 2010; Dahlgren, 2011) – specifically manifested in relation to elections. Most of our interviewees vote regularly (at least in national elections), considering it their "civic duty", as some put it. Fulfilling this duty is at the same time understood as a legitimization of ensuing discontent: "When I need to complain about something later, I have the right to do so." (Volunteering student, female, 22)

In these four dimensions we can see an interesting tension between the negation of institutionalized politics as flawed and the normative sense of duty that suggests a denial of apathy. In some cases the negation of current politics results in a careful labelling of one's engagement and participation as "non-political" or as "accidental". In other cases, it results in a conviction that politics should and could be changed – from below.

I believe in a revolution, in that bottom-up change, [...] when people change, when they start to think differently, politics will fit to that somehow. So it doesn't make sense to change politics... and hope that people start to think differently afterwards. (Working student, male, 24)

And, importantly, this sense of duty seems to get stronger and the sense of disconnection weaker as we move from the national to local contexts, this can be explained by the more binding loyalty to particular people and relationships in the local context, in other words, the duty to the imagined community of the nation is weaker than that to actually lived local communities.

RENAISSANCE OF THE LOCAL? BETWEEN "CITY" AND "VILLAGE"

The findings discussed so far show that distrust in national politics is more obvious when compared to interviewees' attitudes to local issues (in urban and rural settings). The low external efficacy related to disappointment with national politics is accompanied by higher external as well as internal efficacy in local politics. The interviewees characterize local politics as closer and within reach in terms of their own influence and also in terms of the responsiveness of the political. Any "change for the better" is more meaningful and likely at the local level because politicians and active citizens are able to know and meet each other.

Nevertheless, here we encounter the notorious and at the same time ideal typical distinction between the village and urban spaces. To put it simply, the interviewees met our expectations based on the classical Tönniesian duality of Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft – "community" and "civil society" (Tönnies, 2001). The city as Gesellschaft is

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characterized by its physically and socially dispersed space – a space fragmented into a number of particular places that overlap with points of social encounters and networks of social ties. As such the city could be seen as a matrix of diverse civic practices. Diversity could be productive but it can also come at a price. The networked social topology and the missing "centre of gravity" of the single core community easily make urban civic practices as dispersed and fragmented as the social space itself. Moreover, the distance between citizens and their local representatives is inevitably greater in a city than in community-based towns and villages. Hence engagement and participation could be experienced as less efficient in cities. In contrast, the everyday social space of our interviewees living in villages is centred on Gemeinschaft, around local communities firmly situated in a relatively delineated physical and relational space. The communities are based on the personal knowledge of others and on various interpersonal ties. When talking about their civic practices, our interviewees inevitably talk about their relatives, friends and neighbours. They are directly grounded in local politics and public issues and things are perceived as done by certain people for certain people, not by distant elite for an imagined community (cf. Anderson, 1991).

It is not surprising that our interviewees' differences in civic practices and related uses of media copy the differences between these two types of spaces. Opportunities and limitations offered by social spaces evidently call for different engagement and participation as well as reception and interaction practices. Typically, interviewees from villages and small towns found practices related to the maintenance and reproduction of the local community and its collective self crucial, these involved engagement or participation in organizing cultural events that are usually closely and personally connected to local municipalities and public institutions (libraries, schools, youth centres etc.). Furthermore, we can reasonably argue that both spaces call for distinct theoretical approaches, "the village" – as reconstructed in or interviews – corresponds to a communitarian view of citizenship where "community holds ontological primacy over the individual" (Bakardjieva, 2009: 92). In contrast to that, "the city" – with its fragmented social space, where NGOs play a crucial role and where a wider range of topics and issues is addressed – corresponds to a republican view of citizenship which "does not discount individual interests and group or community belonging, but places the public as a political community at a higher level of significance" (*ibid*.: 93).

CASUALLY ACTIVE: THREE TYPES OF (SUB)ACTIVISM

It is worth stating that our interviewees' practices share some general characteristics that question the simple distinction of village versus city and that show that despite structural differences both spaces have a lot in common. We have arrived at an open-ended typology of our interviewees' engagement and participation that takes distinct motivations for these practices into account along with the broader context of the crisis of the political as well as the role of a sense duty to participate in public and political issues. The typology helps us answer the initial question about actual civic practices in our interviewees' lived, contextualized experience.

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In general, we do not merely mean "regular" – i.e. organized, institutionalized and explicit – activism here. Indeed, some of our interviewees were involved in NGOs or local institutions, however, we also took into account "implicit" forms of engagement and participation. In this respect the interviewees' publicly and politically oriented practices should be seen (1) as responses to the needs or expectations of a community or immediate social peers, (2) as responses to the experience of a dysfunctional system, i.e. institutionalized politics, (3) as deeply intertwined with interviewees' everyday private lives and last but not least (4) as contingent and occasional, disconnected from an explicit ambition to "change the world", often experienced in contrast with "regular" activism or politics. The first two points suggest that conclusions formulated in relation to other national contexts also apply in the Czech case. Dahlgren repeatedly argues that people dissatisfied with national politics look for alternative political paths, such as alternative politics or activism, or tend to focus on topics or politics they can actually change (Dahlgren, 2005, 2013, Lievrouw, 2011). Points 3 and 4 prompted us to employ Bakardjieva's concept of subactivism as "a kind of politics that unfolds at the level of subjective experience and is submerged in the flow of everyday life" (Bakardjieva, 2009: 92). This concept – based on Ulrich Beck's (1996) notion of subpolitics – enables us to identify one of the sources of political agency in mundane practices and relationships in the private sphere.

Some practices described by our interviewees suggest a blurry line between subactivism and "regular" activism: the contexts of private life and public sphere get inseparably mixed (cf. Papacharissi, 2010). Therefore, in the following we use (sub)activism to highlight that we find both subactivism and activism (i.e. subpolitical and political phenomena) in our interviews and these often merge. As we have identified three distinct sources of motivations for civic practices – sources related to individual skills, social peers and the construction of individual biographies – we talk about (sub)activism on demand, biographic (sub)activism and peer-motivated (sub)activism.

In our sample (sub)activism on demand tended to be more typical of the urban context – it is practiced by actors offering their specific expert skills (in computer graphics, cultural production, PR and marketing, accountancy, video editing etc.) to "regular" activists, NGOs or other civic organizations. (Sub)activism on demand differs from "regular" activism in its topical randomness – it is driven by the interviewee's sense of duty to do the "right things" and by her or his willingness to apply particular skills but is not guided by an intentional and systematic focus on a specific topic. Moreover, (sub)activism on demand mostly merges with interviewees' everyday work routines – particular tasks or contracts are simply conceived as part of their job agendas.

Interviewees practicing biographic (sub)activism become engaged or eventually begin participating based on life trajectory choices. Engagement and participation are consequent to such choices as they result from interviewees' individual tactical struggles – in line with Michel De Certeau's (1984) distinction between tactics and strategies – with formative contextual conditions. Becoming a teacher or a local clerk could thus signify an "inevitable" engagement in local public events or a participatory struggle with conditions of a school or an office, on the one hand, and the state, on the other.

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Peer-motivated (sub)activism emerges – both in urban and rural spaces – as a response to a friend's or a relative's suggestion. It is typically conceived of as more accidental and less intentionally activist or political than other types of (sub)activism since interviewees understand it as a favour. For example in this case of cooperation with the Green Party: "I was shooting a video for the Green Party by chance. [...] I did it 'cause my friend asked me. And he just like [...] I did it simply for him. Rather than for the party." (Working student, male, 24) Although social ties and others' expectations are an important source of motivation for engagement and participation in general (Dahlgren, 2011; Macek, 2013b) play a central role in this type of (sub)activism. Furthermore, peer-motivated (sub)activism illustrates Bakardjieva's (2009: 97) argument that ties with family members, friends and neighbours involved in politics or activism could mobilize and at the same time they blur the private / public distinction.

Communication technologies play a role in all three types of (sub)activism – as routine interaction and production tools used in line with interviewees' other work and life routines, as specific tools employed for more complex online practices and – last but not least – as environments structuring their experiences of time and space.

NEW MEDIA AND "DIFFUSED PARTICIPATION"

Along with contingency, we emphasize another important feature of (sub)activism: its specific position in the temporal and situational structures of our interviewees' everyday lives. For them it is often impossible to separate public and political practices from private aspects of their lives, work / studies, leisure and hobbies. In other words, theirs is "diffused participation" building on Nicholas Abercrombie and Brian Longhurst's (1998) notion of a "diffused audience" – being a (sub)activist is a permanent experience and therefore it should be treated as one of the formative axes of our interviewees' everyday lives. As an undergraduate student helping in an NGO with PR and marketing puts it: "Leisure time... mostly in the evenings... I had it, but hmm... hard to specify." (Volunteering student, female, 22) Similarly illustrative are words of a middle-aged citizen journalist: "And work is merging with leisure time too because it's about stuff I'm interested in and I'd like to write and shoot about it." (Journalist, male, 38)

New media affordances play a significant role here – mobile and networked communication technologies enable actors to blur or even break down explicit physical boundaries between recently separated situations as well as between private and public spatiotemporalities. According to Shanyang Zhao's (2006) phenomenological explanation, new media set up a new spatiotemporal zone of "there and now" broadening the spatially settled "world within reach" of "here and now". New media make it possible to be constantly available to others and therefore to merge contexts of previously discrete social encounters. They create, in Sherry Turkle's (2011) words, a "life mix" in which actors – balancing on the edge between physically experienced situations and interaction interfaces of their smartphones, laptops and other objects – perform multiple roles all the time.

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Our interviewees experience this – when talking about their (sub)activist practices – mainly in relation to the use of mobile phones and social media. Interviewees from cities use social media broadly for receiving and redistributing contents, for interaction with friends and colleagues, to express political opinions and for work-related tasks – and thus they mix all these particular practices. They obviously take an instrumental advantage of this mix – the mediated permanent contact with others bridges the physical fragmentation of the social space. However, some tend to reflect on media use critically and see it as a source of disintegration of time, potential precarization (permanent availability could mean permanent availability for work, cf. Standing, 2011: 108), information overload and colonization of privacy by other contexts: "So I got there [on the smartphone] emails, as many people do, right? So we're complete idiots, right? That we let work penetrate into our pockets." (Designer, male, 31) "It's a terrible mix 'cause my Facebook is split in a stupid way when it's half personal stuff [...] and it's half about work [...]." (Working student, male, 24)

Nevertheless, it would be probably misleading to blame new media for having an exclusive and destructive impact on the division between private and public. Rather, they amplify the tendency to mix private and public that is implicit in (sub)activism itself. Some interviewees from villages – who do not use social media in their engagement and participation at all or as actively as interviewees from cities – resist the perceived "threats" of social media passively: "I'm there [on Facebook], not using it," as one of the interviewees noted (Working student, male, 24). Nevertheless, due to the contingencies of the village community space (sub)activism remains diffused and permanent even in these cases. People in the local "here and now" community are "within reach" as much as are their urban counterparts reconstituting the sense of "us" through interactions in the online "there and now" zone. In other words, (sub)activism itself challenges the boundaries of private and public contexts.

SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES AND PUBLIC NOTICEBOARDS

And what about other roles that media play in civic agency? We have uncovered a wide range of reception and interaction practices employing both new and traditional media within the three types of (sub)activism discussed. The practices are mostly based on the creation and recirculation of contents that are perceived as political, activist or simply publicly relevant. At the same time the practices range from clearly subpolitical, non-systematic individual acts to systematic and even collectively organized tactics – from forwarding an email from one's favourite NGO, recommending an article or sharing a petition or an event on Facebook, ad-hoc spreading of information about an upcoming demonstration to the systematic distribution of information about a project among friends, creating and administering a local blog on culture and politics in the village or running a satirical website mocking local representatives online. Indeed, face-to-face interactions along with media – old and new – play a crucial role here. It is particularly in cities that SNSs (and dominantly Facebook) became tools of and arenas for these practices. However, as one of our interviewees who works as a citizen journalist suggests, using

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Facebook, blogging or publishing online can be seen as substitutes for or extensions of older "material" practices:

When something intrigued me, I was underlining and cutting it out [from newspapers] and showing it to other people thinking it was good for them to read it. [...] But I often talk with political scientists and other experts [...] and then I mediate the information to other people. Recently, I was talking about it to people around the pub table, now I mediate it to readers, so there is no... I don't see any substantial change. (Journalist, male, 38)

The role and importance of SNSs as tools of engagement and participation in cities and villages differ clearly. All our interviewees followed a wide range of particular paths to reception and interaction, gathering knowledge and information, persuading others about organizations, projects and planned events. However, we can argue that SNSs play a dominant (even though not exclusive) role in the (sub)activism of our interviewees who live in cities.

