Media and Communication
Open Access Journal | ISSN: 2183-2439
Volume 3, Issue 4 (2015)

Special Issue

Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media

Editor

Epp Lauk

COGITATIO

Media and Communication, 2015, Volume 3, Issue 4
Special Issue: Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media

Published by Cogitatio Press
Rua Fialho de Almeida 14, 2º Esq.,
1070-129 Lisbon
Portugal

Guest Editor
Epp Lauk, University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Managing Editor
Mr. António Vieira, Cogitatio Press, Portugal

Available online at: www.cogitatiopress.com/mediaandcommunication

This issue is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY). Articles may be reproduced provided that credit is given to the original and Media and Communication is acknowledged as the original venue of publication.

Table of Contents

Editorial
A View from the Inside: The Dawning Of De-Westernization of CEE Media and Communication Research?
Epp Lauk 1-4

Article
Revisiting National Journalism Cultures in Post-Communist Countries: The Influence of Academic Scholarship
Halliki Harro-Loit 5-14

Article
Values Underlying the Information Culture in Communist and Post-Communist Russia (1917−1999)
Hedwig de Smaele 15-25

Article
Governance of Public Service Media in Poland: The Role of the Public
Michał Głowacki 26-34

Article
Online Political Campaigning during the 2014 Regional Elections in Poland
Paweł Baranowski 35-44

Article
One Country, Two Polarised Audiences: Estonia and the Deficiency of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive
Andres Jõesaar 45-51

Article
Czech Journalists' Refreshed Sense of Ethics in the Midst of Media Ownership Turmoil
Roman Hájek, Sandra Štefaniková, Filip Láb and Alice N. Tejkalová 52-61

Article
Comparing Czech and Slovak Council Newspapers' Policy and Regulation Development
Lenka Waschkova Cisarova 62-75

Article
Voice of the Church: A Debate about Religious Radio Stations as Community Broadcasters
Gabriella Velics and Urszula Doliwa 76-90

Article
Media Literacy in Montenegro
Jelena Perović 91-105

Article
Who Is Willing to Pay for Online Journalistic Content?
Marju Himma-Kadakas and Ragne Kõuts 106-115

Book Review
Journalism that Matters: Views from Central and Eastern Europe. By Michał Głowacki, Epp Lauk and Auksė Balčytienė. Bern: Peter Lang, 2014, 214 pp.; ISBN: 978-3-631-65421-7 hb.
Elena Rodina 116-119

Media and Communication (ISSN: 2183-2439)
2015, Volume 3, Issue 4, Pages 1-4
Doi: 10.17645/mac.v3i4.545

Editorial

A View from the Inside: The Dawning Of De-Westernization of CEE Media and Communication Research?

Epp Lauk

Department of Communication, University of Jyväskylä, 40014 Jyväskylä, Finland; E-Mail: epp.lauk@jyu.fi

Submitted: 22 December 2015 | Published: 29 December 2015

Abstract
The Editorial outlines some characteristics of the development of the Central and Eastern European (CEE) media and communication scholarship during the past 25 years. In the majority of CEE countries, the media and communication research was re-established after the collapse of communism. Since then, a critical mass of active scholars has appeared who form an integral part of the larger European academia. A gradual integration of East and West perspectives in media and communication research is taking place along with moving away from the barely West-centred approach, and utilizing the research done by CEE scholars. Certain 'de-westernization' and internationalization of the research in terms of theoretical and methodological frameworks is depicted.

Keywords
Central and Eastern Europe; media systems; media change; CEE media and communication scholarship; de-westernization

Issue
This editorial is part of the special issue "Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media", edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

© 2015 by the author; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

The collapse of communist regimes and dissolution of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s opened up a new, large and compelling field of media and communication scholarship—media transformation and democratization in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). Like the other fields of social sciences in CEE countries, media and communication studies literally had to be re-established in the early 1990s. No wonder then that in the early stages, scholarly discussion of the most crucial issues (e.g., new ownership patterns, formation of public service media, new technologies, professionalization of journalism etc.) largely followed the lines of Western European and American conceptualisations. These, however, appeared insufficient in explaining the peculiarities of CEE media development. For instance, the efforts at exporting the philosophy and elements of the liberal (Anglo-American) model of journalism were not successful in CEE countries, although this model has been generally accepted by media practitioners and theorists as the dominant ideal of a responsible and professional journalism.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) did not include CEE countries in their comparative media analysis. Their typology is based on an assumption of relatively stable processes of societal and media development. Their models do not, therefore, embrace rapidly changing media systems, although many elements of their analysis are applicable. As a result of comparative research it has become obvious that regardless of a generally similar framework—democratic government, market economy, and freedoms of the press and expression—media systems in these countries have developed along a variety of trajectories.

The international scholarly debates have recognized "an obviously existing disjuncture between theoretical approaches and systems of analysis predominantly rooted in North-Western academia and complex media realities that go beyond the narrow scope of Western experience" (Grüne & Ulrich, 2012, p. 1; see also Curran & Park, 2000). It has become obvious that the media "in democratising countries is an exercise of a different quality than the study of mass media in established

democracies of the West, in which media studies originated" (Jebril, Stetka, & Loveless, 2013, p. 2).

A quarter of a century of development of CEE media and communication scholarship has led to a significant change in the direction of the research perspectives: from West-to-East towards East-to-East and East-to-West.

The first decade of CEE media research produced two kinds of studies that can generally be labelled as *descriptive comparisons.* First, the collections of single-country studies that describe a set of aspects of media change in each country, such as market conditions for the print and broadcasting media; ownership structures; legal regulation; media consumption; audiences; aspects of professionalization etc. (Paletz & Jakubowicz, 2003; Paletz, Jakubowicz, & Novosel, 1995; Vihalemm, 2002). Second, approaches that attempt at conceptualizing and theorizing the media change by comparing particular phenomena in different countries. For example, the development of public broadcasting across certain CEE countries; the conditions of media freedom; state media policy; structural development of media systems; media and civil society etc. (cf. Downing, 1996; Sparks & Reading, 1998;Splichal, 1994; Sükösd & Bajomi-Lázár, 2003). The normative understanding of the role and functions of the media in a democratic society dominated as the departure point for explaining the differences and similarities between the countries. The realities of the emerging democracies in CEE, however, deviated significantly from those in established democracies, and the research soon led to the conclusion that the transforming societies construct their unique media systems in a manner that cannot be entirely explained using only the 'western' perspective. For example, the role of cultural and other contextual factors appeared to be more significant than had been assumed. It also became apparent that the issue about the role of the media in societal change remained insufficiently explored. As Jebril et al. (2013, p. 10) demonstrate, from the mid-2000s, the evolution of the scholarship continued towards "a more systemic approach, and comparative perspective, often inspired by Hallin and Mancini's (2004) seminal book on comparative media and politics…and discussing particular aspects of media system transformation in the context of broader processes of Europeanisation and globalisation". From this perspective, for example, Greskovits suggests three distinct varieties of capitalism emerged in CEE societies instead of one: 1) the neoliberal, 2) the embedded neoliberal, and 3) the neocorporatist type, which all resulted in different types of media systems (Greskovits, 2015). Based on the analysis of the indicators of the advancement of societal transformations (the level of media politicization, economic development and degree of media commercialization, freedom of expression, access to the internet) Dobek-Ostrowska defines four models of media and politics in CEE (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015). She classifies all 21 post-communist CEE countries into the Hybrid Liberal (7 states), the Politicized Media (5 states), the Media in Transition (7 states) and the Authoritarian models (2 states). All the countries of the Hybrid Liberal model[1] have joined the EU and have the highest rankings in the Democracy Index and the Press Freedom Index, and have the highest GDP among the CEE countries. This model is described as the most stable among the four models. The Politicized Media model applies to Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Serbia, with high political parallelism, high politicization of public broadcasting and control over the PSB by political actors, and economic stagnation. The Freedom House classifies these countries as 'partly free'. The Media in Transition Model is typical to Moldova, Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ukraine. All of them are in the phase of transition towards democracy and the primary stage of media reform. Weak democratic standards are accompanied by very low journalistic professionalism. The Authoritarian model includes Belorussia and Russia. They are 'non-free' countries according to the Press Freedom Ranking of 2014, and the media in both countries are instrumentalized by political elites (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2015, pp. 26-35). Dobek-Ostrowska's 'inside perspective' of characterising media systems of CEE countries adds a new dimension to traditional normative approaches and deserves further discussions.

The collections of the 2010s have added valuable contribution to the systemic approach and analytical comparison in CEE media research (esp. Dobek-Ostrowska & Glowacki, 2015; Dobek-Ostrowska, Glowacki, Jakubowicz, & Sükösd, 2010; Downey & Mihelj, 2012; Glowacki, Lauk, & Balčytiene, 2014; and Zielonka, 2015).

In addition to (collective) publications, the international co-operation of scholars has significantly contributed to the development of the CEE scholarship. In shifting the direction of the research perspective, a European collaborative network in 2005−2009, COST A30 played an important role. The network was called "East of West: Setting a New Central and Eastern European Media Research Agenda". The project was a good example of integration of East and West perspectives in media and communication research moving away from West-centred approach, and theoretically and methodologically utilizing the research done by CEE scholars. This was, in all likelihood, the first network that brought together media and political communication researchers from 13 CEE countries, and boosted the development of their scholarship. Today, researchers from 12 CEE countries participate in the global project called *Worlds of Journalism Study*[2]*,* which investigates the de-

[1] The Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

[2] http://www.worldsofjournalism.org/index.htm

velopment of journalism cultures around the globe.

From the viewpoint of the history of CEE media and communication scholarship, the first regional meeting in Poland, in 2008, was a defining moment. The first Polish-Czech-Slovak Forum on Political and Communication Sciences demonstrated that the community of researchers had acquired the critical mass necessary to advance CEE scholarship on key issues and the trends of these societies and their media. Since 2008, the Central and Eastern European Media and Communication Conferences have become regular events and are increasingly attracting scholars from around the world. The 8th conference took place in Zagreb in 2015.

In 2010, European Communication Research and Education Association established a Central and East European Network to engage more regional scholars into the activities of ECREA and promote research projects and fieldwork carried out at the CEE Universities and Departments, as well as facilitating communication and cooperation between both institutions and scholars based in the 'West' and the 'East'.

Within recent decades, a number of new communication and media research journals (including eight international ones) have been established in CEE countries, which definitely have enhanced the possibilities of the CEE scholars to present their work to larger national and international audiences[3]. None of the languages of CEE countries is sufficiently widespread to serve as the academic *lingua franca* for any region. The main option is to publish in English. Scholarly discourse in national languages, however, will not develop without publications in those languages. Bilingual publishing seems to be a rather popular practice in the journals, simultaneously serving both purposes: enabling international visibility and developing national scientific discourse.

The special issue of *Media and Communication* journal is an additional proof of the ability of CEE scholarship to add fresh viewpoints to the media and communication research internationally. The authors (15 of 16) represent the community of CEE media and communication researchers, who discuss in their articles several 'universal' issues of media development (ownership, ethics, media policy, status of public service media, media literacy, information culture) from the perspectives of their own countries. Along with a broader issue of the role of academic scholarship in journalism cultures in CEE, Czech and Slovak council newspapers and religious radio stations in Poland and Hungary are comparatively discussed. The Estonian example throws light on news organizations' search for ways of making online news profitable.

The expansion of the scope and diversification of the theoretical and methodological approaches of the CEE media and communication research clearly reflect its advancement towards a distinct field of scholarship. Simultaneously, it forms an integral part of a broader European research agenda. 'De-westernization' does not mean "a rejection of Western theories and paradigms, but rather their critical revision and improvement through an openness for flexible integration of 'peripheral paradigms'", as Grüne and Ulrich (2012, p. 1) emphasize. Even a rather cursory view on the 25 years of the CEE media and communication scholarship confirms the relevance of this statement.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

Curran, J., & Park, M.-J. (Eds.) (2000). *De-Westernizing media studies*. Routledge.

Dobek-Ostrowska, B. (2015). 25 years of communism: Four models of media and politics in Central and Eastern Europe. In B. Dobek-Ostrowska & M. Glowacki (Eds.), *Democracy and media in Central and Eastern Europe 25 years on* (pp. 11-46). Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Dobek-Ostrowska, B., & Glowacki, M. (Eds.) (2015). *Democracy and media in Central and Eastern Europe 25 years on*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Dobek-Ostrowska, B., Glowacki, M., Jakubowicz, K., & Sükösd, M. (Eds.) (2010). *Comparative media systems. European and global perspectives*. Budapest and New York: CEU Press.

Downey, J., & Mihelj, S. (2012). *Central and Eastern European media in comparative perspective. Politics, economy and culture*. Surrey, UK: Ashgate.

Downing, J. D. H. (1996). *Internationalizing media theory. Transition, power, culture*. London, Thousand Oaks and New Dehli: Sage.