Although our study has limits due to the use of a qualitative method and sample size, we can formulate yet another generalization that could serve as a hypothesis: While in the "republican" cities included in our sample we have encountered a more colourful range of topics, in the "communitarian" villages we saw a more diverse and selective use of specific communication channels: interviewees from villages quite reflexively stratified their choices of channels by particular topics or according to recipients' personal knowledge. In "communitarian" villages the interaction component of political and public agency seems to be more balanced between face-to-face interaction, email, SNSs and information websites, phone and "physical" media. Yet "physical" media – namely local and municipal print publications, public announcement systems and public notice boards – play a crucial role in spreading information within rural communities covered in our study. While some of the interviewees from villages consider Facebook useful in relation to local youth and children, older community members are commonly addressed via print media (municipal papers, leaflets) distributed around the place or pinned to local noticeboards serving as a "Facebook wall for the elderly": "Well, we use Facebook a lot [...]. When we put it on our [Facebook] wall, you can see more children when we put it just on the municipal noticeboard on the square. [Laughing.] Obviously, children stick to Facebook, so we have to too." (Worker at a youth centre, female, 36) Nevertheless, face-to-face communication remains central for interviewees from villages as it emphasizes the communitarian character of the "personal and conservative" village that makes their home distinct from the "impersonal and modern" city.

It was somehow nice how these people communicated with each other in the past. When people isolate themselves in their homes, living anonymously, not knowing each other, then it's like in a city and I don't like it. [...] It's definitely better [here] than in a city. People communicate with each other and they prefer personal communication, not mediated one or something similarly modern. We even planned to send news as text messages but people didn't want it. They said: print it, announce it as a public announcement, but no text messages. (Mayor of a small village, female, 45)

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CONCLUSIONS

Employing a context-oriented perspective results in a rich and at the same time realistic image of the role of new media in civic practices. Our research indicates that even in cases when new media are routinely used as tools of reception and interaction, they are not necessarily central to citizens' political and public practices – nevertheless, an understanding of citizens' practices can uncover much about the role of new media as well as of more traditional communication channels and practices in civic engagement and participation.

Our analysis suggests that active Czech post-socialist citizens do not principally differ from their counterparts living in other national contexts (Bakardjieva, 2009, Dahlgren, 2013). Engagement and participation are structured both by the way interviewees perceive the political and public in general and by their immediate social contexts. Our interviewees' relation to the political is characterized by a tension between a normative sense of duty and the experience of national politics as dysfunctional. At the same time, politically and publicly oriented activities, described above as (sub)activism, are predominantly aimed at local issues, deeply ingrained in interviewees' everyday lives and oriented towards their peers and the broader local collectivity. Actual civic practices can be seen as a result of a combination of a duty-motivated reaction to national politics and the immediate contexts of our interviewees' everyday lives. We suggest that these immediate contexts – in particular peer pressure, individual biographic trajectory and structural differences between the communitarian space of "the village" and the socially dispersed space of "the city" – can amplify or silence the proactive potential of the individual sense of civic duty.

New media are not irrelevant to this story. Firstly, in the urban space they help to substitute for the lack of direct social interaction typical of physical communities. Secondly, they disperse (sub)activism into everyday routines as they enable to be "always on" and thus blur the spatial and temporal structures of everyday routines. And thirdly, they are pragmatically used as routine tools of reception and interaction, i.e. of practices conditioning engagement and participation as collective phenomena. Nevertheless, new media practices are not isolated from traditional communication practices such as face-to-face interaction, traditional media and local physical media and particularly in the rural, communitarian context, new media do not seem to be the driving force of engagement and participation.

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ŠTO JE NA PRVOM MJESTU – KORIŠTENJE NOVIH MEDIJA ILI GRAĐANSKA PARTICIPACIJA KROZ NOVE MEDIJE? PREISPITIVANJE ULOGE NOVIH MEDIJA U GRAĐANSKIM PRAKSAMA U ČEŠKOJ

Jakub Macek :: Alena Macková :: Johana Kotišová

SAŽETAK *U članku predstavljamo kvalitativno istraživanje svakodnevne građanske prakse dijela Čeha, s posebnim naglaskom na ulogu novih medija. Temi smo pristupili tako da smo se orijentirali na sadržaj, a ne na medije. U fokusu našeg istraživanja jesu načini na koje su građanske prakse strukturirane u užem i širem društvenom i političkom kontekstu te kako te kontekste doživljavaju postsocijalistički građani iz sela i velikih gradova. Uzimajući u obzir navedene kontekste, analizirali smo ulogu novih medija i građanske prakse u svakodnevnom životu. Istraživanje se temelji na polustrukturiranim dubinskim intervjuima s 22 politički i javno aktivna građanina, a pokazalo je da se Česi suočavaju sa sličnom krizom u institucionalnoj politici kao što je to slučaj i u starijim demokracijama. Istraživanje je također otkrilo razlike u načinu informiranja između sela i gradova, kako u participacijskim praksama tako i u načinima kako građani koriste nove medije. Međutim, istraživanje nije dokazalo da su novi mediji radikalno transformirali građanstvo, već je pokazalo da je došlo do suptilnih pomaka u praksi i do pragmatičnog miješanja komunikacije licem u lice i tradicionalnih medija (tiskani mediji, sustavi razglasa, oglasne ploče) s novim komunikacijskim tehnologijama.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

GRAĐANSKE PRAKSE, RASPRŠENE PUBLIKE, NOVI MEDIJI, TRADICIONALNI MEDIJI, ČEŠKA

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MEDIA AND DEMOCRATISATION: CHALLENGES FOR AN EMERGING SUB-FIELD

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ABSTRACT *This article seeks to compile an empirically-based understanding of the role of media in countries in transition. The study focuses on the processes of political socialization, behaviour and accountability, and gives examples from three regions: Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East/North Africa region. We draw on some of the major works relevant to the study of mass media in these transitional contexts with the aim of discerning emergent theories available to the study of media and democratisation. While aware of the limitations posed by the nature and scope of the sample of the studies reviewed, we do identify and discuss some of the potentially key obstacles to theory-building and propose some alternative paths of enquiry.*

KEY WORDS

DEMOCRATISATION, TRANSITION, POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION, ACCOUNTABILITY, NEW MEDIA

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INTRODUCTION

The (potential) sub-field of "media and democratisation" presents several fundamental challenges to the scholarly work on the topics of both "democratisation" and the "media". What lies at the core of these challenges is the (inherent) scattered nature of work on this topic. Attempts at understanding the role of not only the traditional mass media but increasingly also the newer media and social networks in countries in transition require both the knowledge of existing media theory as well as regional expertise. While media theory might seem to be a means of unifying or harmonizing the empirical work that has been done, work across different regions has instead revealed substantial limitations.

This article seeks to compile an empirically-based understanding of the role of media in countries in transition. Focusing on selected dimensions of the process of democratization, namely political socialization, political behaviour and accountability, the study draws on empirical examples from three different regions: Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), Latin America (LA), and the Middle East/North Africa region (MENA). These regions offer differing but still comparable insights into political socialization (arguably most developed in CEE), political accountability (which LA might be best illustrative of), and the political impact of "new media" (with visible examples coming in recent years from MENA).

This article, therefore, provides less of an overarching structure of theoretical work than a review of regional empirical enquiries investigating the processes of political socialization, behaviour, and accountability. It has to be stressed, though, that our article is not a substitute for a full-fledged comparative analysis across the different regions as that would necessitate a completely different type of study. Neither is it our intention to provide a comprehensive overview of the available literature, as that is well beyond the scope of this article. Instead, we infer from the existing – if fragmentary – empirical evidence about the prospects and limitations to theory-building in this emerging sub-field. Thus, our article is intended as an attempt to inform new directions for the study of media and democratisation both empirically and theoretically.

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN MEDIA AND DEMOCRATISATION

Scholars have different understandings of democratisation as a process. This is not surprising as there are various – though not necessarily contradictory – ways of understanding what democracy is (e.g. Schmitter and Karl, 1991). Here, we define democratisation as "a complex, long term, dynamic, and open-ended process ... [consisting] of progress towards a more rule-based, more consensual and more participatory type of politics" (Whitehead, 2002: 27).

Studies which have addressed the relationship between the media and politics in the context of democratisation usually have two major concerns: (1) democratisation *via* the media and (2) democratisation of the media itself (Hackett and Zhao, 2005). It is difficult to

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identify a direct relationship of cause and effect between the media and democratisation as the available empirical evidence is anecdotal and so cannot be subjected to rigorous empirical testing (see Voltmer and Rownsley, 2009). This is the case as the media may be viewed either as dependent on society and mirroring its contours or as primary movers and moulders (McQuail, 2005). That is, media freedom has been perceived as an indicator of democratic reform, or as a precondition for democratic institutions to work properly (Berman and Witzner, 1997; Dahl, 1989).

In normative media theory, democratic political structures are often assumed to precede the growth of media markets. This assumption may not be accurate for some emerging democracies, but the proposition that democracy influences the functioning of the media is a plausible one (e.g. through legislation, protection, etc.). This is based on the long-standing theory of media and democracy in which there are normative expectations regarding the media itself (e.g. normative values) as well as regarding how other institutions should treat the media (e.g. structure). Overall, freedom and independence are the most universally endorsed ideal characteristics of the media. The normative functions of the media are often based on the characteristics of representative or liberal democracies (see Norris, 2000).

The relationship between the growth of free media and the process of democratisation is considered to be reciprocal. Once the liberalisation of the media has been achieved, democratic consolidation and civil society are strengthened as journalists in independent media facilitate greater transparency and accountability in governance through quality news reporting (Norris, 2009). This relationship is reflected in mobilisation theory which states that multiplying media potentially produces greater opportunities in terms of accessibility for more political engagement (Loveless, 2010). At the consumption level, it is suggested that, because of a 'virtuous circle', attention to the news gradually reinforces civic engagement, just as civic engagement prompts attention to the news (Norris, 2000).

The democratisation literature rests on institutional foundations; yet a state of democracy is not realised unless citizens undergo socialisation to new values, attitudes, and behaviour norms of democratic culture (Almond and Verba, 1963; Putnam, 1993). Given the substantial body of work that has demonstrated mass media's influence on citizens' political attitudes (Lerner, 1958; McCombs and Shaw, 1972; Zaller, 1992; Norris, 1997; Newton, 1999; Putnam, 2000), it is not unreasonable to imagine that the mass media play an important role in political socialisation for the citizens of countries undergoing democratisation.

MEDIA AND POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION DURING DEMOCRATISATION

The study of political socialization during periods of transition refers to whether and/or how much citizens exhibited (normative) support for democracy (or at least the transition), generic democratic political attitudes (e.g. efficacy, trust, tolerance), and/or behaviours (e.g. voting, mobilization). Few would argue that mass media are the primary mechanism

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for political socialization; however, given citizens' limited first-hand experience of politics, the mass media are a source from which individuals develop political understanding (Schmitt-Beck, 1998; Mutz, 1992). The reason to expect this is twofold. First, during periods of turmoil and transition, citizens are more likely to turn to the media as a source of reassurance and information (i.e. the theory of media dependency, Loveless, 2008; Voltmer and Schmitt-Beck, 2006). Second, the responsibilities of democratic citizenship are heightened during periods of democratisation (Almond and Verba, 1963; Dahl, 1989).

At the same time, media research in transitional countries has been dominated by examinations of the complex processes of liberalization and privatization of media institutions in non-Western regions via the remaking of media ownership, media legislation, economic freedom, *inter alia*. One reason for this may simply be the assumption that mass media would (naturally) play a positive role in democratic transition and political socialization. However, investigations into this process have not revealed a clear pattern of (positive) media effects on individuals.