Glowacki, M., Lauk, E., & Balčytiene, A. (Eds.) (2014). *Journalism that matters. Views from Central and Eastern Europe.* Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Greskovits, B. (2015). Capitalist diversity and the media. In J. Zielonka (Ed.), *Media and politics in new democracies. Europe in a comparative perspective* (pp. 58-72). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Grüne, A., & Ulrich, D.-C. (2012). Editorial: (De-) Westernizing media and journalism studies: Demarcating, transcending and subverting borders. *Global Media Journal*, *2*(2). Retrieved from www.globalmediajournal.de

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems. Three models of media and politics*. Cam-

[3] Among them, the best known and most cited are *Javnost/The Public* (published in Slovenia), *Central European Journal of Communication* (published in Poland), *Medijska Istraživanja/Media Research* (published in Croatia), *Medialni Studia/Media Studies* (published in the Czech Republic) and *Media Transformations* (Lithuania).

bridge: Cambridge University Press.
Jebril, N., Stetka, V., & Loveless, M. (2013). *Media and democratisation: What is known about the role of mass media in transitions to democracy*. Oxford: Reuters Institute for the Study Journalism.
Paletz, D. L., & Jakubowicz, K. (Eds.) (2003). *Business as usual. Continuity and change in Central and Eastern European media*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press Inc.
Paletz, D. L., Jakubowicz, K., & Novosel, P. (Eds.) (1995) *Glasnost and after. Media and change in Central and Eastern Europe*. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press Inc.
Sparks, C., & Reading, A. (1998). *Communism, capitalism and the mass media*. London: Sage.
Splichal, S. (1994). *Media beyond socialism: Theory and practice in East Central Europe*. Boulder: Westview Press.
Sükösd, M., & Bajomi-Lázár, P. (Eds.) (2003). *Reinventing media: Media policy reform in East-Central Europe*. Budapest: Central European University Press.
Vihalemm, P. (Ed.) (2002). *Baltic media in transition*. Tartu: Tartu University Press.
Zielonka, J. (Ed.) (2015). *Media and politics in new democracies. Europe in a comparative perspective*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

About the Author

Dr. Epp Lauk
Epp Lauk is Professor of Journalism and Head of the Department of Communication at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Her research interests and publications include media development in Eastern and Central European new democracies, the history and culture of journalism and its professionalization in national and international perspective. She is Board member of the European Communication Research and Education Association, co-chair of the International Association for Media and Communication Research History Section and chair of the Estonian Press Council (ASN).

COGITATIO

Media and Communication (ISSN: 2183-2439)
2015, Volume 3, Issue 4, Pages 5-14
Doi: 10.17645/mac.v3i4.387

Article

Revisiting National Journalism Cultures in Post-Communist Countries: The Influence of Academic Scholarship

Halliki Harro-Loit

Institute of Social Studies, University of Tartu, 51003 Tartu, Estonia; E-Mail: halliki.harro@ut.ee

Submitted: 13 July 2015 | In Revised Form: 29 November 2015 | Accepted: 8 December 2015 | Published: 29 December 2015

Abstract

The aim of this exploratory study is to develop the concept of the actor approach and journalism culture by adding a factor that has been more or less overlooked: academic scholarship. The paper also proposes to use the concept "discursive institutionalism" in order to clarify what knowledge and opinions about media are formed in the interaction of media institutions and academia with other institutions in society (e.g. educational, political and judicial). The concept "discursive institutionalism" includes the role of academia in providing new knowledge by conducting and disseminating research on the national and international levels, and this deserves greater attention. Although it is a common understanding that the role of academia is to prepare young professionals, it is less discussed how national media research and journalism education, in synergy, can create and maintain a collective understanding regarding the role and performance of national journalism in turbulent times. The paper is a meta-analysis of published research, and the empirical part of the study includes a close reading of academic articles, reports and conference presentations that are available in English about media in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries. Examples of research from selected CEE countries provide a descriptive view of problems and tendencies concerning media performance in these countries. The proposed analytical approach aims to connect these problems and provide ideas for further research.

Keywords

academic scholarship; actor approach; CEE countries; discursive institutionalism, journalism culture

Issue

This article is part of the special issue "Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media", edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

© 2015 by the author; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

Although millions of people constantly produce and disseminate information and news, democratic societies still need professional journalism to be a source of autonomous and reliable information, as well as analysis, and a potential watchdog over power-holders. Politicization (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2010), commercialization, instrumentalization and stagnation were extensively depicted in CEE countries in 2006−2008 and have been from 2011 onwards (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2013, p. 36). However, these problems are presented and interpreted quite differently in various CEE countries (e.g. Jakubowicz, 2001; Jakubowicz & Sükösd, 2008; Lauk, 2009a). Dobek-Ostrowska proposes that CEE countries can be described as being on four levels of media professionalism and the implementation of media accountability instruments (MAI): "Estonia and the Czech Republic are leaders in the region; they have the best position in many rankings (including Democracy Index, Press Freedom Index). The second consists of Poland and Slovakia, which have eliminated many negative consequences of instrumentalization during recent years. Slovenia, Latvia and Lithuania share some troubles, where the media feel pressure from political actors. The worst situation of media accountability is traditionally observed in Bulgaria, Romania, and—from 2011—also in Hungary" (2013, p. 37). Why have media accountability and professionalism in CEE countries developed so differently?

Various researchers have found that cultural factors play the most important role in daily media performance (e.g., Lauk, 2008, p. 209). At the same time, it seems to be characteristic of media scholars to not specify "cultural implications". Peter Gross, in his review (2013) of the book *Central and Eastern European Media in Comparative Perspective: Politics, Economy and Culture*, points out that although Colin Sparks gets everything right about the relationship between the media and elites, between the various elites, and the political and economic context that surrounds them, the explanatory essence of the cultural underpinning is insufficient.

This article is an exploratory study that aims to develop the concept of the actor approach and journalism culture by adding a factor that has been more or less overlooked: academic scholarship. In order to use this concept as an explanatory analytical model for cultural analysis, the article proposes that the concept of discursive institutionalism that makes it possible to combine the analysis of actors, the interaction between different actor groups and discourses that are produced by media and media scholars. As academic scholarship describes journalism culture from a scientific perspective, it has the potential to provide a diachronic self-description of the national journalism culture. Especially in transition societies, the ability to carry out analytical self-reflection (during rapid social changes) is a precondition for dealing with such problems as clientelism, politicization, political parallelism, commercialism and weak professionalism, as well as low levels of autonomy in journalism.

2. Discursive Institutionalism and "Performative Discourse of Journalism"

The concept of discursive institutionalism that the present article uses is connected with the interpretive or constructivist approach, initially introduced by Vivien Schmidt in 2002 and further developed in 2008. In this approach, "discourse" is the interactive process of conveying ideas, and therefore "discourses" influence cultural developments. Discursive institutionalism can be seen as having two forms: coordinative discourse among policy actors, and communicative discourse between political actors and the public (Schmidt, 2008). According to Schmidt, "discourse" is an important analytical tool for the study of the relations and interaction between ideas and institutions.

Therefore, in this study I use the concept "discursive institutionalism of journalism" in order to clarify what kinds of knowledge and opinions about media are formed in the interaction of media institutions and academia with other institutions in society (e.g. educational, political and judicial). The concept "discursive institutionalism" also includes the role of academia in providing new knowledge by conducting and disseminating research on the national and international levels, preparing young professionals, constructing and maintaining collective memory regarding the role and performance of national journalism over time, and providing cultural sustainability and "bridges" during turbulent times.

The concept "performative discourse of journalism" (Broersma, 2010a, 2010b) is used to explain how journalistic discourse (as a specific discourse among other communicative discourses), or the "rules of the game" for media-workers and the public, are conveyed via textbooks, media classes, lawsuits etc. into daily reality. As Broersma (2010a, p. 30) has stated: "By making choices about the form and style of news, journalists affect how reality is experienced. If we want to understand media and the 'logic' of the public sphere, we have to examine the forms and styles of journalism that embody its performative power." The performative discourse of journalism is partly universal (form and style, conventions of genres, normative theories that impose certain role perceptions for journalists etc.), and therefore transmittable from country to country, being partly very contextual (i.e. the content of daily journalism). Broersma's approach to the performative discourse of journalism is critical, and he points out that to communication scholars and journalists this seems self-evident but to audiences it is not (Broersma 2010b, p. 22). As an example, he points out that while journalism's claim to truthfulness and reliability is crucial for existence and this is the basis of a shared social code between journalists and their public, in scholarship, after major cultural and linguistic changes, the idea that media provide a daily mirror is no longer generally accepted (Broersma, 2010a, p. 16).

Assuming that interaction between institutions for conveying ideas is crucial, one has to determine to what extent various actors share the knowledge of the performative discourse of media. In this paper, I argue that academic scholarship is a crucial factor in functional discursive institutionalism.

My basic argument for why academic discourse is an important element influencing journalism culture relies on what Peeter Torop, a professor of semiotics at the University of Tartu, has pointed out: self-description is a central characteristic of culture. Self-description is a process of auto-communication, and its result can be self-modelling, which determines the dominant factors, the principles of unification and the generative language of self-description (Torop, 2010).

In the context of the present study, the following notion from Torop is important: "Each attempt to describe culture from any scientific position proves, on a different level, to be a self-description of culture. By creating treatments of culture, we can also be part of culture's creativity" (Torop, 2005, pp. 169-170). For example, decades-long research traditions—carried out by both professional scholars and students who follow

all the quality standards of academic research—provide descriptions and analyses that make it possible to create the diachronic dimension of journalism culture, the ability to reflect upon changes in journalism culture over time. In addition, studies on media and journalism *history* can construct media as a hallmark in the collective memory of a nation and therefore be an important source of value communication concerning the media (King, 2008).

The concept of discursive institutionalism, combined with the actor approach, makes it possible to focus more directly on the question of how the different actors who create the media and communication culture obtain their knowledge, values, approaches and daily practices from the surrounding environment, and how they transmit these ideas back into daily practices.

3. The Actor Approach as a Tool for Analysing Cultures

The most elaborated concept concerning "cultural implications" (which have also been empirically tested in comparative studies) has been the concept of "journalism culture". Since 2001 various authors (e.g. Hollifield, Kosicki, & Becker, 2001; Knott, Carrol, & Meyer, 2002) have dealt with different aspects of journalism culture, e.g., "news culture", "newspaper cultures", "the culture of news production" and "editing culture" (Saks, 2011). Erdal (2009), for example, claims that complex media organizations contain a number of different *journalistic sub-cultures*, which include several production cultures. Hanitzsch (2006) introduced a taxonomy of journalism cultures, consisting of territorial, essentialist, value-centred, milieu-specific, organizational and professional journalism cultures. In conceptualizing journalism culture, Hanitzsch (2007) proposed constituents and principal dimensions of journalism culture that would work properly in diverse cultural contexts. Since then empirical cross-national studies have focused on *journalists*' perceptions of their professional values, roles and journalistic norms (Berganza-Conde, MMartín Oller-Alonso, & Meier, 2010; Hanitzsch, 2011; Mellado, Moreira, Lagos, & Hernandez, 2012; Reich & Hanitzsch, 2013). Hence, the concept of journalism culture strongly addresses the actor approach, as well as the relationship between media and elites. This actor-centred approach means that personal and professional values (either consciously reflected or not) and actual performance of actors shape daily practices, and such practices in turn create discourses that both mould and reflect conventions within the media, as well as relations between the media and other institutions and groups in society (legislatures, courts, communities, etc.).

What seem to be more specific for CEE countries as transition societies are the rapid changes that have brought about the need to redefine professional values and conventions, and the fact that people might not be able to change so quickly (e.g. Coman, 2010; Krašovec & Žagar, 2009; Salovaara, & Juzefovics, 2012). Epp Lauk (2009a, p. 81), in analysing the performance of the professional community as one of the main influential factors in changing patterns of journalism in some of the CEE countries, concluded: "The process of the emergence of qualitatively new journalism cultures cannot be accomplished in just 20 years. It requires a complete generation shift in the media". Lauk does not elaborate on her idea of "generation shift", but in this article I will later provide conclusions from selected case studies (in the section on the interruption of journalism culture) that describe different problems connected to the "generation shift".

The Mediadem[1] media policy analysis refers to the influence of the interaction between multiple actors: "Media policy, as expounded in a burgeoning literature on the subject, is shaped by a multiplicity of actors and institutional structures, besides the state, that interconnect and interact among each other in various venues and through various processes in order to organize the media system" (Anagnostou, Craufurd Smith, & Psychogiopoulou, 2010, pp. 12-13).

A close reading of the studies of various scholars on media performance in CEE countries reveals that most of the problems are linked to political, business and media actors. For example, Henrik Örnebring points to "clientelism", which exists at the top level, mainly between politicians and media owners. More precisely, he claims that elite-to-elite communication is an important cultural factor that has received too little critical attention (Örnebring, 2012). Vaclav Štetka has carried out research on the relations between businessmen and journalists in the Czech Republic (Štetka, 2013), stressing that the economic recession and struggle for survival have made structural autonomy for big business a luxury commodity. Both authors implicitly claim that the reasons for political and economic instrumentalization lie in the values of elites. Io-

[1] MediaDem was a European research project which sought to understand and explain the factors that promoted or conversely prevented the development of policies supporting free and independent media. The project combined country-based studies in Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Turkey and the UK with a comparative analysis across media sectors and various types of media services. It investigated the configuration of media policies in the aforementioned countries and examined the opportunities and challenges generated by new media services for media freedom and independence. Moreover, external pressures on the design and implementation of state media policies, stemming from the European Union and the Council of Europe, were thoroughly discussed and analysed. Project title: European Media Policies Revisited: Valuing and Reclaiming Free and Independent Media in Contemporary Democratic Systems. Project duration: April 2010—March 2013. Cf. http://www.mediadem.eliamep.gr

na Coman and Peter Gross came to a similar conclusion while analysing the Romanian clientelism and political parallelism. They point out that the expression of the powers of manager journalists or star journalists (and not only of media owners and politicians) leads to clientelism and political parallelism in Romanian mass media (Coman & Gross, 2012). Andrej Školkay, referring to several studies, points out that "although generalisations should be avoided, judicial decision-making in cases related to the freedom of speech, access to information and the protection of personal rights in the realm of the media has proved problematic for many lower courts" (Školkay, 2014, p. 118). Školkay refers to the inconsistencies that characterise domestic rulings and points out the problem of judges' low professional quality (Školkay, 2014, pp. 117, 118). "Some judges simply fear they would be criticised by the media or feel reluctant to decide fairly in cases involving politicians, public officials, including judges, or celebrities for fear of reprisals….Judges are not specialised, and thus have no in-depth knowledge to evaluate competing interests and rights in complicated cases related to the freedom of expression and the protection of one's honour or personality" (Školkay, 2014, 120). Školkay here points to one more "elite" actor group—judges—but in the context of the present study his indication of cultural factors, such as the autonomy of the profession, and the lack of competencies in using argumentation that is based on Western traditions of freedom of speech and privacy, makes more sense.

In summary, it is not only the combination of media (accountability) system, media policy and/or economy that is different in CEE countries, but also the values and principles that people in different roles apply in their daily practices. The critical question is: would it be the academic scholarship that has enough autonomy and analytical capacity to bring the decision-making elite(s) under the pressure of value-clarification and accountability?

4. Horizontal and Diachronic Ruptures of Journalism Culture

Collapses and alterations of political regimes, wars, and societal and economic crises have significant impacts on the "life course" of journalism cultures in all European countries. As this study emphasises various actors, the notion of diachronic rupture is used to point out the perdition of the values, competencies and identities of the journalism community in the course of political and societal turmoil in CEE countries, especially in the 1990s. However, the concept of diachronic ruptures of journalism culture is not elaborated in the present article[2], as the temporal dimension of different ruptures goes beyond the transition time in the 1990s. For example, political and cultural ruptures may not be synchronous: while a change in a political regime leads to an instant rupture in the political culture, the journalistic discourse may have some ability to withstand political control (Harro-Loit, 2014, p. 268) and the academic discourse even more potential to maintain knowledge and values.

The notion of horizontal rupture between different actors helps to reveal the interruption in coordinative and communicative discourse between the professional media community, political and economic actors, media scholars and the public. In other words, the widely spread knowledge of the performative discourse of journalism in democratic society lessens the potential of horizontal rupture. In addition, if media researchers do not disseminate knowledge, or journalism students do not find jobs in journalism, there is a potential for horizontal rupture.

The researchers of CEE media and society have described the phenomena I here lable as the diachronic rupture of professional knowledge, values and identities, mainly in the 1990s. For example, researchers have pointed out that in the course of political and societal turmoil generations of journalists leave the profession or dramatically change their attitudes, but newcomers, although they are expected to be free from the historical-ideological burden, are not equipped with the performative discourse of journalism. Mihai Coman (2000, pp. 42-43) has written:

> The birth of numerous new publications and radio and television stations brought about a rapid and uncontrolled increase in the number of those who work in the journalistic field. This does not necessarily mean that the number of professional journalists increased: only the number of those employed by enterprises which produce media goods increased. It was assumed that the newcomers, who were far more numerous than those with some experience in the communist press, would bring a new, non-ideologized approach, a greater social responsibility and more professionalism to the journalistic task….The group is dominated numerically by young people who began working in the media after 1989. The majority do not have a relevant academic background or training. They present themselves as an antithesis to the old guard and consequently they promote: (a) an ideology of 'negation', (b) a sentiment of necessary superiority, based on the idea that those who have not work in the communist media were not touched by the communist ideology and (c) a certain professional self-sufficiency, based on the idea of a 'mission' in the name of which they have chosen the press, a mission which does not require any critical self-evaluation, or journalism education and training.

[2] The concept of ruptures in the development of journalism cultures is clarified in Lauk and Harro-Loit (forthcoming).

Coman also refers to Peter Gross, who warned in 1996 that, while some progress has been made in professionalizing the field, to date the region's journalism is not of a calibre consonant with that of its Western neighbours (Gross, 1996. p. 94).

Stępińska and Ossowski (2012) recall that in the early 1990s in Poland about 1500 journalists left their jobs for various reasons, but even now three different generations have different role perceptions, depending on the time they entered the profession. Romania and Bulgaria have the same problem: experienced journalists have left the field (Ghinea & Avădani, 2011; Smilova, Smilov, & Ganev, 2011). Lucyna Szot, in analysing the main professional dilemmas of journalists in Poland (2013), argues that journalists as a group of actors are not in a strong position: "The very low activity of professional associations makes the situation worse. Journalists' organizations are too weak and divided. They are not able to articulate group interests or represent their profession effectively in Parliament….Polish journalists find it difficult to define their own identity" (Szot, 2013, pp. 231-232). Hadamik (2005) argues that the evolution of Polish journalism has had a strong literary, intellectual and political connotation, and those features have shaped the professional culture for many years, including during the communist era, when Polish journalists struggled with censorship for decades (Hadamik, 2005, pp. 214-215). The transition time of the 1990s produced a specific (different from the communist period) rupture in the journalism culture of CEE countries.

Jaromir Volek (2010, pp. 176-177) very explicitly points out the repetitive rupture in the professional culture during different periods of time in the Czech Republic:

> Few occupations in the Czech Republic have changed their professional standards over the last 70 years as frequently as journalists….Inevitably, the eras beginning in 1939, 1945, 1948 and 1968 always brought 'new', ideologically motivated redefinitions of the journalists' professional role….Its latest transformation took place after the collapse of the old regime in 1989, when a dramatic institutional and professional change took place, starting with a serious disruption of the state monopoly over the media system.

Volek also reports that many journalists left the profession, others adapted to the new circumstances, many experienced journalists returned to the profession only after a 20-year involuntary break, and a new generation of novice journalists appeared. Volek describes the "proletarization of the journalists' community", especially on the local level.

At the beginning of the 1990s, in Estonia a lot of very young and inexperienced journalists were hired by media organizations (which thrived until the end of the 1990s) and a special expression was introduced for this time and generation: "juvenile-journalists" (Tali, 2010, pp. 55-56). The country report for the Mediadem project carried out by the Slovakian team reported: "The professionalism of journalists' output is also shaped by the sometimes limited competence of editors and many young journalists" (Školkay, Hong, & Kutaš, 2011).

Inka Salovaara and Janis Juzefovics (2012, p. 770) have provided a description of how a change in owners caused processes that in this study I interpret as a rupture in ideology and professional values in a media organization: the Latvian newspaper *Diena*. Disloyal members of the staff were replaced by new and inexperienced reporters who were unable to produce analytical investigative materials, or ask critical, unpleasant questions.

Péter Bajomi-Lázár (2013, pp. 82-83) asks why political elites have attempted to exert pressure on the media, using the case of Hungary. He has provided a description of economic strategies (outsourcing) and a personnel policy that led to control of the content production processes:

> The new regulation outsourced the production of the three public service broadcasters' news bulletins to MTI, and that of other programmes to the Media Fund. The number of each of the three public service broadcasters' employees has been reduced to a mere forty-nine people. Hence, neither the Directors General nor the Boards of Trustees (having some opposition nominees) of the public service broadcasters have much influence on production and programming. MTV has hired a number of pro-Fidesz journalists and activists, including….Philip Rákay former master of ceremony of Fidesz's street demonstrations, was appointed supervisor to the institution. The list of freshly appointed Fidesz loyalists could be long continued. Most of them receive wages of more than 1,000,000 forints (3,580 euros) a month, while the average Hungarian earns 210,000 forints (750 euros).

Hence, while researchers admit that problems in media performance are linked to various political, business and media actors, they also describe phenomena that reflect diachronic and horizontal ruptures in the professional culture. It is obvious that post-communist countries need more changes than Western democratic countries. Still, as it appears form the above-cited authors', that the phenomena have neither supported the development of autonomous and professional journalism culture nor created preconditions for innovations.

5. Academic Scholars and Scholarship in CEE Countries

As Radu and Popa (2014) have found, there is a com-

monly agreed understanding of the role and influence of journalism education on the profession, as well as on society: it forms journalists' attitudes, it is the usual entry route into newsrooms, it fosters media accountability regarding citizens and society, and it increases awareness of media accountability. Media education has been traditionally considered particularly important in the context of professionalization (e.g. Hoyer & Lauk, 2003). As mentioned at the beginning of this study, I believe that media education should not be separated from research. I propose that journalism education and journalism research should be integrated into academic scholarship in journalism.

However, academic scholarship as a source and catalyst for necessary cultural changes has not received much analytical attention, except for a few programmes and projects (e.g. the Carnegie-Knight Initiative on the Future of Journalism Education, in 2005). The critical analytical questions include: are the media scholars in CEE countries able and motivated to act as engines of innovation and change? And are the different media-related actors and especially journalists ready and motivated to co-operate? The latter question is especially important, as the tension between the industry and academia has been a long-term problem in Europe, including CEE countries. For example, according to the survey carried out in Slovenia, the editors' very critical views of university journalism programmes are not based on actual knowledge of what the journalism faculties offer currently, but in some cases are based on what was happening a decade or more ago (Kovačič & Laban, 2009). Köpplova and Jirák (2008, pp. 205-206) concluded from in-depth interviews with Czech journalists that there was a tend to underestimate journalistic university education, although the vision of a journalist as an educated person was alive in the Czech environment in 2002−2004 (when the survey was carried out).

The question of the potential of media scholars is also linked to the complicated notion of rupture and/or continuity in academia. In most cases, personnel policies in academia are less dependent on employers than they are in media organizations. Academic qualification requirements usually include international publishing, teaching evaluation, management skills etc., which are evaluated either internationally or by local experts in academia. In addition, the "career-building time" in academia is longer and professional values are less connected to the political system.

As mentioned above, academic discourse has more potential to withstand (at least to some extent) political pressure, and therefore, the diachronic continuity of journalism culture can be embedded in the academic discourse. Kovačič and Laban (2009, p. 100) describe the development of Slovenian journalism education:

> At its beginning in 1964, journalism was taught at a "political school"; this was a time when Slovenia was one of the six socialist republics in the common state of Yugoslavia, when journalists were supposed to be socio-political workers responsible to the state (i.e. to the communist party leaders)….However, even at the outset the journalism education programme tried to follow examples not only from faculties in socialist states but also from the democratic world, largely because of Professor France Vreg, the founder of the journalism studies programme in Slovenia….Among other activities, a special fund was set up in the Faculty's journalism department to invite guest lecturers from both the East and the West."

Quite the same can be said about Estonian journalism education. In 1954, the founder of journalism education in Estonia, Professor Juhan Peegel (1919–2007), started the programme as part of the Estonian language and literature faculty at the University of Tartu. Therefore, journalists were not trained as political workers, and the academic research traditions began in the 1950s. Estonian journalism education was research-based from the very beginning, although academic discourse on media and society in post-Soviet countries could develop internationally as part of social or political science only since the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s. However, national research and publications in the field of Estonian journalism history have supported national identity and pride since the late 1950s (Lauk, 2009b). Hence, in these two cases (Slovenia and Estonia), there was actually no diachronic rupture, nor was there a need for a rupture because of existing resistance.

Today, the analytical question is: did Slovenian and Estonian journalism scholars gain some advantage from continuity? The question certainly needs more detailed analysis, but one can find a possible approach to this question using the QS World University Rankings (academic reputation + employer reputation + citations per paper + H-index Citations). In 2015, there are four universities in CEE countries ranking among the top 200 in the area of communication and media studies: the University of Tartu (Estonia) ranks between 101 and 150; the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia), the University of Bucharest (Romania) and the University of Zagreb (Croatia) between 151 and 200.

This ranking takes into consideration various factors: academic reputation (40%), citations per faculty (20%), student-to-faculty ratio (20%), employer reputation (10%), international faculty ratio (5%) and international student ratio (5%). It is worth further investigating the academic scholars, traditions and scholarship at these universities.

Coming back to the question of the actual power of academia to catalyse changes and innovations, it is important to ask how to investigate the potential of

scholarship on journalism in a CEE country. One possibility is to analyse the community of scholars. Claudia Mellado (2011) has conducted a survey of the professional patterns, scholarly productivity and educational characteristics of Chilean Journalism and Mass Communication (JMC) educators. She concludes: "Considering these factors, Chilean journalism education would be largely contributing to the professionalization of the practical activity of teaching journalism, but not to the development of new knowledge from the university-scholarly tradition." One important aspect Mellado points out is the need for implementation of minimum quality standards by universities (2011, p. 389).

One of the main quality standards in academia is international visibility and international networking. Articles published in acknowledged journals form a criterion for evaluation of research quality. International interaction also opens up the national "pool" and brings fresh ideas to local journalism culture. In addition, articles in international journals disseminate knowledge of a country.

Research should be useful to media and should be accessible to the professional community in national languages. This multidimensional activity requires a critical mass of media scholars and an expedient motivation system. As Balčytienė (2008, p. 222) points out:

> One way to promote debate on media matters is by popularising results of academic research. In this respect, the situation seems to be the most auspicious in Estonia (*compared to the other Baltic States—remark by the author*), with the highest number of journalism and communication academics. Until now, the higher education reform in the Baltic countries and the system ranking of academic publications did not motivate scholars to write in their national languages, and thus, to increase popular public discussion on media matters and to widen knowledge and understanding of critical media concepts.

A strong research community usually supports better education (Nelles, 2001). Not only because of international "quality control" but also because the funding that comes both from scientific research and educational funds can often be used in synergy (Harro-Loit, 2009).

Many researchers have come to the conclusion that CEE countries have varied problems concerning the development of media-related scholarship. Mihai Coman has claimed (2000, p. 35):

> First, the media system's evolution has been so rapid and, often, so unexpected, that findings are quickly overtaken by events: too often, after just a few months, an analysis becomes 'history'….Research on media development in transitional societies can be difficult to obtain or, sometimes, inadequate for definitive analysis. Studies based on field research are published in the languages of the countries where the research was conducted and are usually inaccessible to foreign researchers.