There are a number of reasons why this sub-field may not have converged. At the theoretical and methodological level, the countries and regions of democratization have a varying level of comparability with one another, some have the physical infrastructure of modern media (e.g. the former Soviet Union) while others do not (e.g. sub-Saharan Africa). Transitions also take place in societies with cultural, historical, political, economic, and social profiles that differ not only from one another but also from the comparatively similar West (the origin of the vast majority of media theories). In conjunction with the first point, this undermines attempts at building a coherent picture across regions of transition. Finally, and at the most basic level, there is a lack of available data on transitioning countries.

In this study on media and political socialization we mainly draw on research conducted in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) to explore the media as an instigator or determinant of changes in individuals' political attitudes or behaviour during periods of democratisation. One of the most widespread expectations here is that as 'Western media' diffuses into transitional countries, they raise expectations and aspirations, widen horizons, ultimately enabling people to demand better alternatives for themselves (Lerner, 1958; see also Huntington, 1991)[1]. However, there is little evidence to support such expectations. In CEE, Matthew Loveless (2009) finds that those consuming international media do not exhibit higher levels of democratic values compared to those who do not. Holger Lutz Kern (2011), using recently released survey data in East and West Germany, also finds no evidence that television from West Germany affected the spread or intensity of protests in 1989 (see also Kern and Hainueller, 2009). This is congruent with work in other regions where foreign media are identified as a source of information – e.g. in the Middle East in the pre-pan-Arab satellite TV period (Ghareeb, 2000) – yet where there is no consistent evidence of these media having cultivated pro-democratic attitudes in citizens (for the 'Arab Spring' see Khamis and Vaughn, 2012). While possibly dispiriting,

[1] Western media are not the acme of media objectivity in a market of ideas, but in comparison with other media they have had more opportunities and longer time to achieve these normative goals.

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explorations of the diffusion of democracy – via mass media – continue to suffer from a lack of usable data in pre-democratic or pre-transition countries.

For countries *in* transition, in CEE, Holli Semetko and Patti Valkenburg (1998) show that individuals in East Germany who paid initial attention to political news displayed higher levels of internal efficacy, although these declined steadily over the period under study (1991–3). Similarly, Katrin Voltmer and Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck (2006) find evidence for strong media effects in four democratizing countries in the areas of political knowledge, political participation, the evaluation of political parties, and preferences for democratic political order. Loveless has shown that 'information-seeking' media behaviour in CEE – the use of media for gaining political information during transition (2008) – has positive effects on individuals' internal political efficacy (2010)[2].

These works represent a wealth of more focused studies in the fields of political science, mass and political communication, anthropology, and sociology. However, they do not provide an understanding of individual political socialization via mass media. That is, a potential coalescence is undermined by the wide swath of media (television news, electoral campaigns, public radio, *inter alia*), and political outcomes (personal efficacy, voting, political knowledge, etc.) in a variety of contexts. In addition, our understanding of democratisation is further complicated with the shift from theories and empirical research involving traditional research (i.e. print and broadcast media) to new media. Therefore, we next assess new media's proclaimed revolutionary roles in regime changes with a particular focus on recent debates about the relationship between social media and the Arab Spring.

NEW MEDIA AND THE ADVENT OF DEMOCRATISATION

"New media" refers to the internet and its extensions such as mobile technology and software/websites that instantaneously connect individuals (i.e. social network sites) via the internet. While there was no 'new media' in CEE in 1989, there has been an understandable rise in the study of the effects of individuals' internet use on levels of political participation in recent years (Delli Carpini, 2000; Zúñiga, 2012; Baumgartner and Morris, 2010; Di Gennaro and Dutton, 2006; Ward et al., 2003; Zhang et al., 2010), emphasizing the causal precedence of social media (Boulianne, 2009; Jennings and Zeitner, 2003; Shah et al., 2002)[3].

In the case of democratising countries, this has added to the 'revolutionary' promise of new media, particularly in regions that have been the focus of democratisation recently, such as the Arab World. As far as the role of social media in the 2011 Arab uprisings is concerned, scholars seem to adopt a dichotomous vision; either envisioning

[2] In LA, there is congruency to this. In Brazil and Mexico, media-intensive electoral campaigns provide information to low socio-economic-status citizens but fail to stimulate sufficient attention to politics among them (McCann and Lawson, 2006, for a similar study on Brazil and Peru, see Boas, 2005). Television news encourages party identification in the short run, although the development of television may weaken LA parties in the long run (Pérez-Liñán, 2002; see also Salzman and Aloisi, 2009).
[3] Versus others who suggest an ambiguous or endogenous causal relationship (Lassen, 2005).

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the 'revolutionary' role of social media in empowering people living in non-democratic societies or minimising its role (for a detailed review of both approaches see Comunello and Anzera, 2012; Joseph, 2012).

There exists a third approach that moves beyond the enthusiastic and the sceptical outlooks regarding the role of social media (i.e. contextualism) and uses comparative research to emphasise the impact that political, social, and economic variations have on the role of the social media in collective action (Wolfsfeld et al., 2013: 4). Here, social media are not likely to be interpreted as the 'main cause' of such complex processes, nor can they be seen as without any influence (Comunello and Anzera, 2012: 453).

Thus, generally, debates about the connection between social media and the Arab Spring suggest that, while social media can be effective in reshaping the public sphere and creating new forms of governance (e.g. Shirky, 2011; see also Etling et al., 2009, for the impact of social media on political and social organisation), they are not the cause of revolutions (e.g. Anderson, 2011; Papic and Noonan, 2011). This is reflected in the available empirical evidence which provides little support for claims about the significant impact of new media on the political protests that formed part of the Arab Spring (see Aday et al., 2012; Dajani, 2012).

The role of social media is thus seen to be facilitated by the presence of revolutionary conditions and the inability of the state apparatus to contain the revolutionary upsurge (Khamis et al., 2012). In fact, scholars note that a significant increase in the use of new media is much more likely to follow a significant amount of protest activity than to precede it (see Wolfsfeld et al., 2013). These outcomes are often drawn from comparative research on the role of social media in protests in Arab countries (e.g. Howard and Parks, 2012; see also Wolfsfeld et al., 2013 for a review).

Yet, there have been several attempts at systematising theoretical concerns and empirical research about the role of social media in political change. Some scholars suggest distinguishing between the internet as a *tool* for those seeking to bring about change from below, and the internet's role as a *space* where collective dissent can be articulated (see Aouragh and Alexander, 2011). Others have called for abandoning the technological deterministic framework and instead focusing on the complex interactions between society, technology, and political systems (Comunello and Anzera, 2012) as well as long-term social and cultural effects of internet and mobile phone use (Hofheinz, 2011). The nature of the political environment also affects both the *ability* of citizens to gain access to social media and their *motivation* to take to the streets (Wolfsfeld et al., 2013).

At this point, we move toward exploring the relationship between media reform and institutional change during democratisation periods, focusing on the contribution of media to institution building and democratic performance in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the relationship between political accountability and the accountability function of 'watchdog journalism' in Latin America.

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MEDIA, INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE AND POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

One of the main reasons why we focus on CEE countries when examining the roles of media in democratisation is that this region – or at least most of it – can be seen as representing a more or less 'complete' case of democratisation. We have witnessed the beginning, middle, and end of transition as many of the countries of this region have not only moved away from authoritarianism towards democracy but have succeeded in doing so (e.g. with membership of the European Union)[4].

However, other regions seem to remain in a liminal state of soft transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic ones. Thus, Latin America (LA) offers a nuanced look at the role of media in political accountability which has traditionally been regarded as one of the most important functions of the press in a democratic society (Gurevitch and Blumler, 1990; Scammel and Semetko, 2000), this role "hinges on the combined actions of a network of institutions rather than on the solitary actions of one organization" (Waisbord, 2000: 229). However, even within these limits, the role of the press is indispensable in exposing facts and issues which either the state wants to keep secret or which involve corruption of public officials. Far from ascribing LA watchdog journalism an all-powerful status, Silvio Waisbord (2000) is nevertheless not nearly as pessimistic concerning its practical effects as many CEE media experts and journalists (Stetka and Örnebring, 2013).

Other scholars have shared this "cautiously optimistic" perspective about the impact of LA media on political accountability. According to Sheila Coronel, LA represents "perhaps the most instructive case" of the watchdog role of media, as it is "widely acknowledged that sustained investigative reporting on corruption, human rights violations and other forms of wrongdoing has helped build a culture of accountability in government and strengthened the fledgling democracies of the continent" (2003: 9). Catalina Smulovitz and Enrique Peruzzotti (2000) argue that "the state of accountability in Latin America is not as bleak as most of the literature would suggest", since "in several LA countries, the media are playing a central role in exposing abuses and keeping governments in check" (Smulovitz and Peruzzotti, 2000: 154) not just by damaging the political capital and reputation of public officials but, subsequently, also by triggering "procedures in courts or oversight agencies that eventually lead to legal sanctions" (Smulovitz and Peruzzotti, 2000: 151).

The analysis conducted by Juliet Pinto (2008) in Argentina has, however, provided a notably more critical picture of the current state of watchdog journalism. She concluded that after two decades of being part of the mainstream, "watchdog press had lost its bite by 2005", which, the author argues, was caused by the economic crisis as well as by the changing organizational culture of news media which favoured corporate interests (Pinto, 2008: 751). This trend of gradual diminishing and weakening of investigative journalism – never particularly strong to begin with, as it has been pointed out above – has been observed in many CEE countries as well, especially since the beginning of the economic

[4] This certainly does not mean democratization is a linear process, or that the initial success of democratization cannot be reversed again, as shown e.g. in recent trends in Hungary (see Bajomi-Lazar, 2013).

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crisis in 2007/2008 which has put news media organizations under unprecedented pressures and often resulted often in the trimming down of investigative departments (Rudusa, 2010; Salovaara and Juzefovics, 2012; Stetka and Örnebring, 2013). Such tendencies further underscore the necessity of examining the media's – and specifically journalism's – role in fostering the democratization process within the broader societal and economic frameworks of consolidating democracies.

The process of media liberalization from state- and party-control has been seen as the basic precondition for the media to become a proper forum for pluralistic public debate and to facilitate greater transparency and accountability in governance through quality news reporting (Norris, 2009). However, subsequent processes of commercialization and tabloidization of content which have quickly followed the growth of media markets in the newly democratizing countries have been viewed as obscuring and – at least partly – inhibiting the democratic roles that normative media theory has associated with the free press[5]. Based on the literature, one might plausibly argue that the contribution of the media to democratization might well be at its strongest during regime change – including mobilization against the old regime. In the later stages of democratic consolidation, media are often weakened as a result of market pressures and (newly emerging) political constraints.

Nevertheless, the above quoted examples of research from LA suggest that there is at least some evidence of an effective contribution of media to institutional change during the consolidation phases of democratization as well, particularly in enforcing political accountability through watchdog journalism, which is something that research from CEE has not (yet) been able to document. It is also possible, however, that the overwhelmingly sceptical assessment of the impact of media on the building and performance of democratic institutions in CEE, as demonstrated in the literature, might simply reflect the high normative expectations concerning media reform which was expected to replicate established Western models (Jakubowicz, 2006; Splichal, 2001). In this respect Peter Gross (2002) characterizes the evolution of media in CEE as "unperfect", as opposed to the more common term "imperfect", suggesting a possibility of further improvement until the envisaged "perfect" state is achieved. According to Gross, such a goal can never be accomplished, and should therefore not be used as a measure for the assessment of media's democratic performance (*ibid.*: 169).

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE STUDY OF MEDIA AND DEMOCRATISATION

Our examination here aims to compile an empirically-based understanding of the role of media in countries in transition. By aligning existing work and empirical evidence on this subject from a number of regions, and in relation to various democratisation processes, we argue that a state of the discipline for the study of media and democratisation is

[5] Some scholars contend that the media, by being over-critical and excessively negative, may lead to political cynicism and the erosion of fragile governments that are struggling for legitimacy (Voltmer and Rownsley, 2009; see also Bennett, 1998).

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difficult to outline. Here we point toward some of the reasons why this sub-field remains inchoate, we identify key limitations to theory-building, and propose some alternative paths of enquiry.

What we have sought to elicit here are generalizable findings that differentiate the study of media during periods of democratisation from the study of media in established democracies. We have also considered works that are characterized by a higher degree of nomotheticism (vs ideographic work) as they are more often indicative of a higher level of innovation and/or generalisability. The existing evidence points toward the conclusion that a sufficient basis for a theory of media and democratisation does not yet exist. There are a number of potential reasons for this and we offer an outline of these and potential means of addressing them.