In 2015, at the final plenary session of the 8th Central and Eastern European Media and Communication Conference (CEECOM), Zrinjka Peruško, based on her research on the content of the national academic journals of CEE countries (journals published in 2013–2014), stated that "after 25 years of its institutionalization in university programs, journals and professional associations, we still have no comprehensive idea of the character of the discipline of communication and media studies in CEE today" (Peruško, 2015). At the same conference, Vaclav Štétka reached the same conclusion about media and communication studies: the research in CEE countries is not equal in quality to the research in Western countries. Štetka, in presenting a pilot study of the publication output of CEE-based authors in communication journals indexed in the Web of Science over the last decade, pointed out that one reason might be the research funding policies in CEE countries, which lead to poor results. He therefore comes to the same conclusion as Tarasheva (2011) regarding the place of Eastern European researchers in the international linguistics discourse: researchers from the former Eastern bloc do not publish as often as their colleagues from the West.

Hence, the problem is that some CEE countries fall into a vicious circle: low quality decreases competitive potential, and if journalism and media scholars are unable to compete internationally (in media and communication studies) and nationally (with other research fields), decreasing funding leads to an inability to attract strong researchers and educators. In addition, as Koivisto and Thomas (2008, p. 171) conclude in their comparative analysis on media and communication research in 9 countries all over the world, research, teaching and administrative tasks should be carried out synchronously in the situation of tough competition:

> In terms of public funding, communication and media research projects are confronted by fierce competition for a share of an increasingly smaller pie….Research is often done in 'spare time', after university academics have fulfilled an already demanding teaching and administrative burden, with obvious negative impacts upon the quality of the research. Insofar as the academic research units are usually the sites of education even—and especially—of future researchers for private enterprises, this lack of funding impacts not only upon the academic environment but also upon the quality of work done across the whole spectrum.

In addition, the financing can come from research contracts with public and private organizations. But all these funding sources demand already existing strong researcher communities. In summary, growing competition in social sciences leads to a situation where the journalism education and research centres that developed sufficiently in the 1990s and have enough qualified scholars, have better chances to survive today.

6. Conclusions

The actor approach, combined with the concept of discursive institutionalism, makes it possible to integrate the actors, the discourses they produce and their interaction. Strong discursive institutionalism makes it possible to evaluate the reflexivity of media performance; hence, media governance may become less vulnerable to the egoistic and controversial interests of various stakeholders. On the contrary, ruptures (e.g. diachronic ruptures of journalists' knowledge and values as well as horizontal ruptures between different groups of actors) diminish the dialogue between different actors, their ability to understand each other and their mutual ability to demand practices from each other that support the values of democracy.

Horizontal rupture between different actors in society seems to be a common problem in transition societies: divisions between media educators and researchers, tension between media elite and rank-and-file journalists, distance between professional journalists and citizens, insufficient dialogue between national and international scholars etc. As the media culture is now global, missing or weak links between national and international discussions of media can also be seen as a rupture. Since the actual internationalization in media and communication studies in CEE countries started only in the 1990s, the research communities had to "run fast and far" within a decade. Determining whether this has influenced innovation in national journalism cultures or whether it has caused another horizontal rupture requires more analysis.

CEE countries also face a problem in diachronic cultural rupture, not only concerning the communism era, but even more connected with the1990s: the shift in generations of media professionals and traditions. The present study suggests that academic scholarship has the potential to withstand political pressure, as well as the power to repair temporal interruptions by providing retrospective self-descriptions, therefore supporting the process of auto-communication in journalism culture.

Finally, I argue that the concept of discursive institutionalism of journalism, combined with the actor approach and notions of various ruptures, has the potential to clarify the complexity of journalism culture and its ties to both unique national and more universal professional cultures.

Acknowledgements

This work was supported by institutional research funding IUT (20-38) of the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research, and Tartu University Centre of Excellence in Cultural Theory

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

Anagnostou, D., Craufurd Smith, R., & Psychogiopoulou, E. (2010). *The formation and implementation of national media policies in Europe and their relationship to democratic society and media freedom and independence: A theoretical and analytical frame for the MEDIADEM project.* Athens: Eliamep. Retrieved from http://www.mediadem.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/theoretical-report.pdf

Bajomi-Lázár, P. (2013). The party colonisation of the media: The case of Hungary. *East European Politics & Societies*, *27*(1), 69-89.

Balčytienė, A. (2008). Changing journalistic discourses in the Baltic states—How to deal with cheap journalism. In K. Jakubowicz & M. Sükösd (Eds.), *Finding the right place on the map: Central and Eastern European media change in global perspective* (pp. 211-226). Bristol & Chicago: Intellect.

Berganza-Conde, M. R., Martín Oller-Alonso, M., & Meier, K. (2010). Journalistic roles and objectivity in Spanish and Swiss journalism. An applied model of analysis of journalism culture. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, *65*, 488-502.

Broersma, M. (2010a). Journalism as performative discourse. The importance of form and style in journalism. In V. Rupar (Ed.), *Journalism and meaning-making: Reading the newspaper* (pp 25-35). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Broersma, M. (2010b). The unbearable limitations of journalism. On press critique and journalism's claim to truth. *The International Communication Gazette*, *72*(1), 21-33.

Coman, M. (2000). Developments in journalism theory about media "transition" in Central and Eastern Europe 1990–99. *Journalism Studies*, *1*(1), 35-56.

Coman, M. (2010). Journalistic Elites in post-communist Romania: From heroes of the revolution to media moguls. *Journalism Studies*, *11*(4), 587-595.

Coman, I., & Gross, P. (2012). Uncommonly common or truly exceptional? An alternative to the political system-based explanation of the Romanian mass media. *International Journal of Press/Politics, 17*(4), 457-479.

Dobek-Ostrowska, B. (2010). Party system and media in Poland—Dependencies and relations. *Studia Medioznawcze*, *2*(41), 1-15.

Dobek-Ostrowska, B. (2013). Media landscapes in transition: Focus on Central and Eastern Europe. In T. Eberwein & L. Schneider-Mombaur (Eds.), *MediaAct final research reports* (pp 36-37). Dortmund: Technische Universität Dortmund. Retrieved from http://www.yumpu.com/document/view/15922335/mediaact

Erdal, I. J. (2009) Cross-media (re)production cultures. *The Journal of research into New Media Technologies*, *15*(2), 215-231.

Ghinea, C., & Avădani, A. (2011). *Does media policy promote media freedom and independence? The case of Slovakia. The MEDIADEM Report*. Athens: Eliamep. Retrieved from http://www.mediadem.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Romania.pdf

Gross, P. (1996). *Mass media in revolution and national development: The Romanian laboratory*. Ames: Iowa State University Press.

Gross, P. (2013). Central and Eastern European media in comparative perspective: Politics, economy and culture. *Slavic Review*, *72*(2), 402-404.

Hadamik, K. (2005). Between East and West or simply "made in Poland"? The many different styles of today's Polish journalism. In S. Hoyer & H. Pöttker (Eds.), *Diffusion of the news Paradigm 1850−2000* (pp 211-224). Göteborg: Nordicom.

Hanitzsch, T. (2006). Mapping journalism culture: A theoretical taxonomy and case studies from Indonesia. *Asian Journal of Communication*, *16*(2), 169-186.

Hanitzsch, T. (2007). Deconstructing journalism culture: Toward a universal theory. *Communication Theory*, *17*(4), 367-385.

Hanitzsch, T. (2011). Populist disseminators, detached watchdogs, critical change agents and opportunist facilitators: Professional milieus, the journalistic field and autonomy in 18 countries. *International Communication Gazette*, *73*(6), 477-494.

Harro-Loit, H. (2009). Cost effectiveness of journalism education in a small nation state. *Journalism Research*, *2*, 138-155.

Harro-Loit, H. (2014). The diachronic approach to journalism culture. In V. Lang & K. Kull (Eds.). *Estonian approaches to culture* theory (pp. 262-280). Tartu: University of Tartu Press.

Hollifield, A. C., Kosicki, G. M., & Becker, L. B. (2001). Organizational versus professional culture in the newsroom: Television news directors' and newspaper editors' hiring decisions. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *45*(1), 92-117.

Hoyer, S., & Lauk, E. (2003). The paradoxes of the journalistic profession: An historical perspective. *Nordicom Review*, *24*(2), 3-18.

Jakubowicz, K. (2001). Rude awakening: Social and media change in Central and Eastern Europe. *Javnost/The Public*, *8*(4), 59-80.

Jakubowicz, K., & Sükösd, M. (2008). Twelve concepts regarding media system evolution and democratization in post-communist societies. In K. Jakubowicz & M. Sükösd (Eds.), *Finding the right place on the map: Central and Eastern European media change in global perspective* (pp. 9-40). Bristol & Chicago: Intellect.

King, E. (2008). The role of journalism history, and the academy, in the development of core knowledge in journalism education. *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, *63*(2), 166-178.

Knott, D. L., Carroll, V., & Meyer, P. (2002). Social responsibility wins when CEO has been editor. *Newspaper Research Journal*, *23*(1), 25-37.

Koivisto, J., & Thomas, P. D. (2008). Mapping communication and media research: Paradigms, institutions, challenges. In *Communication research center, department of communication, research reports 11*. Helsinki: Helsingin Sanomat Foundation, University of Helsinki.

Köpplova, B., & Jirák, J. (2008) Brave new journalism: The attitudes of Czech journalists towards their own profession. In B. Dobek-Ostrowska & M. Glowacki (Eds.), *Comparing media systems in Central Europe. Between commercialization and politization* (pp 197-206). Wroclaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wroclawskiego

Kovačič, M. P., & Laban, V. (2009). Journalism education in Slovenia. Editors' views on the stereotyping of journalism graduates as incompetent theorists and socio-political workers. *Journalism Practice*, *3*(1), 92-107.

Krašovec, P., & Žagar, Ž. (2009) Divisions and struggles of the Slovenian journalistic guild. A case study of contemporary European journalism. *Journalism Studies*, *10*(1), 85-99.

Lauk, E. (2008). How will it all unfold? Media systems and journalism cultures in post-Communist countries. In K. Jakubowicz & M. Sükösd (Eds.), *Finding the right place on the map: Central and Eastern European media change in global perspective* (pp. 192-212). Bristol & Chicago: Intellect.

Lauk, E. (2009a). Changing patterns of journalism in the new EU Countries. *Journalism Studies*, *10*(1), 69-84.

Lauk, E. (2009b). The Estonian journalism education landscape. In G. Terzis (Ed.), *European journalism education* (pp. 393-408). Bristol & Chicago: Intellect.

Lauk, E., & Harro-Loit, H. (Forthcoming). Journalistic autonomy as a professional value. In *Journalism culture: The European perspective*.

Mellado, C. (2011). Examining professional and academic culture in Chilean journalism and mass communication education. *Journalism Studies*, *12*(3), 375-391.

Mellado, C., Moreira, S. V., Lagos, C., & Hernandez M. E. (2012). Comparing journalism cultures in Latin America: The case of Chile, Brazil and Mexico. *The International Communication Gazette*, *74*(1), 60-77.

Nelles, W. (2001) Toward better communications cooperation for Central and South Eastern Europe: Trends and prospects. *Higher Education in Europe*,

26(2), 227-239.
Örnebring, H. (2012). Clientelism, elites, and the media in Central and Eastern Europe. *International Journal of Press/Politics*, *17*(4), 497-515.
Peruško, Z. (2015). Past and present of communication and media studies in CEE. A speech on the plenary session 4 at the 8th Central and Eastern European Media and Communication Conference (CEECOM) in Zagreb, 14 June.
Radu, R.-N., & Popa, D.-A. (2014). Media accountability and journalism education. In S. Fengler, T. Eberwein, G. Mazzoleni, C. Porlezza, & S. Russ-Mohl (Eds.), *Journalists and media accountability. An international study of news people in the digital age* (pp 249-263). New York: Peter Lang Publishing.
Reich, Z., & Hanitzsch, T. (2013). Determinants of journalists' professional autonomy: Individual and national level factors matter more than organizational ones. *Mass Communication & Society*, *16*(1), 133-156.
Saks, K. (2011). *The formation of editing culture and practice in Estonian newspapers 1988*‑*2005* (Dissertationes de mediis et communicationibus Universitatis Tartuensis). Tartu: University of Tartu.
Salovaara, I. & Juzefovics, J. (2012). Who pays for good journalism? *Journalism Studies. 13*(5/6), 763-774.
Schmidt, V. A. (2008). Discursive institutionalism: The explanatory power of ideas and discourse. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *11*(1), 303-326.
Školkay, A. (2014). The freedom of expression in the media and the Slovak judiciary. In E. Psychogiopoulou (Ed.). *Media policies revisited. The challenge for media freedom and independence* (pp 115-128). Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
Školkay, A., Hong, M., & Kutaš, R. (2011). *Does media policy promote media freedom and independence? The case of Slovakia. The MEDIADEM Report*. Athens: Eliamep. Retrieved from http://www.mediadem.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Slovakia.pdf
Smilova, R., Smilov, D., & Georgy Ganev, G. (2011). *Does media policy promote media freedom and independence? The case of Bulgaria. The MEDIADEM Report*. Athens: Eliamep. Retrieved from http://www.mediadem.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Bulgaria.pdf
Stępińska, A., & Ossowski, S. (2012). Dziennikarze w Polsce: wartości, priorytety i standardy zawodowe [Journalists in Poland: Values, priorities and professional standards]. *Studia Medioznawcze*, *1*(48), 1-15. Retrieved from http://sm.id.uw.edu.pl/Numery/2011_1_44/stepinska-en.pdf
Štetka, V. (2013). From multinationals to business tycoons: Media ownership and journalistic autonomy in Central and Eastern Europe. *International Journal of Press/Politics*, *17*(4), 433-456.
Szot, L. (2013). Main professional dilemmas of journalists in Poland. In B. Dobek-Ostrowska, M. Głowacki, K, Jakubowicz, & M. Sükösd (Eds.), *Comparative media systems. European and global perspectives* (pp. 209-232). Budapest & New York: Central European University Press.
Tali, P. (2010). *Eesti ajakirjanike töö iseloomu muutumine 1988−2009* [Changes in the work of Estonian journalists in 1988−2009]. MA thesis. Tartu: Institute of Journalism and communication, University of Tartu. Retrieved from http://dspace.ut.ee/handle/10062/15273
Tarasheva, E. (2011). Critical discourse analysis applied to corpora from specialized journals. The place of Eastern European researchers in international discourse. *Discourse Society*, *22*(2), 190-208.
Torop, P. (2005). Semiosphere and/as the research object of semiotics of culture. *Sign Systems Studies*, *33*(1), 159-173.
Torop, P. (2010). Translation as communication and auto-communication. *Applied Semiotics/Sémiotique appliquée*, *9*(24), 3-10. Retrieved from http://french.chass.utoronto.ca/as-sa/ASSA-No24/Article1en.html
Volek, J. (2010). Czech journalists after the collapse of the old media system: Looking for a new professional self-image. In B. Dobek-Ostrowska, M. Głowacki, K, Jakubowicz, & M. Sükösd (Eds.), *Comparative media systems. European and global perspectives* (pp 171-194). Budapest: Central European University.

About the Author

Dr. Halliki Harro-Loit

Halliki Harro-Loit is currently professor of journalism at the University of Tartu and is heading the Institute of Social Studies. Her research interests include journalism studies, media ethics and law, comparative journalism and communication studies. She has edited and contributed to the book *The Curving Mirror of Time* (2013) which represents her new interest in social time and diachronic dimension of journalism culture.

Media and Communication (ISSN: 2183-2439)
2015, Volume 3, Issue 4, Pages 15-25
Doi: 10.17645/mac.v3i4.334

Article

Values Underlying the Information Culture in Communist and Post-Communist Russia (1917−1999)

Hedwig de Smaele

Faculty of Social Sciences, KU Leuven, Campus Brussels, 1000 Brussels, Belgium;
E-Mail: hedwig.desmaele@soc.kuleuven.be

Submitted: 27 May 2015 | In Revised Form: 24 August 2015 | Accepted: 5 October 2015 |
Published: 29 December 2015

Abstract
In this article the concept of information culture—understood as the dominant handling of information, shared by a dominant proportion of journalists, the public, authorities and other actors within a societal environment at a given time and place—is explored in the context of Communist and early post-Communist Russia (1917−1999). Three value pairs underlying the attitude towards information are explored: individualism and collectivism (the relation of man to the state), universalism and particularism (the relation of man to man), and pluralism versus dominance (the nature of knowledge and truth). Continuities are found between the Communist Soviet Union and post-Communist Russia in their instrumental use of media and information (collectivism), the view on information as a particular privilege rather than a universal right and the monopoly of truth. Post-Communism, therefore, appears not only as an indication of time (i.e. the period after Communism) but also as an indicator of the continuation of basic value orientations over these time periods.

Keywords
collectivism; Communism; information culture; particularism; post-Communism; Russia; value orientations

Issue
This article is part of the special issue "Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media", edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

© 2015 by the author; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

International comparative research on media and journalism shifted attention, though not strictly consecutively in time, from normative press theories (e.g. Siebert, Peterson, & Schramm, 1956) over media structures (e.g. Hallin & Mancini, 2004) to journalism culture (e.g. Hanitzsch, 2011). Although the approach is different, they all touch the same ground: the interconnectedness between media and broader society. Media systems are not isolated systems: they differ according to the societies they are embedded in. This is in essence the most prominent thesis of the classical work *Four Theories of the Press* (Siebert et al., 1956, pp. 1-2): "The press always takes on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates. Especially, it reflects the system of social control whereby the relations of individuals and institutions are adjusted." Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 8), in their turn, follow this thesis: "We shall follow the agenda set out by Siebert, Peterson, and Schramm in attempting to show how different media models are rooted in broader differences of political and economic structure." The variety in journalisms among countries also inspired the Worlds of Journalism project of Hanitzsch and colleagues. Professional milieus in journalism, defined by underlying value orientations, cut across national boundaries but are unevenly distributed among countries: "the nation still seems to be a primary reference for journalists and their practices" (Hanitzsch, 2011, p. 492).

In particular the interdependence between the media system and the political system seems beyond doubt. Political authorities naturally tend to use media as propaganda outlets and political instruments, but they are also able to install restrictions so as to restrain

themselves and others from doing so. Politicians make media laws and shape media policy. Political models are the starting point for the majority of normative media theories and typologies. In reference to *Four Theories of the Press*, Hallin and Mancini (2004, p. 1) place their "primary focus on the relation between media systems and political systems". The Interdependence between the media system and the political system of one society is also empirically researched. Engesser and Franzetti (2011), for example, have done this on dimensions of freedom, diversity, centrality and tradition. The findings of Hanitzsch (2011, p. 492) in the context of journalism cultures "especially point to the significance of political forces that impose important limits on the professional autonomy of journalists."

The Communist system of the former Soviet Union is especially illustrative of the strong link between media and politics. Politics ceased to exist in the Soviet Union as a separate subsystem as everything became politicized. Media institutions were political institutions in the first place, and journalists were considered party workers. The ideology of Marxism-Leninism operated as the societal glue. Hence, the Soviet Union presented a clear, coherent, and distinct media model in line with its general political, economic, and ideological model. It was labelled the Communist model, the Soviet model, or the Marxist model. It was characterized by state (and party) ownership, centralization, partisan journalism, and (ideological) censorship (de Smaele, 2010).

As easy as labelling the Communist Soviet Union, as puzzling seems labelling post-Communist Russia. Consequently, both the media and the political (and societal) system are often described in terms of paradoxes (see for example Pasti & Nordenstreng, 2013; de Smaele, 2006) and contrasts between theory and practice, between law and its implementation, between hearts and minds. An overview of classifications (de Smaele, 2010) shows labels that suggest a congruence with the democratic, Western model that is at best superficial and imperfect (democracy and market economy accompanied by epithets such as pseudo, illiberal, delegated or even authoritarian or totalitarian) and more indigenous Russian labels without even a reference to Western models such as elite corporatism (Shevtsova, 1996), etatism (Vartanova, 2006) or the authoritarian-corporate model (Zassoursky, 1999). One concept that has been particularly useful for the last twenty years and with a wider scope than Russia alone, is that of post-Communism.

The notion of *post-Communism* indicates the all-pervasive influence and heritage of Communism. It is used to label the time period immediately following the Communist period. If something like a totalitarian syndrome exists—"a specific pattern of cognitions, attitudes and behaviours, developed in order to adapt to life under totalitarian circumstances" (Klicperová, Feierabend, & Hofstetter, 1997, p. 39), it is only plausible that also a post-totalitarian syndrome plays its part. Several authors have pointed at the importance of mindsets and habits, routines, norms and values in determining the (often disappointing) pace of reforms: "It is not enough to introduce new institutions: what is also needed is the cultural foundations of those institutions, the values, attitudes and beliefs which make them work, and which encourage the people to take them for granted." (Jakubowicz, 2005, p.2)

Cultural foundations, values, attitudes and beliefs are at the centre of this study. The aim of this article is to look into the basic values underlying the attitude towards information in Russia during the transition from Communism to post-Communism, or from the Soviet Union (1917−1991) into the Russian Federation (1991−1999). A study on values evidently implies a longer time dimension as values do evolve albeit only slowly. The focus is on continuities between two historical periods that appear as separate in history books and timelines defined by the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991. At the same time, abrupt discontinuity is already tempered by the use of terms such as post-Communism, transition or transformation. Especially the Gorbachev years of *glasnost* and *perestroika* (1985−1991) are considered a crucial bridge period between Communism and post-Communism. Whereas both the era of Gorbachev (1985−1991) and Yeltsin (1991−1999) are included in this study, the Putin period (1999−today) is beyond its scope.

The article is structured as follows. First, we explain the concept of information culture in general terms. Three value pairs are singled out as underlying the information culture in a given society: individualism-collectivism, universalism-particularism, pluralism-dominance. Secondly, we name the values prevalent in the former Soviet Union and compare them with the values dominant in Russia throughout the 1990s. The connection between values and society is not based upon one single survey but on a multitude of surveys, authors, testimonials and observations adding to the strength of the argument. By its method, the article can be considered a meta-analysis of divergent studies on Russian mass media scrutinized from the new angle of how information is produced and perceived within the society.

2. The Concept of Information Culture

In political science, the concept of *political culture* has taken hold strongly and is widely elaborated on. It has taught us that a certain political system (structure) is—or must be—supported by a certain political culture as a set of attitudes, beliefs, values. Pioneering research on this topic was done by Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, in *The Civic Culture* (1963/1989). The idea, however, is not new. Plato already taught us that forms of government (oligarchy, democracy, aristocracy, tyran-

ny) differ according to dispositions of men. In the Soviet Union, the concept of political culture was introduced by Burlatsky in the 1970s. White (1979, p. 58) traces the term *policheskaya kul'tura* back to Lenin and more recently to Brezhnev. But it is obviously in post-Communist Russia that the term is increasingly used (e.g. Sergeyev & Biryukov, 1993).

The concept of political culture provides a link between the macro-structure (society) and the micro-structure (individual): "Outcomes at the system level are thought to be determined by the interactions of individuals acting consistently in terms of the axioms of individual behaviour, whatever they may be. We make assumptions about individual consumers to understand markets, about voters to understand politics, and about bureaucrats to understand bureaucracies" (March & Olsen, 1984, p. 736). Sergeyev and Biryukov (1993) base their study of the Russian parliament on the same principle. A parliament is not only an institution, operating according to certain rules and procedures, but also an organisation of "living minds": "The knowledge, habits, patterns of behaviour, ideas and social preconceptions of those who work in it have a profound impact on how it functions" (p. 7). All definitions of political culture encompass the following elements: attitudes (mainly attitudes towards authority), values, belief systems (ideological or pragmatic), a cognitive component (citizens' level of knowledge) and an affective component (identification with the political system, engagement or alienation). Political culture is part of the broader culture in an anthropological sense. Political values and orientations are intertwined with values and orientations in a broader sense (Brown, 1979, p. 4, Deutsch, 1974, p. 237). Like other cultural concepts, the concept of political culture points to what is idiosyncratic in political and social systems.

Analogous concepts such as "academic culture" or "business culture" are increasingly being used. The concept of "information culture" is used predominantly in combination with information technology and digital media in the sense of coping with new information technologies. But also in the concept of "business culture" or "organisational culture", information plays a central role. It points at common orientations and practices within the organisation with regard to sharing, using, distributing information. Like political culture, information culture cannot be separated from culture as a whole but while political culture deals with orientations and attitudes towards authority and the distribution of authority, information culture deals with attitudes towards information and the distribution of information. Culture and communication are thus explicitly linked to each other. This is also the case in the view of Hall and Hall (1987), who define culture as primarily a system for creating, sending, storing and processing information. Informational culture, then, could be reduced to culture *tout court*.

Culture provides a link between present, past and future (its vertical dimension) and between different subsystems within society (its horizontal dimension). We consider the media system as an integral part of the broader societal system. The media system is a social system, encompassing media-institutions, media workers (such as journalists), the public, the politicians and news sources as well as the relations between all these actors, settled by laws, institutions and norms. McQuail (1994, p. 2) defines the media system as a "social institution, with its own distinctive set of norms and practices but with the scope of its activities subject to definition and limitation by the wider society". On the one hand, the media system operates according to intrinsic values and strives for autonomy; on the other hand, and at the same time, it is not an isolated system but it operates in close connection with the respective political, economic, and juridical systems as it is grounded in basically the same "culture". The concept of culture supposes a great deal of inertia and continuity—otherwise the term would not be able to exist (Wyman, 2000, p. 106). Triandis (1995, p. 4) has put the vertical dimension aptly: "Culture is to society, what memory is to individuals."

To summarize, we consider culture as a set of values, norms and beliefs that shape behaviour, as shared by a relatively large section of society (horizontal) and transmitted from one generation to another (vertical). In our further discussion, we limit ourselves to values as the most stable constituents of culture. The notion of "philosophy" used by Siebert et al. (1956) suggests a number of values: "one has to look at certain basic beliefs and assumptions which the society holds: the nature of man, the nature of society and the state, the relation of man to the state, and the nature of knowledge and truth" (p. 2). As the nature of man and society are most easily answered in relation to each other, the first three "questions" are reduced to two: the relation of man to the state is described by the values of individualism and collectivism, and the relation of man to man by the values of universalism and particularism. The nature of knowledge and truth is discussed with the help of the values pluralism and dominance.

3. Values Underlying the Information Culture in Russia

3.1. Relation of Man to the State: Collectivism versus Individualism

The values of individualism and collectivism express the two basic positions with regard to the relation of man to the state. In an individualistic theory, the individual is a rational being and an end in itself, whose happiness and well-being is the goal of society. In the collectivistic theory, the individual is, above all, a part of society, and not an end in itself. The group takes on

a greater importance, since only through the group may an individual accomplish his/her purposes (Siebert et al., 1956, p. 11). Individualism and collectivism are considered as values at the level of the community or society, not at the individual level. They cannot be equalized to egoism and altruism. Collectivism is not altruism but "in-group egoism" (Hofstede, 1994, p. xiii). Some authors use different terms to distinguish between the cultural and personal levels. Triandis (1995), for example, uses "idiocentrism" and "allocentrism" on the individual level in contrast to collectivism and individualism on the societal level. Berry (1994) uses individualism and collectivism for both levels but in combination with "societal" or "personal". Kagitçibasi (1994) replaces individualism and collectivism by "cultures of relatedness" and "cultures of separateness" to avoid the negative connotation of collectivism with group pressure and mass behaviour. Individualism is commonly associated with liberalism: the focus is on the individual, on individual rights, initiative, and individual freedom. In an individualist society, the individual right to information ("right to know") prevails and media are expected to act accordingly. In a collectivist society, the general interest prevails over the individual right to information and the media primarily act as instruments of the authorities.