First, scholars have different understandings of democratisation. The parameters of democratization are contested and vary: When does democratisation start? When does it end? What sufficiently indicates the completion of transition? Media scholars must confront the troublesome reality that elements of *both* democracy and authoritarianism may coexist in countries in transition. In this context, the simple and normative assumption of a positive relationship between changes in the quantity and quality of information sources (and the expansion of freedom of expression) and successful political socialization can be misleading. Investigations into media effects (at the individual level) may find the formation and change of individuals' attitudes a more fertile area of research as well as one that is more closely related to democratisation theory (Bennett and Iyengar, 2008, 2010; Holbert et al., 2010). At the same time, the current literature's focus on an exposure-effect framework (such as agenda-setting and priming) is an eventual investigative avenue in democratizing and transitional states.

Second, as we have seen in the cases discussed here, there appears to be less analytical coordination across democratizing regions than there is between individual regions and established democratic countries. That is, instead of identifying similarities across democratizing regions, researchers tend to attempt a confirmation of existing media theories which may or may not have a meaningful relevance to institutional or behavioural patterns in countries in transition and their citizens. We could transform this challenge into an opportunity by asking, 'what do we expect the media to do and can they reasonably achieve this?' Opportunities for researchers exist in the form of new data collection, inductive theorizing, and drawing together cultural knowledge to make sense of the role of media in fluid societies. For those prepared to do so, this sub-field offers the prospect of genuine comparative research that forces researchers to leave behind the narrow confines of well-established paradigms and venture into an unfamiliar – albeit exciting – theoretical territory.

This requires a break away from deductive approaches. We should stop thinking about the media in terms of static, traditional models which are inadequate for explaining the dynamic processes of democratisation. We may well need more inductive research that is theory-*generating* rather than theory-*testing*. To put this slightly differently,

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there is a need to enhance our knowledge about the dynamics of media landscapes and media audiences in transitional contexts. Future studies need to enhance our understanding of how information-seeking behaviour and/or preferences for political information consumption are affected by rapid changes to political and information environments, and how audiences make sense of complex media transformations that accompany political transitions. This may require integrating theories of non-mechanical media effects and democratisation in order to shed light on the relationship between individuals' media behaviour and choices and the subsequent take-up of democratic values following regime changes. Therefore, future research should further explore media use, contextualise analyses that are conducted at various levels (cross-nationally or ideally with times series/panel data), and ensure that inductive, systematic, and investigative analysis takes precedence.

Third and finally, although we have restricted our investigation into mass media as the instigator (i.e. an independent variable), there is no limitation in thinking of mass media as merely following the change to democracy. The notion of the media as "adjuncts to the transition" rather than agents of change has been taken up by other authors, highlighting the interdependence of particular actors in the political process (Jakubowicz, 2006; Voltmer, 2006). Quoting Morris and Waisbord, Marta Dyczok summarizes that "there seems to be an emerging consensus on the fact that 'paradoxically, the media's ability to uphold democratic accountability eventually depends on the degree to which political institutions have adopted democratic structures and procedures'" (Morris and Waisbord, 2001, quoted in Dyczok, 2009: 32). Similarly, in CEE, Karol Jakubowicz talks about a model of "non-equivalent or asymmetrical interdependence" between socio-political factors and media systems in which social conditions, including social change, create conditions for or trigger media action to influence society (2006: 5, see also Jakubowicz, 2012).

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, we have explored what existing research can teach us about the role of media in the process of democratization, focusing on the dimensions of political socialization, behaviour and accountability, and drawing on examples from Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East/North Africa. While our choice has admittedly been arbitrary, and we have deliberately excluded such important regions for the study of media and democratization as Asia or Africa, we believe our probe into the literature has given us sufficient insights to formulate some general comments about the state of this emerging sub-field, as well as to sketch some directions for future enquiry.

Whatever we know, or assume to know, about the roles of media in the process of democratisation today might be challenged in democratisation processes in the future, simply because of the velocity and scope of the transformation of digital media environments. It is quite probable that future democratic revolutions 'won't be televised', as the political impact of television will gradually subside in favour of the internet and social media, or even newer communication technologies yet to emerge. The greatest

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challenge for research on media and democratisation might therefore be how to avoid the immersion in a conceptual framework that is inadequate for the given social and technological circumstances. Future research will certainly need to broaden its scope and incorporate analyses of non-institutionalised forms of communication, as well as civil society actors which thrive in the rhizomatic structure of cyberspace (e.g. WikiLeaks, Anonymous, etc.), challenging not only traditional modes of communication but ultimately also the notion of the process of democratisation as such.

Margaret Scammell and Holli Semetko have reminded us of two things: "first, the central importance of media for democracy is [...] virtually axiomatic [and] second, the model of democracy which media are supposed to serve is also largely taken for granted" (Scammell and Semetko, 2000: xi–xii). Although formulated fifteen years ago, this observation seems still valid today in the face of most of the research we have surveyed in this article. The potential sub-field of mass media and democratisation may (finally) offer an occasion for us to confront these foundational assumptions by unmooring both democratic and mass media institutions from their rigid and fixed normative locations. If we instead take into account that the two do not so easily – and inevitably – coordinate, we may begin to unpack the complexities that lie at the heart of this area of study.

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MEDIJI I DEMOKRATIZACIJA: IZAZOVI S KOJIMA SE SUSREĆE POTPODRUČJE U NASTAJANJU

Nael Jebril :: Matthew Loveless :: Vaclav Stetka

SAŽETAK *Ovaj članak nastoji prikazati na istraživanju utemeljeno razumijevanje uloge medija u tranzicijskim zemljama. Naše se istraživanje fokusira na procese političke socijalizacije, na političko ponašanje i vjerodostojnost te daje primjere iz triju regija: središnje i istočne Europe, Latinske Amerike te Bliskog istoka i sjeverne Afrike. Pozornost smo skrenuli na neke od glavnih radova relevantnih za studije masovnih medija u tranzicijskom kontekstu s ciljem uvida u važne teorije dostupne u studijama o medijima i demokratizaciji. Svjesni ograničenja koja postavlja priroda i opseg uzorka pregledanih studija, identificirali smo i raspravili neke od potencijalnih ključnih prepreka razvoju teorije o političkoj socijalizaciji, političkom ponašanju i vjerodostojnosti u navedenim područjima te predložili alternativne pristupe u istraživanju.*

KLJUČNE RIJEČI

DEMOKRATIZACIJA, TRANZICIJA, POLITIČKA SOCIJALIZACIJA, VJERODOSTOJNOST, NOVI MEDIJI

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PRIKAZI I ANOTACIJE

BOOK REVIEWS

Pasi Väliaho

BIOPOLITICAL SCREENS: IMAGE, POWER AND THE NEOLIBERAL BRAIN

The MIT Press, Cambridge, London, 2014, 208 pp
ISBN 9780262027472

In *Biopolitical Screens*, Pasi Väliaho seeks to "chart and conceptualize the imagery that currently composes our affective and conceptual reality, producing and articulating our lived experience, as well as foreclosing alternative ways of inhabiting the world" (p. ix). His critical reflection on imagery emerging within the neoliberal visual economy focuses on diverse screen-based mediations: he explores the way that subjects – while producing, selling/distributing and consuming images – inevitably immerse themselves in the logic of neoliberal apparatus (or the contemporary military-entertainment-financial complex).

Similarly to some previous attempts at criticizing media using Foucauldian concepts (starting most probably with Sue Curry Jansen, who compared networked computers with Panopticon; Jansen, 1988), the book does not provide any methodologically systematic analysis of audiovisual representations or of state/economic power reproduction. Instead, it selectively contemplates the power of images, transmitted via game platforms, virtual reality technologies and computer interfaces, over the organization of our minds and bodies. However, Väliaho goes further than many previous applications of Foucault's thoughts in thoroughness and consistency: he defines a "neoliberal brain" that stands for "the dominant form of individuation that composes the circulation of various images and imaginations" (p. xii). In the author's opinion, the brain has replaced reproductive organs in their position of a primary object of biopolitics.

Besides Foucault's concept of biopolitical apparatus or dispositif (referring here to modern visual economy – ensemble of discourses, institutions, propositions – within which images seize human life), the theoretical-epistemological base of the investigation, outlined in the first chapter *Biopolitical Visual Economy: Image, Apparatus, and the Cerebral Subject*, merges several interdisciplinary viewpoints. Not surprisingly, biopolitics is seen as inherent to neoliberalism, in which "the ideals of economic competition, efficiency, profitability, satisfaction, benefit and success are fundamentally generalized into the domain of life itself" (p. 19), creating subjects that are "free" to govern themselves. Moreover, to explain how the war and crisis images intervene in self-governmentality, Väliaho uses the concept of animism/animation. Images, the author says, produce visual truths about who we should become within the biopolitical apparatus, and are able to "animate" our brains: "Images incorporate the future in the present; they make the future a fact lived here and now in our bodies." (p. 24). This happens because – and here Väliaho adopts neurobiological assumptions – images are able to modify the dynamism and patterns of synaptic connections. The question is, however, if it is appropriate to take over the neurobiological standpoints of James LeDoux or James J. Gibson that represent the behaviourist tradition in media studies, and at the same time criticize the "neurobiologization of self": the neoliberal reduction of (cerebral) subjects to mere biological beings, more or less functional and capable brains. Is it felicitous to use (ontologically constructivist) poststructuralism as a source of the conceptual framework and simultaneously work on the presumptions of (essentialistic) neurobiological determinism without attempting to bring the perspectives closer together?

Starting from the premise that the neoliberal order is inherently apocalyptic in its expectations, as it applies the logic of constant insecurity and threat which results in the need for permanent growth and improvements, the author focuses on articulations of anomic situations: wars and crises. Nevertheless, his objects of interest originate from various discourses and branches, ranging from video games to psychotherapy or art.

The second chapter, *Future Perfect: First-Person Shooters, Neuropower, Preemption*, deals with the biopolitical effects of video games imagery. It investigates the way first-person shooter games diminish players' critical distance, who thus become immersed, mentally absorbed and emotionally involved in the game, accepting and embodying the neoliberal subjectivity and political reality that the game implies. According to the author, by exercising "neuropower" (biopower based on the modulation of the cerebral focus of values and feelings), the video games create people in and for the future[1], having the same future aspirations as the "wars on terror": to promote a neoliberal way of life by the visual preemption of dangers and threats, resulting in their embodiment. In this sense, war represented by video games is preemptive: "instead of reacting to actual facts, it operates by simulating future potentialities […]. And this futurity made present – the perceptual production of indistinct forms of threat and fear – is the motor of its actions" (p. 51). In other words, the anticipation of indefinite and constant threats means waging a perpetual war on the affective level – translated into the feeling of fear that becomes the anticipatory (present) reality of a threatening future. "Securitization", the author says, "by countermimicking future catastrophe, actually brings it about and even hastens it" (p. 57). Although the idea that (not only screen-based) media define a constant threat and turn it into unceasing fear and ontological insecurity is a familiar one, as it corresponds to Anthony Giddens' notion of reflexive modernity (Giddens, 1991) and Ulrich Beck's concept of risk society (Beck, 1992), the persuasive idea that communication technologies are able to foresee the future at the level of human body is more provocative. Yet, there have been some – usually less committal and explicit – conceptions of future contained in presence, albeit emerging from very different epistemological backgrounds. Media researchers and sociologists have worked with future-presence dialectics mainly while applying concepts such as self-fulfilling prophecy and other modifications of the Thomas theorem[2] (Merton, 1948, Thomas and Thomas, 1928, see also Cohen, 1972, Jewkes, 2004).

If the second chapter deals with the screen-based fabrication of the strategically deployable neoliberal brainhood, the third chapter *Contingent Pasts: Affectivity, Memory, and the Virtual Reality of War* investigates a therapeutic technology Virtual Iraq, developed to be used when the killing machines become psychologically dysfunctional, paralyzed by feelings of guilt, fear and anxiety. This therapeutic tool, the author shows us, is just another means of (re)producing the subjects usable within the neoliberal military-industrial complex, readapting them to the continuous state of potential war. As there is "no questioning of what the patient saw or did – such issues are deemed irrelevant or even incomprehensible" (p. 81), the virtual reality interface that rearranges, "reprogrammes" memories of war and related emotions is nothing else than another technology of governmentality. A problem emerges, though: the persistent state of emergency, made possible by the technologies

[1] After all, the military-entertainment complex has also embraced games as tools for training and therapy (see e.g. Der Derian, 2000).

[2] Psychoanalysis and anthropology provide more examples of the theoretical notion of present future: Carl Gustav Jung's idea that the future is made present by "leaks" of collective unconscious (see Jung, 1970); the "anthropology of future", a sub-discipline promoted by Akhil Gupta or Arjun Appadurai (see Appadurai, 2013).

that see the psyche as a war zone, inverts into an autoimmune crisis. Protecting life from what threatens it turns into its destruction – Väliaho speaks about "a suicidal project", within which "the imperative of protecting and promoting life is pursued so aggressively that it turns against itself" (p. 86).

While in the third chapter the author himself offers an eschatological vision, affirming the logic of constant threat and danger, the fourth chapter *Emergent Present: Imagination, Montage, Critique* provides an optimistic view of a particular interruption of the current logic of power. The author shifts his focus to screen-based attempts at questioning and redesigning the neoliberal imageries when exploring three experimental artworks that seek to deconstruct the biopolitical economy. The artworks (montages and video installations) that the author analyzes attempt to undermine the dominant models of visual subjectivation by producing an alternative kind of understanding of images. All the pieces are, nevertheless, rather far from Väliaho's original point of interest. As if he had to, while seeking examples of emancipative aspirations of screen-based mediations, step outside the military-entertainment network (if we agree that isolated and unusual art does not belong to the network). The artworks he focuses on in the fourth chapter, however interesting they are, confirm the absolute character of the neoliberal order, as they either represent tactics, powerless within the strategies of dominant modes of subjectivation, or they belong to a different (oppositional, artistic) discourse/network. If the author looked for individually produced representations of crises within the military-entertainment-economic complex, he would probably find just confirmations of the neoliberal-catastrophic logic, see e.g. Kari Andén-Papadopoulos' analysis of soldiers' YouTube videos from Iraq (Andén-Papadopoulos, 2009).

Despite this inconsistency (caused by wishful thinking), *Biopolitical Screens* is an exceptionally important analysis for at least two reasons. First, it provides a fresh viewpoint on the Heideggerian question concerning technology, integrating the spheres of human body, the role of technological artifacts and their content: "It is human bodies and minds, in addition to technological platforms, that carry images, reproducing them in gestures, clothes, thoughts, beliefs, politics, and rituals." (p. 5). *Biopolitical Screens* understands human beings (and bodies) and technologies as mutually cooperative in mediating and reproducing the neoliberal order, which resides in imageries. Second, the book specifies in a straightforward manner the urgent problem of the autoimmune crises of the world dominated by the logic of twenty-first-century capitalism.

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Johana Kotišová

Christian Fuchs

SOCIAL MEDIA: A CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

Sage, London, 2014, 304 pp
ISBN 978-1-4462-5731-9

Social media have been one of the most popular subjects in media studies since the emergence of early social media platforms. In academic discussions the term Web 2.0 was initially used, characterising users' interactions and participation on these media. Academic studies as well as periodical reports have extensively covered the new interactive features of the technology and users' practices. However, new media have been relatively immune to critical theories, unlike more traditional electronic media that have been widely studied critically since the emergence of the Frankfurt School.

Social Media: A Critical Introduction declares its critical approach to new media in its very title. Its author, Christian Fuchs, who has been enthusiastically working on expanding the scope and depth of critical new media studies, first suggests that we need to be aware of the true meaning of *social* in social media, which has been treated as a value-neutral term stressing networking and participatory characteristics by so-called social media optimists such as Henry Jenkins, Clay Shirky, and Manuel Castells. Fuchs calls for the strict application of critical social theories to social media studies in order to comprehend complex socio-cultural impacts and the political economies of corporate social media platforms. Thus, three essential components of critical theories – power, political economy, and ideology – must be considered in order to reveal the true, critical meanings of *social* in social media. In Chapters 3 and 4, Fuchs points out what mainstream social media studies have overlooked, criticizing the notion of participatory culture (Jenkins) and network society (Castells). According to Fuchs, mainstream social media studies use theoretical terms like *participation* in a superficial way. Participatory culture refers to such behaviour in a simplifying manner as active consumption, information sharing, and community building. Such understandings ignore the real meaning of participation, which is reflected well in the notion of participatory democracy that fully covers the political economy and power relationships around corporate social media platforms. Grounded in a Marxist conceptualization of production, Fuchs argues that social media use is also labour (called digital labour) that generates surplus values for corporate social media platforms rather than participation that realizes grassroots democracy, extractive power, and democratizes market structures. This argument embodies Fuchs' basic position from which he develops further criticisms about different corporate social media platforms. Similarly, he criticizes the notion of network society that "lacks an engagement with social theories that conceptualize power, autonomy, society, sociality and capitalism" (p. 87), a notion that leads Castells to fall back on technological determinism that overstates the role of social media in recent social movements, such as the Arab Spring.

In Chapter 5, Fuchs applies critical theories to the analysis of social media platforms. First of all, he demonstrates that corporate social media platforms also accumulate capital by selling targeted advertisements based on the amount and the pattern of individual users' activities on their services. Like traditional capitalists – who pursue capital accumulation by prolonging the workday and by pushing workers to increase productivity – corporate social media platforms capitalise surplus value. Users generate surplus value for corporate services by providing unpaid labour, that is to say, posting messages, generating their own content, and interacting with other users on social media.

In the remaining chapters, Fuchs' critical view focuses specifically on specific corporate social media platforms, including Google, Facebook, Twitter, WikiLeaks, and Wikipedia. Reflecting on the features of each social media platform, Fuchs criticizes (1) economic surveillance of users' activities, backed by Google's privacy policy, (2) Facebook's privacy strategy aiming at maximum profits, (3) slactivism (slacker + activism) on Twitter, alerting to the limited potential of Twitter as a new public sphere, (4) WikiLeaks' liberal bias focusing on good governance that ignores the political economy and power relationships in capitalist states, and (5) the danger of the potential commercial use of Wikipedia's content, which may undermine the emancipatory (communist) aspect of Wikipedia based on cooperative labour and Wikipedians' common ownership.

Developing the Marxist media studies tradition, Fuchs has long criticized technological determinism and optimism about new digital media while shedding light on the hidden yet dominant power and capital relations among multiple power players. His and many other books and articles emphasize that the notion of digital labour is crucial for a critical approach to social media. According to Fuchs, individual users, who have been widely regarded as active participants in producing Web content, are actually exploited to generate surplus value and to become an important means of capital accumulation by corporate social media platforms. The notion of digital labour intersects with the prevailing dualistic concepts of producer and consumer. However, it is still controversial if an individual user's time spent with social media is working hours that can be directly transformed to increased profits of corporate social media platforms. However, Fuchs overlooks the notion of consumptive production with which Marx demonstrated how reproduction could be made by consumption. People consume their time and resources to reproduce their labour, which is eventually put in the production process and thus consumptive production does not necessarily contribute directly to an increase in profits. While individual users help corporate social media platforms sell targeted advertising and increase corporate profits by spending their own time, they also accumulate different kinds of human capital of their own, such as cultural and social capital, by posting content, consuming multimedia content, and building networks. Many users spend a large amount of time with social media to develop themselves in many ways. If needed, this process can be explained in terms of the Marxist notion of political economy; it is a process of increasing exchange value in a (labour) market rather than doing unpaid labour that directly increases surplus value. Therefore, more nuanced applications of Marxist political economy are called for to define the notion of digital labour correctly.

Throughout the book, Fuchs' main criticisms and arguments are assertive rather than persuasive. His arguments are based on the premise that Marxist political economy is the only theoretical means of revealing that the logic of media capitalism is not different from

other capitalist industries. This premise often forces him to interpret others' positions to his own advantage by simplifying their arguments or by negating their premises. Still, his critical approach has enriched the discussion concerning the political economy of digital media industries. Moreover, the notions that he extrapolates from Marxist political economy can still explain a variety of overlooked aspects of the new media industries and markets. The discussion about the political economy of social media would be developed further if his argument is persuasive and communicative rather than merely assertive. He has recently published a book titled *Culture and Economy in the Age of Social Media*. I expect that he elaborates his analysis of the political economy of social media and provides a more sophisticated definition of digital labour in a more persuasive manner in the new book.

Tae-Sik Kim

David Bartram, Maritsa V. Poros and Pierre Monforte

KEY CONCEPTS IN MIGRATION

Sage, London, 2014, 184 pp
ISBN 978-0-8570-2079-6

What is migration? What does it entail? What are its consequences for the country of origin and for the destination one? What do forced migration, brain circulation or cumulative causation mean? How should we treat ethnic minorities or migrants? Who are the people who migrate and why do they do so? These are all questions to which *Key Concepts in Migration* attempts to find accurate answers.

A typical dictionary entry defines migration as a movement of people from one place to another, in a global sense a movement over long distances and from one country to another. This kind of a typical explanation omits more in-depth aspects of migration. To be precise, migration is not a new phenomenon, rather it has been with us throughout history. However, contemporary migration differs from historical ones due to its diversity. The nature of migration has changed, nowadays it is linked to demographic developments, economic and family-related factors and also to reasons unrelated to an individual´s own decisions or wishes (e.g. displacement etc.).

There is a bulk of information available about migration. For example, in their book *Exploring Contemporary Migration*, Boyle, Halfacree and Robinson (1998) introduce different aspects of population migration using quantitative and qualitative methods and various theoretical approaches. Moreover, in the book *The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World*, Castles and Miller (2009) "provide an understanding of the emerging global dynamics of migration and of the consequences for migrants and non-migrants everywhere" (p. 16). Both books offer quite a wide spectrum of themes dealing with migration and an in-depth understanding of migration-related processes but they deal less with specific terms connected to migration. And this is where *Key Concepts of Migration* comes into play by offering specific and compressed information. The authors of *Key Concepts in Migration* argue that migration is a complex phenomenon and has a fundamental position in social sciences. They dissect migration, its components, influences and consequences and although the title refers to migration, it conceals the fact that a

range of related topics is covered including different aspects of migrants' adaptation into societies, questions related to ethnicity and the nation overall, ongoing debates in this field (e.g. migration stocks and flows) as well as references to theoretical frameworks and legal regulation (e.g displacement, forced migration).

So, as I mentioned, Bartram, Poros and Monforte are dealing with migration and more. First, the book brings us closer to understanding different concepts of migration. Second, as already suggested, the authors do not only consider migration, but also related processes and they offer a variety of thematic insights and suggestions for further reading. The authors show which challenges migration entails and that both in the countries of origin and destination, however, mostly, the immigration perspective is taken into account.

The style is typical of a handbook, the book is divided into 39 chapters, each of them 3-4 pages long. Approximately half of the book explains different forms of migration (brain drain, labour migration, illegal, gendered or return migration etc.) and the other half deals with the social background of people's movement (integration, acculturation, social cohesion, denizens etc.). All these approaches are observed at a global level. The explanations for different concepts are not purely theoretical, rather the authors describe specific phenomena and provide easy to understand examples.

The authors also provide a brief overview of the field's main authors and subjects, illustrating these with numerous (international) comprehensible examples. In addition, in some cases a brief historical overview and historical examples are given. The wide range of references provides a good basis for those wishing to further examine an approach or some approaches. *Key Concepts in Migration* is a good starting point for further reading.

The book's authors are sociologists and this is somewhat reflected in the writing, however, it is clear that the book was written by experts on migration. Migration represents a social, cultural as well as an economic phenomenon and the relevant disciplines are taken into account when explaining migration. Traditionally, it was the discipline of human geography that concerned itself with different migration processes and I would have welcomed a greater focus on the geographical dimension in *Key Concepts in Migration* as migration is above all a spatial process. Nevertheless, I do not consider this a particular weakness or shortcoming. There are, however, some issues that caught my attention. When discussing acculturation, it would have been desirable to include more about the sociopsychological approach, for example John Berry's conceptualization of acculturation which I consider relevant in this case, especially because he was one of the founders of the field. Also, when dealing with immigrants' adaptation into a new society, more "beneficial" strategies like assimilation or integration are discussed at length while an exploration of separation (or social exclusion or marginalisation) is missing completely. There have been ongoing debates about segregation in immigrant receiving countries, but unfortunately the book does not discuss segregation as one of the key terms. The absence of the term cosmopolitanism from the list is my only other criticism.