As for the Soviet Union, few dispute the collectivist nature of society expressed "by placing social (state, Party, group) loyalties above individual rights" (Kon, 1996, p. 188). Art. 39 of the 1977 Constitution guaranteed the Soviet citizens social, economic, political, and personal rights and freedoms, but also stipulated that citizens' rights might not be exercised at the expense of the interests of society or the state. Individual rights and freedoms (e.g. Art. 50: freedom of speech and the press) were awarded "in accordance with the interests of the people and in order to strengthen and develop the socialist system". In Western liberalism, "state" (government, president, army, security services) (*gosudarstvo*) is considered as the antipode of "society" (civil society) (*obshchestvo*). In the official Soviet discourse, however, state and society were as one, placed opposite the individual. Igor Kon (1996, p. 190) points out that neither the Soviet Philosophical Encyclopedia of the 1960s nor the six successive editions of the Ethical Dictionary, published between 1965 and 1989, had an entry on "personal" or "private" life. Private life was only briefly touched upon, accompanied by the remark that it was not allowed to hinder public life. Both strict child-rearing practices in families and at school and an oppressive atmosphere at work fostered conformity: "The attempted 'over-socialization' into groups (collectives) suppressed the individuality of the individual" (Klicperová et al., 1997, p. 40).

In his classification of collectivistic and individualistic countries, Triandis (1995, p. 3) also places Russia in the 1990s, like the Soviet Union, among the collectivistic countries. Notwithstanding the changing official discourse of the early 1990s (e.g. the Constitution of 1993 with its stress on individual rights and freedoms), the supremacy of the state is kept nearly untouched by all reforms. Vladimir Putin's "millennium speech" (1999) with its stress on traditional Russian values—such as *patriotism* (pride in Russia, its history and accomplishments), *derzhavnost'* (belief in a Great Russia), *gosudarstvennichestvo* (etatism or 'the state as source and protector of order and as driving force of change') and *sotsial'naya solidarnost'* (social solidarity)—is a textbook example of the preference of collectivism over individualism.

A different appreciation of the individual by individualistic and collectivistic societies evidently affects the attitude towards information and the media as information carriers. The rational individual has an individual and universal right to freely available information through autonomous media. The "cog in the wheel" (Heller, 1988) receives its particular part of the information, modelled according to societal goals, through dependent and instrumental media. The lack of autonomy, and consequently the instrumentality of mass media, is an element of continuity in Russian history. Its social subsystems of politics, economics, law and media have never been clearly distinguished from each other. In tsarist Russia, the tsar represented legal, executive, and juridical power (Malfliet, 1999, p. 36) and was often personally engaged in information matters (e.g. Peter the Great, Catharina the Great). In the Soviet Union, the Communist Party took over these tasks. The political, economic, juridical and media systems were closely integrated and connected by ideology (Marxism-Leninism) and the Party organization. The mass media were considered instruments of the vanguard Party. Lenin formulated the task of the mass media as a collectivist propagandist, agitator and organizer (Bol'shaya, 1952, vol. 10, p. 8). Journalists were party functionaries in the first place, but of a type that could also write (Lenin, 1988, pp. 66-67). Stalin not only used the term "instrument" (*orudie*) but also the word "weapon" (*oruzhie*) to describe mass media (Bol'shaya, 1952, vol. 10, p. 8). The most important principle, as listed in handbooks for journalists, was "partiality" or *partiinost'* (de Smaele, 2001, pp. 38-42). Information was made instrumental to societal goals.

The instrumental view of mass media survived Communism. Mikhaïl Gorbachev (1985−1991) depended on the mass media to promote his glasnost policy and to win the population for his reforms. The media function of mobilization was kept untouched, only its goal changed slightly into dynamic socialism instead of stagnant Communism. Boris Yeltsin (1991−1999) was the self-appointed patron of press freedom, but in return he, too, expected loyal support for his reforms from the media. Newspapers that were favourably disposed towards Yeltsin's regime, were financially re-

warded (Richter, 1995, pp. 15-16). In the run-up to the presidential elections of June 1996, the mass media were massively mobilized to secure Yeltsin's second term as president (EIM, 1996). Moscow students of journalism throughout the 1990s were taught the lasting value of *partiinost'* (Prokhorov, 1998, pp. 157-88) and the educational, ideological and organisational rather than the informational functions of the mass media (Prokhorov, 1998, pp. 46-48). The difference between Yeltsin's Russia and the Soviet Union was that not all journalists were instruments for one and the same government or party. Instead, they were at the disposal of widely divergent patrons. Hence, Yeltsin's Russia evolved into a corporate or oligarchic system with him as arbitrator among concurrent power groups of politicians, bankers, media tycoons, business people and bureaucrats. Due to the strong political-economic conflict of interest of the elite, the autonomy of the social subsystems, including the media system, remained limited. Media magnates were simultaneously politicians and businessmen. Their investments in the media were inspired by both economic gain and political ambitions (Vartanova, 1997). Analogous to the corporate societal system, Yassen Zassoursky (1999) labelled the Russian media system in the late 1990s an "authoritarian-corporate system". His grandson, Ivan Zassoursky (1999), spoke of the "mediapolitical system". Both labels point to the symbiosis of private capital, politics and media. The latter are not an independent "fourth power", but serve the (political-economic) power groups.

The individual and collective interests are conflicting values everywhere. But, whereas in Western-Europe the basic right is the individual right to information, and limitations to that freedom are the exceptions, the opposite is true of transitional Russia. Mikhail Gulyaev (1996, p. 14) speaks about "the tradition of the policy of enforced secrecy" as a method to control the information flow. Notwithstanding the law, restricted access to information is common practice. Participants of an IREX meeting (IREX, 2001, p. 196) to discuss the media situation in Russia came to the conclusion that "access to some publicly relevant information is not free: authorities continue to view information as their property, and want to control access." In the annual reports of violations of journalists' rights (compiled by the Glasnost Defence Foundation since 1993), the violation of their right to information—namely denials of information, refusals of accreditation and admission to press conferences and certain locations—remains a highly quoted problem. Surveys cited by Svitich and Shiryaeva (1997, p. 157) confirm this finding as well as the deterioration of the situation throughout the 1990s. Especially difficult to obtain are bare facts, figures, and documents. Little has changed in this respect since Soviet times. The executive branch has the worst reputation with regard to openness of information, followed by the security services, commercial, state and financial companies. Since the Soviet era, state organisations have generally become less transparent with less clearly defined functions and competences (Svitich & Shiryaeva, 1997, pp. 154-160). Not only the state is to blame. Whereas American journalists consider the watchdog role of journalists vis à vis the government their second most important task (following the distribution of information), Russian journalists do not as "they share leadership with state officials" (Wu, Weaver, & Johnson, 1996, p. 538). According to the same survey, Russian journalists stress their role in shaping the political agenda twelve times more than American journalists, a role the latter in fact consider of least importance.

3.2. Relation of Man to Man: Particularism versus Universalism

When the relation of man to the state is expressed by the value pair individualism and collectivism, the relation of man to man can be described by the values of universalism versus particularism. In short and in general, the distinction comes down to the precedence of general rules, codes, values and standards over particular needs and claims of friends and relations (universalism) or, in contrast, the precedence of human friendship, relations, and situations over rules (particularism). In the original, *theological* sense, universalism points to the belief that ultimately all humanity will be saved by God's grace. Particularism, on the other hand, holds that only the chosen will be saved. In the *sociological* sense, the pair universalism-particularism derives first and foremost from the dichotomic pattern-variables of Talcott Parsons (1990). These are patterns of inherently cultural value-orientation, but they become integrated both in personalities and in societal systems. The choice between universalism and particularism comes down to the choice between a cognitive or an appreciative standard, between referring to a general framework (objectivity) or itself (subjectivity). In the *ontological* or *philosophical-anthropological* sense, as underlying the French Revolution and the Enlightenment, universalism sees all men as equal. Universalism then is "the treatment of all persons alike based upon general criteria and not upon any special or unique characteristics of the persons themselves" (Orum, Johnstone, & Riger, 1999, p. 534) whereas particularism is "the treatment of people as special individuals, based on their personal features, rather than as members of some broader class or group" (Orum et al., 1999, p. 528). The distinction between universalism and particularism reminds us of Tönnies's distinction between Gesellschaft and Gemeinschaft or Durkheim's distinction between "mechanical" and "organic" solidarity. Universalism, Gesellschaft or organic solidarity is commonly associated with liberalism, *civil society* and rationalism. Particularism, Gemeinschaft or me-

chanic solidarity is associated with nationalism and romanticism (e.g. Mertus, 1999).

Particularistic cultures are—in the terminology of Edward T. Hall (1976/1989)—*high context* communication environments while universalist cultures are *low context* communication environments. Context, in this sense, has to do with how much you need to know before you can communicate effectively. In high-context cultures "most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message". In low-context cultures, in contrast, "the mass of information is vested in the explicit code" (Hall, 1989, p. 91). Consequently, high-context cultures communicate intensively within their in-groups that are aware of the context while out-groups are largely left out (particularism). Low-context cultures do not differentiate as much as high-context cultures between in- and out-groups; information is freely available for both in- and out-group members (universalism). More specifically, we can state that information is considered a universal *right*—for all individuals without distinction—in the universalistic variant and a particularistic right or a *privilege*—for certain groups or individuals—in the particularistic variant.

Despite its theoretical "universal" ambitions, Communist Russia was particularistic rather than universalistic: "Important features of the Leninist type were that it was not based on citizenship and that it was *not*, despite its protestations, *universalistic* in the real sense of the word, because entitlement to social benefits depended upon being a loyal worker or employee of the state", Mareš, Musil and Rabušic (1994, p. 83) write. The sociologist Igor Kon (1996, p. 197) points at the priority of the "particularistic norm of group privilege over the universalistic principle of human rights". The Orwellian phrase "all animals are equal but some animals are more equal than others" reveals as nothing else the discrepancy between the universalist claims and the particularist reality. The empirical study based on the World Values Survey of 1991 reveals for early post-Communist Russia a weak score on the value of "universalism" and confirms the failed universal ambition of Marxism in Russia (Verbeeren & de Smaele, 2004).

Information in Russia has never been available to everyone on the same conditions. In sharp contrast with the theoretical ideal of the classless society, Soviet society was characterized by a strong vertical segregation with the "elite" (party leaders) on the one hand and "the mass" on the other. Novosel (1995) speaks of "first class" and "second class" citizens. The first was a privileged class whose privileges were institutionalised by the *nomenklatura* system. These not only encompassed material privileges (such as housing, food, health care, and education) but also enhanced access to information, from the right to see "forbidden" films or read "forbidden" books (that is, films and books not considered suitable for general distribution) (e.g. Benn, 1992, p. 9) to the receipt of special foreign news bulletins, put together on a daily basis by TASS and distributed on differently coloured paper according to the degree of detail and the targeted readers (Lendvai, 1981, pp. 129-131). Although the highly-placed officials obviously could claim access to more information, they too received information on a "need-to-know" basis (Bauer, Inkeles, & Kluchkhohn, 1959, p. 43). The overall result was an information deficit. Information was one of the most sought after commodities in the Soviet Union (Ellis, 1999, p. 6). Informal networks, oral communication and rumours filled the vacuum (Banai, 1997, p. 252; Bauer & Gleicher, 1964; Chilton, Ilyin, & Mey, 1998, p. 20; Inkeles & Bauer, 1959, pp. 163-165). Parallel to the official information circuit and analogous to the black market, an unofficial information circuit (e.g. *samizdat*) was functioning. Bauer et al. (1959, pp. 74-78) speak of "informal adjustive mechanisms" developed by the population as a reaction to the high degree of control and centralization. The use of personal networks and informal contacts to obtain sparsely available goods, services, and information and to sidestep formal procedures, is indicated by the Russian word *blat* or the term *ZIS* (*znakomstva I svyazi*, acquaintances and contacts) (Ledeneva, 1998, p. 1). These informal *blat*-networks can be considered particularistic networks wherein personal ties do play a bigger part than universal procedures and institutions: "It was in essence a value-system that depended upon men and not upon laws" (Markham, 1967, p. 21). Ellis (1999, pp. 6-7) speaks about a paradox: the Soviet Union honours the principle of "public property" but refuses to consider information as a public property whereas in the West private property and owners' rights are honoured but much information is freely accessible to everyone.

The particularist orientation can be found in all aspects of societal organization. Russian political life, for example, is highly characterized by particular in-groups versus out-groups: different clans or oligarchs fight each other and value their particular interests higher than the common interest. In economics, personal, particularistic relations, often linked with corruption and privileges, are more important than professional, impersonal, universal market relations, procedures and institutions (Bryant, 1994, p. 70). In the transition from Communism to post-Communism, privileged access to information played a crucial role in the process of privatizations, which became known as *insider privatizations* (e.g. Arik, 1999, pp. 52-53). State property was privatized according to rules written by "the elite" for itself (Androunas, 1993, p. 45). Together with Ledeneva (1998, pp. 184-185) we can state that *blat* played a role in the first privatizations. Whereas in the Soviet Union information concerned mainly what, where and how to obtain scarce goods, during the transition period it also

pertained to information about money, business, laws and taxes, licenses, loans and other scarce 'inside' information (Ledeneva, 1998, p. 209).