To conclude, there is much to like about this book. It focuses mainly on international migration and its purpose is to show how migration - as a social phenomenon - crosses different disciplines. It is written in an easy-to-comprehend manner and it definitely provides valuable and solid readings especially for students and scholars interested in a range of issues linked to migration. In addition, the book is also useful for non-academics interested in the topic as it does not require previous knowledge of the subject.

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Marianne Leppik

Amy B. Jordan and Daniel Romer (eds)

MEDIA AND THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

Oxford University Press, New York, 2014, 288 pp
ISBN 978-0-19-998746-7

Evidence from significant amounts of research shows the growing importance of media in the lives of today's children and adolescents. The number of technologies to which the youngest generations have access is constantly increasing, as well as the amount of time they spend consuming and using media. It is no exaggeration to say that children' and teens' leisure time is completely dominated by media of all kinds. Even very young children are frequent media users gaining their first experiences of media at an increasingly lower age. Under these circumstances it is obvious that questions concerning the impact of media technologies and contents on children's and teenagers' wellbeing and healthy development are becoming more and more pressing.

A collection of up-to-date answers is proposed in the new book *Media and the Well-Being of Children and Adolescents*. The publication brings together chapters from media scholars as well as practitioners offering various perspectives on the role that media play in young people's lives. As the editors emphasize in their preface, the purpose of the book was neither to focus only on the harmful effects of media, nor to praise media's benefits for children's development, but to offer a balanced approach which pays attention to different media contents, various contexts in which communication occurs and different stages of child development.

The book opens with two chapters outlining the main features of the contemporary media environment of children and youth. The first chapter by Amy Bleakley, Sarah Vaala, Amy Jordan and Dan Romer, *The Annenberg Media Environment Survey: Media Access and Use in U.S. Homes with Children and Adolescents*, brings fresh empirical data about media trends in U.S. households with children and teenagers. As the authors from the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania conclude, the rapidly evolving media landscape and young people's ability to quickly incorporate new platforms, devices and technologies into their lives make growing demands on researchers who aim to capture these developments and understand their nature and implications. In the second chapter titled *Learning in a Digital Age: Toward a New Ecology of Human Development*, Lori Takeuchi and Michael Levine use Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory to distinguish different factors shaping children's settings and to describe various dimensions of the relation between media and children's lives.

The next part of the book consists of six chapters focusing mainly on possible negative effects of media on children's development or behaviour. *Examining Media's Impact on*

Children's Weight by Dina Borzekowski offers a brief overview of up-to-date scientific knowledge about media's influence on children's weight and body size. The promotion of unhealthy food and beverages which is considered the main cause of children's weight problems and obesity is elaborated upon in detail in the next chapter *Demonstrating the Harmful Effects of Food Advertising to Children and Adolescents*. Here Jennifer Harris writes not only about the negative effects of food advertising but is also concerned with potential policy solutions (industry self-regulation, expert guidelines, regulation etc.) that can help to protect children and teens. Victor Strasburger in his contribution *Wassssup? Adolescents, Drugs, and the Media* explores how advertising and other media content (movies, TV-series etc.) affect teenagers' cigarette, alcohol and illicit drug use. The author gives an informed overview of studies convincingly demonstrating the influence of media on teenager's use of tobacco and alcohol products. He also suggests possible remedies to this situation, such as a complete ban on tobacco advertising in all media, more aggressive and better counteradvertising or increased media literacy programmes in schools. The subsequent three chapters each deal with media contents and activities which can be risky but can also have various benefits. *Growing up Sexually in a Digital World* written by James Brown, Sherine El-Toukhy and Rebecca Ortiz offers profound insights into the role media in the process of adolescents' sexual socialization. Based on a review of a large body of studies, the authors show how exposure to sexual media affects adolescents' sexual behaviour. Today, we already have strong evidence that exposure to sexual media content has a largely negative impact on teenagers' beliefs, attitudes and behaviours (e.g. sexual relationship stereotypes, earlier sexual initiation, risky sexual behaviour); however, in some cases, media can also be beneficial to sexual socialization (e.g. media campaigns promoting healthy sexual behaviour have a proven impact on teenagers' more positive attitudes about engaging in safe sex). The next chapter *The Positive and Negative Effects of Video Game Play* (by Sara Prot, Craig Anderson et al.) discusses the theme that stands in the centre of today's public debate concerning negative and positive effects of media on children and adolescents. As the authors point out, views expressed in this debate have often been extreme because the critics and the proponents of video games tend to ignore research evidence supporting the views of the opposing camp. The findings of contemporary research support the notion of mainly harmful effects of violent video games as well as positive effects of prosocial or educational video games. However, the line between "good" or "bad" games and their effects is not clear: "even a single game can have multiple effects on a person, some of which are harmful and some of which are beneficial (e.g. a violent game which improves visuospatial functioning, but which also increases the risk of physical aggression)" (p. 123). Finally, the last chapter in this section of the book, *Risk and Harm on the Internet* by Sonia Livingstone, presents the main findings and policy recommendations emerging from the EU Kids Online project.

The final section of the book focuses on different ways in which media can be used for the enhancement of children's and adolescents' development. Beside the contributions on frequently discussed issues (e.g. *Early Learning, Academic Achievement and Children's Digital Media Use* by Ellen Wartella and Alexis Lauricella), the chapters presented here deal mainly with topics often underrepresented in the current debate about media influences on children and teens. Michele Ybarra, for example, summarizes the benefits and drawbacks of media technology in public health. In her chapter *Technology and Public*

Health Interventions she also describes in detail two projects where media technology was successfully used to affect youth behaviour change, namely an internet-based HIV prevention program CyberSenga in Uganda and a text messaging-based smoking cessation program Stop My Smoking (SMS) in Turkey and in the United States. Two chapters focus on how media can aid children in difficult life circumstances. Dafna Lemish in her contribution *Using Media to Aid Children in War, Crisis, and Vulnerable Circumstances* documents a number of media initiatives striving to help children that have been caught in crisis (e.g. war conflict, loss of parents due to AIDS, loss of the home in an earthquake) to cope with these situations and to improve their lives. The chapter *Sesame Workshop's Talk, Listen, Connect* written by David Cohen, Jeanette Betancourt and Jennifer Kotler then introduce the multiple-media project aimed at military families with young children. In the United States, there are more than 700,000 children under six years old who have parents that serve in the military, and many of them experience high rates of trauma as well as mental health problems. The Talk, Listen, Connect initiative was developed to address the critical needs of military families with young children and as the trio of authors point out, the results of the project show the potential for media to make a positive difference for these families experiencing traumatic or disruptive events. Another interesting chapter *Behind the Scene* by Marisa Nightingale describes the efforts of The Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy to work with television production companies to create more realistic and prosocial messages about sex in American TV shows.

Overall, the whole collection of sixteen contributions offers an interesting and informed insight into the variety of connections between media and its young users and consumers. The editors conceived this book not as an exhausting encyclopaedia but as a case-based volume covering both publicly known and popular issues and less well known ones. Although the book seems to be meant primarily for the American audience, it could be a useful resource for students, scholars and media professionals all around the world.

Marek Šebeš

Angus Phillips

TURNING THE PAGE: THE EVOLUTION OF THE BOOK

London, Routledge, 2014, 156 pp
ISBN 978-0415625654

People's strangely heightened willingness to mark and reflect on various changes in different social systems is often understood as an essential feature of modernity. In his new book, Angus Phillips, a leading UK-based academic, author and experienced professional in book publishing, joins this line of thinking. In the introduction to *Turning the page: the evolution of the book,* Phillips writes: "This is an exciting period for the book, a time of innovation, experimentation, and change. It is also a time of considerable fear within the book industry [. . .]" (p. xi) These words make you, the reader, feel that this is neither the work of a naively enthusiastic proponent of technological determinism, nor of an obstinately conservative critic of any technological improvements that followed the printing press. Precisely this ability to perceive and rigorously describe the highly ambivalent nature of

trends such as globalization or digitalization and their possible consequences in different geographical and cultural contexts is the strongest trait of Phillips' study.

The book consists of six chapters, dealing with issues of authorship, readership, copyright, digital capital and the changing logic of the global cultural industry. These topics intentionally reflect multiple facets of the "big themes" currently dominating the discourses of the book publishing business, namely disintermediation, globalization, convergence and searchability. The study builds upon theory and research across a wide range of subjects, from business and sociology to neuroscience and psychology. The data gathered from research reports, news articles or institutional reports are supplemented with information from Phillips' interviews with industry professionals (such as Mike Shatzkin and Miha Kovač).

Let me turn to the "big themes" more closely and explore some of the questions that they prompt. As for *disintermediation*, Phillips observes that with the arrival of digital production and distribution, the traditional players in the value chain of publishing may easily find themselves bypassed, if not left out completely. At first glance, this might appear to be a great liberation for both writers and readers, as they are no longer subordinated to those greedy and snobbish publishers or booksellers and finally can publish whatever they want and read whatever they want. To those enchanted by this notion Phillips puts a simple yet ultimately unsettling question: why is it, then, that really successful writers are often so keen to be signed up with a major traditional publisher? Definitely there are self-published authors who emphasize the advantages of their position greatly. But the "lure" of the publishing houses continues to be huge and they attract many like a magnet, especially when the author wants to dedicate his time to writing rather than promotion or rights selling, not to mention the key role of the editor in getting the manuscript into a proper shape. Taking Bourdieu's theory of social action into account, we can argue that the relationships, investments or position-takings in the game of books are far more complex than often suggested in the black-and-white picture of the winners and losers of the digital revolution.

In a similar vein, Phillips, referring to *globalization*, notes that with the arrival of e-books, readers on the other side of the world do not have to wait for a book to be spotted, bought and translated by a local publisher. This, too, seems to increase readers' and writers' freedom. As a reader, you can now read the coveted book at once and as a writer you can extend your fan club without an extra effort. Of course, adequate linguistic competence is essential, if this is to work for both parties. According to Phillips, a proper ability to speak the language in question can be expected vis-à-vis English, which is today's lingua franca of the book business and in some cases also the "bridge language" for translations from minor languages. But how many people speak Danish, Lithuanian, Czech or Bulgarian? What are the chances of writers from those relatively small linguistic communities of "winning" a translation into English? Is the readers' and writers' freedom really extended? We must bear in mind that while on the one hand, the digital revolution can significantly contribute to greater diversity in books (anyone can publish anything, anyone can read anything), at the same time when we leave the land of unlimited possibilities and review these in light of the dominant position of English, e-books and their global reach could appear as another driver of homogenization of cultural markets. Again, the challenges of digitalization are not straightforward.

The third big theme in today's publishing trade is *convergence*. Phillips borrows Henry Jenkins's definition of the term: "convergence represents a cultural shift as consumers are encouraged to seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content" (p. 126). Convergence and the newly-found praxis of bricolage are big threats to the traditional concepts of "copyright" and "text" (as a unit clearly separated from other units). As for texts, the transition from the vanilla e-book (plain text) to the enhanced e-book or the renaissance of short story as a genre particularly suitable for reading on mobile phones are viewed with optimism. When mapping the discussion on copyright, the picture is rather fuzzy. Phillips writes: "industry experts believe that the best solution is to make it as easy as possible to download content in a legal manner" (p. 60). However, there does not seem to be a widely shared agreement upon what "as easy as possible" actually means. The tension between the institutional frameworks and the less powerful individuals outside these structures, usually readers and writers, is much greater over copyright and piracy than in any dispute mentioned above. Phillips comments: „The problem today is that measures necessary to combat piracy have come to seem merely to defend the interests of the media corporations, which have pressed for action from governments and technology intermediaries. Furthermore, some of the measures proposed to control the internet, including blocking websites at the domain level, start to appear reminiscent of those earned out by totalitarian regimes." (p. 64) According to Phillips, the threat of Big Brother is always present and many times, it takes on rather covert forms. For instance, the e-book not only allows you to carry your library anywhere, it also enables producers to track your reading habits and possibly exploit these in their marketing strategies.