Privileged information played an important role in the transition process, but remains important also in post-Communist Russia, where the right to information and inadmissibility of censorship are included in the 1993 Constitution (Art. 29) and in the 1991 Russian Federation Law on the Mass Media (Art. 1). Notwithstanding the law, access to information remains a much quoted problem. The sole remedy according to Konovalov (2002, p. 49) lies in maintaining close and personal connections with, for example, the Defence Ministry and the security services. The observation of Vladimir Ermolin (2002, p. 7) is identical: journalists do not receive rights by laws, but by the personal preference of (state) officials and press services. By law, the media are equal, but by preference some are more equal than others. Code words in the process of information gathering in Russia remain "trust, relations, and integration" (Banai, 1997, p. 242). Authorities have relations with some media professionals, who enjoy the privilege to receive information unavailable to the rest of the media. Among the privileged media in the Yeltsin era were, according to Gulyaev (1996, p. 14), news agencies such as ITAR-TASS and *Interfaks*, newspapers such as *Kommersant* and *Izvestiya*, and weeklies such as *Argumenti i Fakty.* The most important private channel NTV has had changing relationships with the president and his administration (from "neutral" or "opposition" in 1994–1995 to "supporter" during the 1996 presidential elections, and "opposition" in 2000). With each phase the level of access to information shifted accordingly. In the early years, when NTV adopted an oppositional stand, access to the Kremlin was forbidden for NTV-journalists on occasions. In September 1996, however, the "collaborating" channel received a broadcast license for the entire fourth channel by presidential decree and enjoyed privileges such as the same transmission rates as state channels and enhanced access to information. Acting in opposition again, the channel saw its privileges, and ultimately its future, disappear. Another illustration is provided by the Kremlin's handling of the Kursk disaster in the summer of 2000. Media coverage was restricted, only one journalist from the state-controlled television channel RTR was granted full access to the scene. Konovalov (2002, p. 51) calls the Kursk disaster crucial for dividing journalists into "ours" and "others". Journalists of state media like RTR are "ours" and consequently enjoy enhanced access to information. Konovalov also ranks the obedient media according to their proximity to the Kremlin (for television stations, in declining order: RTR, ORT, NTV, TV-Centre).

Very few journalists or media claim their right to receive information before court (Svitich & Shiryaeva, 1997, p. 160). They prefer to overcome the information barriers by other means, such as maintaining privileged relations or bribing officials and openly purchasing information from them. Journalists also only rarely send formal letters of inquiry. Formal inquiry, moreover, appears as a highly ineffective method in comparison with personal contacts and visits to institutions and officials. An experimental study in Voronezh is illustrative: where approximately 70% of formal letters of enquiry resulted in the refusal of information, 70% of personal visits to officials, in contrast, led to acceptance and access to information (Arapova, 2003). And, "if these methods ['back doors', privileged relations, personal contacts] are beyond them, they [the journalists] resort to fabrication and conjecture" according to the Presidential Judicial Chamber for Information Disputes and the Union of Russian Journalists in their 1995 "joint recommendation on the freedom of mass information and the responsibility of journalists" (Price, Richter, & Yu, 2002, p. 341). The latter, thus, assigns responsibility for the dissemination of untruthful information in the media to the closed administration: "Unreliability, incompleteness, and distortion of information very often results from the inaccessibility of sources of information" (Price et al., 2002, p. 341).

3.3. Nature of Knowledge and Truth: Dominance versus Pluralism

Pluralism, commonly associated with democracy and liberalism, acknowledges the existence of all (political) players and their opinions. Consequently, in a pluralist democracy one does not seek the one and only truth but a workable compromise, a balanced view acceptable to all. The pluralist "search for truth" contrasts with the dominant "monopoly of truth". In an authoritarian society, "truth was conceived to be not the product of the great mass of people, but of a few wise men who were in a position to guide and direct their fellows. Thus truth was thought to be centered near the center of power." (Siebert et al., 1956, p. 2).

Authoritarian societies are closed societies: "societies that do not accept the legitimacy of different perspectives on social, political, religious, or normative questions on which reasonable men inevitably disagree" (Mayer, 1989, p. 236). Open, pluralist societies, in contrast, welcome divergent views. In order to reveal the truth, all opinions need to be heard in an open marketplace: "pluralistic views of reality, taken together, were expected to provide a representative mosaic of truth" (Schoenbach, 1983, p. 34). A closed, dominant society rejects freedom of information as useless or disturbing while an open, pluralist society considers freedom of information as essential to its health.

The Soviet Union was a closed society: closed for information from outside (e.g. jamming of foreign radio stations, limited import of foreign books and journals, small percentage of foreign television programmes)

but also reluctant to release "inside information" to its own citizens. Journalists (who were carefully selected and educated) had extremely limited access to information in the first place, and even the information acquired had to pass several strict (mainly political-ideological) filters before appearing in the news. A limited flow of information was the norm.

As in Communist Russia (see for example Berdjajew, 1947, p. 5), in post-Communist Russia too the monopolistic view on truth and a dualist view on morality (good versus bad) are twin leading principles. Politics and morals are often confused, various opinions are not considered to be morally equal (Dolgopolov, 2000, p. 5; McDaniel, 1996, p. 17). What is strived for in Russia, is not "a" decision but "the"—right—decision (Sergeyev & Biryukov, 1993, p. 25). "Truth is unitary…community must also be unitary…opposition and diversity is falsehood and therefore deserves no hearing", McDaniel (1936, p. 35) summarizes. Levada (1996, p. 300) and Millard (1994, p. 27), in their turn, point at intolerance towards dissident or divergent behaviour. William Zimmerman (1995, p. 631) has called this "synoptic thinking": "the view that there is only one correct philosophy". The Russian word *sobornost'* not only points at the (mystic) unity and connectedness of the Russian people but has also a political connotation, with the meaning of a dislike of fractions and opposition and a preference for unanimous decisions. Sergeyev and Biryukov (1993) contrast the "model of sobornost'" with the parliamentarian model with its fractions, representations and compromise. McDaniel (1996, p. 52) places the Russian "government of truth" versus the Western "government of law".

3.4. Clusters of Values

The above-mentioned values form coherent clusters. The values of universalism, individualism and pluralism seem to gather, and so do the values of collectivism, particularism and dominance. Hofstede (1994, p. 2), for example, found a strong correlation between individualism, universalism, and autonomy on the one hand, and collectivism, particularism, and dependency on the other. Triandis (1995, p. 19) connects individualism with liberalism and collectivism with authoritarianism and Marxist collectivism. More in general he links the former with 'the West' and the latter with "the rest" (Triandis, 1995, p. 13). More recent empirical research on universalism based on the World Values Survey showed a clear North-South and East-West opposition within Europe, and a correlation between universalism and democracy (Verbeeren & de Smaele, 2004). Suvarierol (2004) studied the communication habits of European Commission officials and observed a clear North-South dimension according to the degree of universalism causing different communication behaviour patterns. In general, a parallel between universalism and transparency of governance—interpreted as openness of government information—can be observed. The Nordic countries, which score high on universalism, are forerunners in the domain of transparency of governance too. Sweden, together with Finland, were the first in Europe to install in 1766 the "Act on the Freedom of Publishing and the Right of Access to Official Documents" (Janssen, 2012). Both were followed by the other Nordic countries Norway and Denmark, as well as "universalist" France and The Netherlands. Transparency of governance in Central and Southern European countries was the subject of legislative acts only much later, and in fact, legislation still is inadequately implemented (Suvarierol, 2004).

The majority of media systems can be situated somewhere in between the two extremes of pluralism and dominance. Hence, the classification is not to be considered a strict dichotomy but a continuum going from full autonomy to complete control. The distinctive criterion, thus, is the degree of control. Additionally, also the perception and appreciation of control plays a role. Whereas in the West, control over media is perceived negatively and media autonomy is seen as an ideal (but not necessarily within reach), in the Soviet Union, for example, personal and media autonomy were consciously rejected. Sparks (2000, p. 36) formulated this as follows: "the only real difference between what was believed in Prospect Marxa 20 [Lenin's view on the press] and what was believed in the Armory Building [Schramm's description of the Communist press in *Four Theories*] was in the evaluation of the system in question". The same could be said for the majority of non-Western countries that do not necessarily appreciate the Western ideal of freedom or, indeed, so-called "chaos" (Merrill, 2002, pp. 22-23).

4. Conclusion

We looked into the concept of information culture during transition from Communism to post-Communism in Russia. Collectivism, particularism and dominance appear as key values to describe the handling of information in both the Communist Soviet Union and post-Communist Russia in the 1990s. In this article we did not go into the many changes in Russian media during transition. Changes, though, are numerous. Post-Communist Russia became a different country with regard to media ownership structure, media law, and media content. The 1993 Constitution fundamentally reversed the relation of man to the state and acknowledged the principles of individuality, plurality, democracy, and market economy. *De jure* this is an obvious "out of the old" and "into the new". The *de facto* implementation of the law and everyday behaviour, however, could raise doubt about the consolidation of the new order and reminds us of the earlier cited quote of Karol Jakubowicz (2005, p. 2): "It is not enough to in-

troduce new institutions: what is also needed is the cultural foundations of those institutions, the values, attitudes and beliefs which make them work, and which encourage the people to take them for granted."

Western observers and advisers perhaps too easily presumed that "the new order" automatically would be "the Western order". The overview of the first ten years of post-Communist Russia reveal that at least in the field of information and communication dominant values were not all of a sudden replaced by Western values. A further look into the Putin era is recommendable to extend the time dimension of the study and to see whether values start to modify or consolidate. As for Yeltsin's Russia, we can conclude that it is post-Communist indeed, by continued value orientations prevalent also in Communist Russia.

Acknowledgments

The research was partially supported by the Brussels Center for Journalism Studies.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

Almond, G. A., & Verba, S. (1963/1989). *The civic culture. Political attitudes and democracy in five nations.* London: Sage.

Androunas, E. (1993). *Soviet media in transition. Structural and economic alternatives.* Londen: Praeger.

Arapova, G. (2003). The right to access to information: Monitoring experience. *Media Expert*, 4. Retrieved from http://www.medialaw.ru/e_pages/laws/project/r2-3.htm

Arik, M. (1999). Controversies of the post-Communist transition. *Eurasian Studies, 16*(autumn-winter), 51-73.

Banai, M. (1997). Children of the system: Management in Russia. In T. Clark (Ed.), *Advancement in organizational behaviour. Essays in honour of Derek S. Pugh* (pp. 241-257). Aldershot, Brookfield: Ashgate.

Bauer, R. A., Inkeles, A., & Kluchkhohn, C. (1959). *How the Soviet system works. Cultural, psychological, and social themes*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Bauer, R. A., & Gleicher, D. B. (1964). Word-of-mouth communication in the Soviet Union. In L. A. Dexter & D. M. White (Eds.), *People, society and mass communications* (pp. 413-428). New York: The Free Press of Glencoe.

Benn, D. W. (1992). *From glasnost to freedom of speech. Russian openness and international relations*. London: Pinter.

Berdjajew, N. (1947). *Het Russische denken in de 19e & 20e eeuw. Aspecten en perspectieven* (oorspr. *Russkaya mysl' v devyatnadsatom veke i v nachale dvadsatogo veka*). Amsterdam: De Bezige Bij.

Berry, J. W. (1994). Ecology of individualism and collectivism. In U. Kim, H. C. Triandis, Ç. Kâgitçibasi, S.-C. Choi, & G. Yoon (Eds.), *Individualism and collectivism. Theory, method, and applications* (pp. 77-84). London: Sage.

Bol'shaya (1952). *Bol'shaya Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya* (2nd ed., Vol. 10). Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe Nauchnoe Izdatel'stvo.

Brown, A. (1979). Introduction. In A. Brown & J. Gray (Eds.), *Political culture and political change in Communist states* (2nd ed., pp. 1-24). London: MacMillan.

Bryant, C. (1994). Economic utopianism and sociological realism. Strategies for transformation in East-Central Europe. In C. Bryant & E. Mokrzycki (Eds.), *The new great transformation? Change and continuity in East-Central Europe*. London: Routledge.

Chilton, P. A., Ilyin, M. V., & Mey, J. L. (Eds.) (1998). *Political discourse in transition in Europe 1989−1991.* Amsterdam: Benjamin Publishing Company.

de Smaele, H. (2001). *Massamedia in Communistisch en postCommunistisch Rusland (1917−2000). Factoren van continuïteit of van verandering?* (doctoral dissertation). Gent: Universiteit Gent.

de Smaele, H. (2006). In the name of democracy: The paradox of democracy and press freedom in post-Communist Russia. In K. Voltmer (Ed.), *Mass media and political communication in new democracies* (pp. 42-58). London: Routledge.

de Smaele, H. (2010). In search of a label for the Russian media system. In B. Dobek-Ostrowska, M. Glowacki, K. Jakubowicz, & M. Sükösd (Eds.), *Comparative media systems: European and global perspectives* (pp. 41-62). Budapest: CEU Press.

Deutsch, K.W. (1974) *Politics and government. How people decide their fate* (2nd ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Dolgopolov, G. (2000). World history in 60 seconds: How Bank Imperial re-edited Russian binary logic. *Social Semiotics, 10*(1), 5-20.

EIM (European Institute for the Media). (1996). *Preliminary Report. Media and the Russian presidential elections, 4 July 1996*. Düsseldorf: European Institute for the Media.

Ellis, F. (1999). *From glasnost to the Internet. Russia's new infosphere*. London: Macmillan.

Engesser, S., & Franzetti, A. (2011). Media systems and political systems: Dimensions of comparison. *International Communication Gazette, 73*(4), 273-301.