Finally, the fourth big topic is *searchability*. Certainly, there is a vast overproduction of books, fuelled by, although not restricted to, self-publishing, print on demand or specific logics of media conglomerates. Also, with the possibilities offered by the internet book distribution and selling are changing as well. Simultaneously, the authority of traditional opinion-leaders in the realm of books, mostly of dedicated booksellers, is diminishing. In this context, Phillips mentions the rather striking paradox of choice, as firstly observed by Barry Schwartz: many readers find an abundance of choice dissatisfactory, for if choice is more limited, they often feel less responsible for their decisions. Furthermore, he explains how publishers can deal with the problem of abundance of books and the general distraction of attention: they may work closer with book metadata, explore the possibilities of semantic web or emphasize their role as an active player in their local community.

To conclude, Phillips's book offers a neat and understandable overview of the current state of affairs in the book publishing business. The range of topics covered is quite remarkable. Although the depth of their description varies and the examples are mostly from the Anglo-American world, the book still serves as a great guide, especially when the area under study is a terra incognita for the reader. Sometimes the text even leaves you with more new questions raised than answered. But ultimately, this is a feature to be enjoyed, for it stimulates your own thinking rather than confuses it.

Kateřina Kirkosová

Suzanne Franks

WOMEN AND JOURNALISM

I. B. Tauris, London, New York, 2013, 85 pp
ISBN 978-1-78076-585-3

Women and Journalism is the latest book by Suzanne Franks who currently works at City University London and who used to work as a producer of BBC's flagship programmes like Panorama, Newsnight and Watchdog. It provides an overview of the current situation and key problems that women often face in the media and journalism. The author focuses mainly on the cases of the United Kingdom and the United States but she also provides findings from other countries. The book is organized thematically and consists of five chapters which build on existing research and on current examples from UK media that are based on Franks' interviews with media practitioners working in a variety of fields. Franks provides an overview of a wide range of research and the appendices list the key ones of these.

The first chapter provides a historical overview of women's involvement in journalism since the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries when with the development of the mass press, the first women started working in media and they often faced stereotypes and had to negotiate their place in the organization. The chapter suggests that the process of establishing women in the media was slow, with a number of obstacles and reversals. Rachel Beer is an example in this respect, she became an editor at the Sunday Times already in 1893, however, since then no British newspaper had a female editor. The chapter also discusses contradictions in education and its relevance for securing jobs in journalism; some of these contradictions are still relevant. Franks describes how women outnumbered men as journalism students and shows that their academic achievements were better, yet, in contrast with men only half of women secure employment in the media and eventually the majority of them abandon this career path. The author believes that this is the consequence of the so-called ivory tower syndrome when women gain journalistic skills as part of their education but they do not acquire skills that would help them succeed in the media.

The second – and longest – chapter deals with a number of phenomena that are more or less linked to the horizontal and vertical segregation of the whole media scene. Franks first addresses global gender inequalities in pay which she thinks are the more striking the higher we look in the media hierarchy. Another topic that she covers is age discrimination in the media when ageing female journalists are marginalized in particular and once they reach a certain age, they are forced to leave not only television stations but also other media. Franks then turns her attention to the gendered clustering of journalistic topics and types of media and shows that the fields in which women and men develop their careers can be significantly different. As a consequence of stereotypes, female journalists can find themselves in pink ghettoes – magazines, regional or local newspapers or soft lifestyle topics and they find it difficult to be promoted. In comparison, most men tend to work in prestigious fields of journalism – politics, sports and columns which are difficult for women to get into as editors tend to view them as feature bunnies rather than as newshounds. Nonetheless, Franks shows on concrete examples (such as economics and war reporting) that the gendering of topics is not always easy to predict and that it can diverge from cultural expectations.

The third chapter opens with a critical evaluation of the much used term glass ceiling which refers to obstacles that women face in their careers. Franks thinks that the metaphor of a glass ceiling ceased to be adequate because in the diverse and digital environment of contemporary journalism it becomes more difficult to recognize as it can take on the appearance of other phenomena such as glass menagerie, sliding glass door or bamboo ceiling. Franks considers motherhood a decisive dividing line when it comes to women's careers in the media – unless women have an unconventional family background, they can find it difficult to combine the demanding journalistic work with a family life. Franks views freelancing in the digital media age as a chance for journalists-mothers to keep working in journalism. She deals with blogging and websites that bring together mothers-journalists examples of a newly emerging journalistic genre. This new world of freelancers working for social networking sites is described as a positive development, however, she does not leave out its negative aspects.

The fourth chapter discusses changes in journalism since the 1980s when more women began entering the profession, new trends such as confessional columns or girl writing and the spread of infotainment which has previously been associated with growing numbers of women in media are explored. The author also explores shifts in the news agenda, news values and changes in media contents that are linked to increased numbers of female experts and other female sources. Although Franks stresses that the impact of gender differences on journalism continues to be researched, she identifies ways of challenging stereotypes in the above mentioned new journalistic genre. The concluding part of the chapter considers possible future trends, such as feminization of media due to decreasing pay and the increasingly unstable work conditions in journalism. On the contrary, Franks thinks that a positive trend may emerge if female entrepreneurs manage to utilize the opportunities provided by the digital revolution without getting discouraged by their experiences from traditional media.

In the final, fifth chapter, Franks reminds her readers of the arguments outlined before and she also proposes recommendations that could help tackle inequalities that women face in journalism. She discusses audits that would ensure fair pay, recruitment quotas, transparent employment procedures and other policies that should be implemented also in other countries than Scandinavia. She also refers to anti-ageist campaigns that could lead to the representation of diverse age groups. She also suggests means (technological, legal) that would prevent anonymous online abuse which tends to target female journalists.

In short, *Women and Journalism* represents an accomplished overview that deals with topical gender issues that women face in the world of journalism – from unequal pay through ageism and glass obstacles that prevent their career development all the way to women-freelancers facing abuse in the anonymous online environment. Franks thus alerts to the fact that much effort is needed to ensure gender equality and balance in the media which would enable women to fully utilize their journalistic potential. The author, however, does not merely describe the current situation, on the contrary, she also introduces recommendations that would lead to improvements.

Daniela Vajbarová

INFORMACIJE

INFORMATION

ECREA TWG MEDIA & THE CITY 2015 CONFERENCE

Urban Media Studies: Concerns, intersections and challenges

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Political Science, 24–25 September 2015

Confirmed keynote speaker: Ole B. Jensen, Professor of Urban Theory, Dept. of Architecture, Design and Media Technology, Aalborg University.

CALL FOR PAPERS AND PANELS

Media related practices are grounded in the city – where the majority of human population today lives – and media as both technologies and representations pervade nearly all aspects of urban living, cutting through diverse forms of public appearance, community, control, resistance and habitation.

As a result, none of the established perspectives in media studies, whether that of democracy and participation, production and technology, representation and use, or belonging and identity, can claim to have an exhaustive understanding of their problematics without appreciating the urban context. In the same way, no urban process can be fruitfully tackled without taking into account the involvement of media and media related practices.

Yet, despite being closely – though unevenly – entwined, from small towns to megalopolises, the two complexes, media and the city, have remained disjointed in the scholarly analyses. In fact, it can be argued that for media scholars in particular, the city has remained a terra incognita.

Wishing to revive the initial enthusiasm in media studies, which started as an interdisciplinary endeavour, Urban Media Studies conference aspires to provide a dialogic space for disciplines interested in mediated urbanism. We also hope to stimulate critical reflections on the challenges of collaborating across disciplinary boundaries. Thus, though speaking from the position of media studies, we invite submissions from scholars who work in all relevant fields that interface with the key issue of media and the city. These include, but are not limited to, such fields as urban geography, urban sociology, architecture, anthropology, science and technology studies, visual and sound/auditory culture studies, sociology of the senses, and other related subfields.

We specifically welcome submissions which deal with the following themes and approach them with an interdisciplinary curiosity – as potential intersections between two or more fields of research:

Historical connections between urban studies and media studies / Urban spaces and media practices / Urban sociality and media / Mediation of urban daily life / Media, architecture and urban design / 'Media cities' as production clusters and complexes / Performing and audiencing (in) the mediated city / Media, urban power, resistance and conflict / Media, gender and the city / Media, ethnicity and the city / Urban spaces of media consumption / Urban law in the digitally sustained cities / Mediated urban sensescapes / Urban, outdoor and ambient advertising / Fashion as urban communication / Urban gaming / Journalism and the city / The city as a mediated ecosystem / Urban mediation and spatial negotiations / Methodologies of urban media studies / Teaching about media and the city

We welcome both individual and multi-authored abstracts, and full panel proposals (with four presentations; 15–20 minutes per presentation). In the case of panel proposals, the candidate chair should provide a title and a short general description of the proposed panel, together with the abstracts of all presenters.

In addition to conventional academic presentations of original theoretical, methodological and/or empirical research of any of the above or other related themes, we encourage practice-based presentations, like urban films and documentaries, sonic projects and other exploratory artwork that probe issues of media and the city.

Abstract proposals (300 words) for presentations and panels, together with short bios, should be submitted to **mediacity.twg@gmail.com** by May 1st, 2015. Authors will be informed of acceptance by June 1st, 2015.

The conference will also feature a special dialogic plenary where participants from different disciplines will be invited to share views on their work in the context of media and the city.

As part of our commitment to stimulate interaction between scholars from different disciplines, we shall also be organising a guided urban exploration of Zagreb's industrial, modernist/utopian architectural heritage, and post-industrial urban developments.

A selection of papers will be published in an edited book and/or in a journal special issue.

Conference fee is 50 Euros for ECREA members, 70 Euros for non-members. The fee will cover conference materials, and coffee and lunch both days.

Any queries should be sent to conference organizers Seija Ridell (University of Tampere, Finland), Simone Tosoni (Catholic University of Milan, Italy) and Zlatan Krajina (University of Zagreb, Croatia). Please use the conference e-mail address **mediacity.twg@gmail.com.**

OBS. For the conference updates, please follow the Media & the City websites on http://**twg.ecrea.eu/MC/** and https://**www.facebook.com/mediaandthecity**

11th Dubrovnik Media Days
October 30-31, 2015

"Artificial Intelligence, Robots and Media"

CALL FOR PAPERS

Technology has always influenced journalism and media by reshaping news production process and changing the way journalists produce their work. Today, in the time of Big Data and Artificial Intelligence Algorithms, the news production process could be completely automated especially in the area of newsgathering where computer algorithms (robot journalism) could generate news (and replace humans). As a result of these advances media companies are increasingly experimenting with algorithms, drones and other computer operated/powered devices in newsgathering, production of news and storytelling. In line with new trends and ideas coming from Google News project, Associated Press and Automated Insights, drone reporting etc. a new set of ethical, quality and transparency questions arises. For example: What are the ethics of the use of algorithms in journalism? Who is monitoring the computers? Are journalists and media industry ready for the future? How does audience accept robot journalism?

Possible topics include, but are not limited to, issues surrounding the following questions and cases:

>Use of artificial intelligence/algorithms in news
>Use of drones and other computer operated/powered devices in reporting
>Ethical issues with robot and drone journalism
>Questions of accuracy and transparency
>Audience and robot reporting
>Future plans for robot reporting about more challenging topics
>Legal and copyright problems with algorithm reporting
>Role of computer programmers in robot journalism

Confirmed keynote speakers:

Mark Deuze, University of Amsterdam, Netherlands
Noam Lemelshtrich Latar, School of Communication, Israel
Christer Clerwall, Karlstad University, Sweden
James Kotecki, Automated Insights, USA
Different theoretical and empirical scientific approaches are welcome.

Conference venue: University of Dubrovnik Main Campus **http://goo.gl/vc1tLO**

Papers presented at the conference (after peer review) will be published in the science journal Medianali.

Official conference language is English.

Timeline:

Deadline for submission of abstracts and registration: August 15, 2015;
Notification of acceptance: August 30, 2015.
Registration fee for participants whose papers are accepted – 120 Euro, all others pay 200 Euro.

Full Papers due by November 1, 2015 (4,000-6,000 words, including 200 word abstracts and six keywords; referencing - APA)

Registration and submission via e-mail: **dmd@unidu.hr**

MeCCSA Conference

Theme: Communities

Deadline for proposals: 8 September 2015

We are pleased to invite you to submit abstracts, panel proposals and posters for the next Annual MeCCSA Conference, to be held 6-8 January 2016 at the School of Media, Art and Design, Canterbury Christ Church University.

The theme of the MeCCSA 2016 is 'Communities'. We invite papers and panel proposals that address this theme, examining how we might advance thinking on for example: communities in the digital age; communities and the commons; communities and cultures; communities on the margins; local and community media; politics and policies of communities; community engagement and cohesion; inclusion and exclusion in communities; communities and the past; media, cultural and communication practices of different types of communities.

We also welcome scholarly papers, panels, practice contributions, film screenings, and posters across the full range of interests represented by MeCCSA and its networks, including, but not limited to:

>Film and television studies and practice
>Radio studies and practice
>Cultural and media policy
>Representation, identity, ideology
>Social movements
>Women's Media Studies
>Disability Studies within media studies
>Approaches to media pedagogy
>Children, young people and media
>Diasporic and ethnic minority media
>Political communication
>Methodological approaches
>MeCCSA subject areas as disciplines

Confirmed plenary speakers

Confirmed speakers that will participate in keynote panels include:
Professor Mark Deuze, University of Amsterdam
Professor Jeremy Gilbert, University of East London
Dr Peter Lewis, London Metropolitan University
Professor George McKay, University of East Anglia
Professor Robin Mansell, London School of Economics
Sara Moseley, Distinguished Visiting Fellow and Development Director, Cardiff University
Jeremy Seabrook, Author and Journalist
Professor Helena Sousa, University of Minho
Hilary Wainwright, Journalist and Researcher, Transnational Institute
Professor Claire Wallace, University of Aberdeen

Submission guidelines

Abstracts of up to 250 words should be submitted by 8 September 2015 through the submission form. We also welcome panel proposals and these should include a short description and rationale (200 words) together with abstracts for each of the papers (150-200 words each including details of the contributor), together with the name and contact details of the panel proposer. The panel proposer should co-ordinate the submissions for that panel as a single proposal.

Conference contacts:

Website: **www.meccsa2016.co.uk**
Email address: **meccsa2016@canterbury.ac.uk**
Twitter: **@meccsa2016**

We look forward to seeing you in Canterbury!

Call for Papers:
Eleventh International Conference on
Interdisciplinary Social Sciences

'An Age and its Ends: Social Science in the Era of the Anthropocene'

Imperial College London
London, UK
2-4 August 2016

CALL FOR PAPERS

The International Advisory Board is pleased to announce the Call For Papers for the Eleventh International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences. The Social Sciences Conference will be held on 2-4 August 2016 at the Imperial College London, London, UK.

Conference Themes

The Conference will address a range of critically important issues and themes relating to the Interdisciplinary Social Sciences community. Plenary speakers include some of the leading thinkers in these areas, as well as a numerous paper, colloquium, poster and workshop presentations.
We are inviting proposals for paper presentations, workshops/interactive sessions, posters/exhibits, or colloquia addressing the social sciences through one of the following themes:

>Social and Community Studies
>Civic and Political Studies
>Cultural Studies
>Global Studies
>Environmental Studies
>Organizational Studies
>Educational Studies
>Communication

Special Conference Focus:

'An Age and its Ends: Social Science in the Era of the Anthropocene'

From the first hunting of animals and burning of lands by hunters and gatherers, then the tilling of fields and planting of crops by farmers, to the rise of smokestack industries, and more recently to intensified social, political and economic globalizations, collective human action has left an undeniable mark on the natural environment. The more recent phases of this long history are now being defined as the 'age of the Anthropocene', or an age where a single species is determining the direction of the Earth's natural history. A key purpose of defining the age is to understand a new stage in the interaction of the social and the natural, manifest today in human-induced changes to global temperatures, sea level, CO2 in the atmosphere, to name just a few consequential eco-systemic changes.

There is a certain kind of teleological quality to this argument. We are 'in' the age of the Anthropocene but we are at the same time concerned about its 'ends', in the sense of human purposes and effects. In the most apocalyptic versions of this argument, human damage to the Earth that may undermine the very conditions of human and other life on Earth. 'Ends' are projected through augments supported by evidence of the intensifying impacts of human activity and social systems on the Earth. How can interdisciplinary approaches in the social sciences help us to explore these 'ends' of our age in terms of their environmental and human consequences? This year's Special Focus for the Eleventh International Conference on Interdisciplinary Social Sciences - An Age and Its Ends: Social Science in the Era of the Anthropocene - is necessarily open-ended because of the contingent nature of human 'ends'. Whether or not we accept the velocity of global environmental change, human impacts on the environment demand a reappraisal of the disciplinary moorings of the social sciences. Looking forward into the future, how can we navigate alternative sustainable social pathways, sensitive to the natural environment? What social, economic, political, educational as well as natural scientific perspectives and methods need to be brought to the table in this essentially interdisciplinary endeavor?

Submit a Conference Proposal

To learn more about preparing and submitting your conference proposal, including guidelines, deadlines, and "how-to" information, go to **http://thesocialsciences.com/the-conference/call-for-papers.**

Upute suradnicima

Medijske studije interdisciplinarni su časopis koji otvara prostor za međunarodnu znanstvenu i stručnu raspravu o medijima, komunikacijama, novinarstvu te odnosima s javnošću unutar kulturnog, povijesnog, političkog i/ili ekonomskog konteksta. Na suradnju su pozvani autori čiji radovi (prilozi) ispunjavaju kriterij relevantnosti i znanstvene izvrsnosti. Radovi ne smiju biti djelomično ili u cijelosti već objavljeni, ne smiju biti u procesu objavljivanja u nekom drugom časopisu, zborniku, knjizi i sl., niti smiju biti prijevod takvih radova. Za sve navedeno autori preuzimaju odgovornost. Uvjet za objavu rada u časopisu jesu dvije anonimne, pozitivne recenzije međunarodnih medijskih stručnjaka.

Radovi se šalju isključivo u DOC formatu elektroničkom poštom na adresu: ms@fpzg.hr. Zbog anonimnih recenzija u posebnom dokumentu treba poslati ime, odnosno imena autora/autorica s mjestom zaposlenja, podatcima za kontakt (adresa/telefon/e-pošta) te kratku biografiju.

Radovi moraju biti napisani na hrvatskom ili engleskom jeziku, fontom Times New Roman, veličina 12, prored 1,5. Sve stranice trebaju biti numerirane. Na prvoj stranici trebaju biti ispisani naslov rada te sažetak koji upućuje na zadaće i cilj rada, metode istraživanja te najvažnije rezultate (100 do 150 riječi s popisom ključnih 5 do 6 riječi), sve na hrvatskom i na engleskom jeziku. Na dnu stranice u bilješci možete navesti zahvale kao i detalje o projektu (naziv i broj), ukoliko je članak nastao kao dio nekog projekta. Očekivani opseg rada (uključujući bilješke, bibliografiju i mjesta za grafičke priloge) je između 5000 i 6000 riječi. Citirani izvori navode se u tekstu (a ne u bilješkama) u skraćenom obliku, npr. (Dahlgren, 2009: 67) ili (Gillespie i Toynbee, 2006). Kod više bibliografskih jedinica istog autora iz iste godine, navodi se: (2006a), (2006b), (2006c) itd. Na kraju teksta pod naslovom *Literatura* navodi se samo citirana literatura, abecednim redom. Obavezno navedite DOI broj uz svaku bibliografsku jedinicu koja ga ima.

Knjige: autor (godina) *naslov*. mjesto: izdavač.

Dahlgren, Peter (2009) *Media and Political Engagement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

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Dokumenti s interneta: autor ili institucija ili naziv mrežne stranice (godina) *Naslov*. Ime projekta ili dokumenta ako postoji. link (DD.MM.GGGG. = datum kada ste pristupili poveznici).

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Bilješke se stavljaju na dno stranice, a ne na kraj teksta. Citati do tri reda integriraju se u tekst. Citati od četiri ili više od četiri reda odvajaju se od teksta, uvučeni su samo s lijeve strane, a veličina slova je 10. Sve tablice, grafikone i slike (sve crno-bijelo) treba integrirati u tekst te opremiti naslovom (na vrhu tablice – Tablica 1. Naslov; Grafikon 1. Naslov; Slika 1. Naslov) i izvorom (ispod tablice, font 10 – Izvor: Autor, godina: stranica). Tablice trebaju biti oblikovane u Wordu (ne ih umetati kao sliku). U posebnom dokumentu treba poslati grafikone u izvornoj verziji (Excel), a slike u JPG formatu. Autori se obvezuju od vlasnika autorskih prava prikupiti dozvole za reprodukciju ilustracija, fotografija, tablica, grafikona ili dužih citata te su obvezni dostaviti ih uredništvu *Medijskih studija*.

Notes for Authors

Media Studies is an interdisciplinary journal that provides an international forum for the presentation of research and advancement of discourse concerning media, communications, journalism, and public relations, within each field's cultural, historical, political and/or economic contexts. It welcomes the submission of manuscripts that meet the general criteria of significance and scientific excellence. The articles should not be published before (neither partially nor completely), nor currently be considered for publication by any other journal or book, nor should the submissions be a translation of previously published articles. Authors are responsible for the paper authorship. All manuscripts shall undergo a rigorous international, double-blind peer review in which the identity of both the reviewer and author are respectfully concealed from both parties. Please send an electronic copy (.doc) of the manuscript to ms@fpzg.hr. For the purposes of our blind review, the full name of each author shall be included along with the author's current affiliation, complete mailing and email addresses, and telephone number. A short biographical note shall be supplied by the author in a separate document.

Manuscripts should be written in either Croatian or English, using Times New Roman font; size 12; 1.5 line spacing; all pages should be numbered appropriately. The title page shall consist of the article's full title and abstract, which sufficiently states the purpose, goals, methodologies, and the most important results (100-150 words, noting the 5-6 key words) in both Croatian and English of the submitted piece. In the footnote please add further description of the research, acknowledge contributions from non-authors and/or list funding sources. If the research was conducted under a project, please add a project number and if applicable include a code or identifier of the project. The main text of the article (including notes, references, and illustrations) shall be between 5,000 and 6,000 words. References must be incorporated into the text (not in end note format) and must follow the Harvard Style of Referencing. References should be cited in the text as follows: (author, date: page). An alphabetical references section should follow the text. If there are more references by the same author published in the same year, letters should be added to the citation: a, b, c, etc. (e.g. 2006a; 2006b).

It is important to add DOI number for each reference which has it.

Books: author (year) *title (English translation)*. city of publication: publisher.

Dahlgren, Peter (2009) *Media and Political Engagement*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ćapeta, Tamara and Rodin, Siniša (2011) *Osnove prava Europske unije (Introduction to European Union Law)*. Zagreb: Narodne novine.

Journal Articles: author (year) title (English translation). *journal* volume (number): pages.

McQuail, Denis (2003) Public Service Broadcasting: Both Free and Accountable. *The Public/Javnost* 10 (3): 13-28.

Book Chapter: author (year) title (English translation), pages in editors (ed./eds) *title (English translation)*. place: publisher.

Tongue, Carole (2002) Public Service Broadcasting: A Study of 8 OECD Countries, pp. 107-142 in Collins, Philip (ed.) *Culture or Anarchy? The Future of Public Service Broadcasting*. London: Social Market Foundation.

Ciboci, Lana, Jakopović, Hrvoje, Opačak, Suzana, Raguž, Anja and Skelin, Petra (2011) Djeca u dnevnim novinama. Analiza izvještavanja o djeci u 2010. (Children in newspapers. Analysis of Reporting on Children in 2010), pp. 103-166 in Ciboci, Lana, Kanižaj, Igor and Labaš, Danijel (eds) *Djeca medija. Od marginalizacije do senzacije (Children of the Media. From Marginalisation to Sensation)*. Zagreb: Matica hrvatska.

Internet references: author or institution or webpage name (year) *Title (English translation)*. Project title or document title if exsist. link (DD.MM.YYYY. = date when retreived).

Ridgeout, Victoria, Foehr, Ulla and Roberts, Donald (2010) *Generation M²: Media in the Lives of 8- to 18- Years Olds.* The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. http://kff.org/other/poll-finding/report-generation-m2-media-in-the-lives/ (28.10.2013.).

UNICEF, Croatian Office (2011) *Mišljenja i stavovi djece i mladih u Hrvatskoj (Opinions and Attitudes of Children and Youth in Croatia)*. http://www.unicef.hr/upload/file/351/175805/FILENAME/StavovidjeceimladihuHrvatskoj.pdf (19.11.2013.).

Ofcom (2013) *Radio: The Listener's Perspective: A Research Report for Ofcom*. http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/radio-research/ressearch-findings13/listeners-perspective.pdf (20.11.2013.).

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