Ermolin, V. (2002). Pressa i silovye vedomstva: vzaimoterpimost' kak forma sotrudnichestva. In M. Pogorelyj & I. Safranchuk (Eds), *Sovremennaya rossijskaya voennaya zhurnalistika. Opyt, problemy, perspektivy* (pp. 73-86). Moscow: Gendal'f.

Gulyaev, M. (1996). Media as contested power in post-

glasnost Russia. *Post-Soviet Media Law & Policy Newsletter, 29*, 12-16.

Hall, E. T. (1976/1989). *Beyond culture*. New York: Doubleday.

Hall, E. T., & Hall, M. R. (1987). *Hidden differences. Doing business with the Japanese*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Press/Doubleday.

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems. Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2012). *Comparing media systems beyond the Western world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hanitzsch, T. (2011). Populist disseminators, detached watchdogs, critical change agents and opportunist facilitators: professional milieus, the journalistic field and autonomy in 18 countries. *International Communication Gazette, 73*(6), 477-494.

Heller, M. (1988). *Cogs in the wheel. The formation of Soviet man*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Hofstede, G. (1994). Foreword. In U. Kim, H. C. Triandis, Ç. Kâgitçibasi, S.-C. Choi, & G. Yoon (Eds.), *Individualism and collectivism. Theory, method, and applications* (pp. ix-xiii). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage.

Inkeles, A., & Bauer, R. A. (1959). *The Soviet citizen. Daily life in a totalitarian society*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

IREX (International Research & Exchange Board). (2001). *Media Sustainability Index 2001*. Retrieved from http://www.irex.org/msi/index.asp

Jakubowicz, K. (2005, March). Post-Communist media development in perspective. In *Internationale Politikanalyse: Europäische Politik/Politikinformation Osteuropa*. Bonn: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung.

Janssen, K. (2012). Open government data and the right to information: opportunities and obstacles. *The Journal of Community Informatics*, *8*(2). Retrieved from http://www.ci-journal.net/index.php/ciej/article/view/952/954

Kagitçibasi, Ç. (1994). A critical appraisal of individualism and collectivism. Toward a new formulation. In U. Kim, H. C. Triandis, Ç. Kâgitçibasi, S.-C. Choi, & G. Yoon (Eds.), *Individualism and collectivism. Theory, method, and applications* (pp. 52-65). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi: Sage.

Klicperová, M., Feierabend, I. K., & Hofstetter, R. (1997). In the search for a post-Communist syndrome: A theoretical framework and empirical assessment. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology, 7*, 39-52.

Kon, I. S. (1996). Moral culture. In D. Shalin (Ed.), *Russian culture at the crossroads. Paradoxes of postCommunist consciousness* (pp. 185-207). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Konovalov, I. (2002). Voennaya telezhurnalistika: osobennosti zhanra. In M. Pogorelyi, & I. Safranchuk (Eds.), *Sovremennaya rossiiskaya voennaya zhurnalistika. Opyt, problemy, perspektivy* (pp. 40-59). Moscow: Gendal'f.

Ledeneva, A. V. (1998). *Russia's economy of favours: Blat, networking, and informal exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lendvai, P. (1981). *The bureaucracy of truth. How Communist governments manage the news*. London: Burnett Books.

Lenin, V. I. (1988). *Over kunst en literatuur*. Moscow: Progres.

Levada, Y. A. (1996). Civic culture. In D. Shalin (Ed.), *Russian culture at the crossroads. Paradoxes of post-Communist consciousness* (pp. 299-319). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Malfliet, K. (1999). *De geest van het Russische recht. Een voorstudie*. Leuven and Amersfoort: Acco.

March, J. G., & Olsen, J. P. (1984). The new institutionalism: organizational factors in political life. *American Political Science Review*, *78*(3), 734-749.

Mareš, P., Musil, L., & Rabušic, L. (1994). Values and the welfare state in Czechoslovakia. In C. Bryant & E. Mokrzycki (Eds.), *The new great transformation? Change and continuity in East-Central Europe* (pp. 78-98). London: Routledge.

Markham, J. W. (1967). *Voices of the red giants. Communications in Russia and China.* Ames: The Iowa State University Press.

Mayer, L. C. (1989). *Redefining comparative politics. Promise versus performance.* London: Sage.

McDaniel, T. (1996). *The agony of the Russian idea.* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

McQuail, D. (1994). *Mass communication theory: An introduction* (3th ed.). London: Sage.

Merrill, J.C. (2002). Chaos and order. Sacrificing the individual for the sake of social harmony. In J. B. Atkins (Ed.), *The mission: Journalism, ethics and the world* (pp. 17-35). Ames: Iowa State Press.

Mertus, J. (1999). The liberal state vs the national soul: Mapping civil society transplants. *Social and Legal Studies, 8*(1), 121-146.

Millard, F. (1994). *The anatomy of the new Poland. Post-Communist politics in its first phase*. Aldershot: Edward Elgar.

Novosel, P. (1995). The iron law of communication. In D. J. Paletz, K. Jakubowicz, & P. Novosel (Eds.), *Glasnost and after. Media and change in Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 9-17). Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press.

Orum, A. M., Johnstone, J. W. C., & Riger, S. (1999). *Changing societies. Essential sociology for our times.* Lanham, Boulder, New York and Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Parsons, T. (1990). *Towards a general theory of action*. Michigan: UMI.

Pasti, S., & Nordenstreng, K. (2013). Paradoxes of journalistic profession: Case of Russia in the context of the Brics countries. In E. L. Vartanova (Ed.), *World of*

media: Yearbook of Russian media and journalism studies (pp. 243-268). Moscow: Lomonosov Moscow State University.

Price, M. E., Richter, A., & Yu, P. K. (Eds.) (2002). *Russian media law and policy in the Yeltsin decade. Essays and documents*. The Hague, London and New York: Kluwer Law International.

Prokhorov, E. P. (1998). *Vvedenie v teoriy zhurnalistiki. Uchebnoe posobie* (2nd ed.). Moscow: RIP-kholding.

Putin, V. (1999, 31 December). Rossiya na rubezhe tysyacheleti. Retrieved from http://www.government.gov.ru/government/minister/article-vvpl.html

Richter, A. (1995). The Russian press after Perestroika. *Canadian Journal of Communication, 20*(1), 7-23.

Schoenbach, K. (1983). News in the Western world. In J. L. Martin & A. G. Chaudhary (Eds.), *Comparative mass media systems* (pp. 33-43). New York: Longman.

Sergeyev, V., & Biryukov, N. (1993). *Russia's road to democracy. Parliament, Communism and traditional culture*. Aldershot & Brookfield: Edward Elgar.

Shevtsova, L. (1996). *After the elections: The balance of power among political institutions.* Paper presented at the Conference "Five Years into the Transition: where is Russia headed?", Washington, DC, National Endowment for Democracy and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 20 September.

Siebert, F. S., Peterson, T., & Schramm, W. (1956). *Four theories of the press. The authoritarian, libertarian, social responsibility and Soviet Communist concepts of what the press should be and do.* Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Sparks, C. (2000). Media theory after the fall of European Communism. Why the old models from East and West won't do any more. In J. Curran & M.-J. Park (Eds.), *De-Westernizing media studies* (pp. 35-49). London: Routledge.

Suvarierol, S. (2004). *Evolving culture in the European Commission? Commission officials, cultural differences, and networking behavior.* Research outline for the NIG annual work conference. Retrieved from https://ep.eur.nl/bitstream/1765/1745/2/NIG1-06.pdf#search=%22suvarierol%20EC%20universalism%22

Svitich, L. G., & Shiryaeva, A. A. (1997). *Zhurnalistskoe obrazovanie: vzglyad sotsiologa.* Moscow: IKAR.

Triandis, H. C. (1995). *Individualism & collectivism.* Boulder, San Francisco and Oxford: Westview Press.

Vartanova, E. (1997). *Russian financial elite as media moguls*. Paper presented at the International Conference on Media and Politics, 27 February−1 March 1997. Brussels: KUB.

Vartanova, E. (2006, 15 November). Russian media between the West and the East. Lecture. Helsinki: Aleksanteri Institute. Retrieved from http://www.helsinki.fi/aleksanteri/maisterikoulu/opinto-opas/luentokurssit/oppimateriaali/russian_media_model/Lecture_2.ppt#256,1,Russia Media between the West and the East

Verbeeren, J., & de Smaele, H. (2004). *Universalism and particularism in the Western world. Implications of basic value orientations for perspectives of democracy*. Paper presented at the Third Interdisciplinary Conference "Democracy and Culture in the Transatlantic World", Maastricht, 27-30 October.

White, S. (1979). The USSR: Patterns of autocracy and industrialism. In A. Brown & J. Gray (Eds.), *Political culture and political change in Communist states* (2nd ed., pp. 25-65). London and Basingstoke: MacMillan.

Wu, W., Weaver, D., & Johnson, O. V. (1996). Professional roles of Russian and US journalists: A comparative study. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 74*(3), 534-548.

Wyman, M. (2000). Political culture and public opinion. In M. Bowker & C. Ross (Eds), *Russia after the Cold War* (pp. 103-118). Harlow: Longman.

Zassoursky, Y. N. (1999). Open society and access to information: The role of Russian media. In Y. N. Zassoursky & E. Vartanova (Eds.), *Media, communications and the open society* (pp. 27-37). Moscow: Faculty of Journalism, IKAR.

Zassoursky, I. I. (1999). *Mass-Media vtoroi respubliki*. Moscow: izd. Moskovskogo Universiteta.

Zimmerman, W. (1995). Synoptic thinking and political culture in post-Soviet Russia. *Slavic Review, 54*, 630-641.

About the Author

Dr. Hedwig de Smaele

Hedwig de Smaele is programme director of the master in Journalism at KU Leuven and a member of the Brussels Center for Journalism Studies. Areas of interest are among others media policy, journalism culture, democratization processes and political communication. Her Ph.D (2001) looks at the transition of mass media in Russia during the 1980s and 1990s. She has published in journals such as *European Journal of Communication*, *Trends in Communication,* and *Javnost/The Public.*

Media and Communication (ISSN: 2183-2439)
2015, Volume 3, Issue 4, Pages 26-34
Doi: 10.17645/mac.v3i4.377

Article

Governance of Public Service Media in Poland: The Role of the Public

Michał Głowacki

Institute of Journalism, Faculty of Journalism and Political Science, University of Warsaw, 00-310 Warsaw, Poland;
E-Mail: michal.glowacki@id.uw.edu.pl

Submitted: 15 June 2015 | In Revised Form: 19 August 2015 | Accepted: 19 August 2015 |
Published: 29 December 2015

Abstract

This paper analyzes the role of the public in governance processes in public service media (PSM) in Poland in the post mass-media era, characterized by participatory culture and network practices. Referencing the findings of the "Democratization of media policy in the digital ecosystems" (2014–2015) research project, the study aims to map the effectiveness of existing tools, practices and attitudes toward opening-up Polish public media enterprises to the public. Examination of media regulation, grey literature (corporate documentation, strategies, reports) and civil society initiatives are likely to indicate the ways and extent to which members of the public might currently participate in the decision-making and control. On the basis of hypotheses that public media enterprises in Poland are not fully prepared for the multi-stakeholder and advanced model of PSM, the study takes into account potential systemic/regulatory, organizational and social barriers for change. The salient questions to be addressed are: What are the strategies and practices through which members of civil society might get involved? At what stages are the publics able to engage? How can PSM take advantage of the development of online tools offering space for interaction and collaboration? How is it possible to make the public more active and interested in governance and participation?

Keywords

civil society; media governance; media regulation; participation; Poland; public service media

Issue

This article is part of the special issue "Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media", edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

© 2015 by the author; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

Media organizations worldwide are currently challenged by network practices, the emergence of creative audiences and easy access to online production tools. New technologies, practices (media activism, collaborative media-making, crowdsourcing, beta testing) and media-like firms (social networks, search engines, content aggregators) that offer possibilities for publics' participation and involvement require traditional media outlets of press, radio and TV to redefine, reorganize and change in order to adapt to fluid digital ecosystems of the post mass-media era. Future scenarios for traditional media firms often relate to power shifts in terms of production and the making of media policy (from top down policy making to the processes of governance). The latter is connected to the examination of emerging modalities and practices that support involvement, empowerment and participation of different media stakeholders.

The user-centric approaches, which are based on openness, responsiveness and transparency are of critical importance for public service media (PSM), which has been tasked to serve the societal and cultural needs of each member nation and to promote democracy and participation within the national geographical boundaries (Council of Europe, 2012; EBU, 2014). Outwardly, PSM would seem ideally placed to thrive in the online and digital environment which benefit open production systems, interaction and harvesting of ideas from creative individuals and suppliers. Empowering the stakeholders of PSM businesses—(i.e. the public), the owner and (in many cases through a combination of the

licence fee system and taxation) also the funder—shall be the guiding principle as the processes of production and consumption blend. However, in many EU countries this has not proved to be the case. In many countries, PSM has been criticized for a lack of independence from government, bias, and hierarchical and rigid organizational structures. Additionally, many PSM firms still see websites as a 'bolt-on' extras for, as marketing platforms for 'traditional' broadcast media (Głowacki & Jackson, 2014). Last, but not least, policy makers as well as leaders and managers of public media have not yet recognized the potential of the multi-stakeholder and advanced model of PSM business, which requires policies and tools to support civic engagement. This could be facilitated through institutional arrangements (audience councils, supervisory bodies), media criticism and accountability, viewers' and listeners' associations, as well as inclusion of the public in consultations related to media policy. Policy makers should also take into account media literacy initiatives to strengthen the quality of public discourse, to show that the public's voice matters as well as different social and cultural architectures, in which public media is mandated to serve.

This paper analyzes the role of the public in governance processes in Poland's PSM. Referencing the findings of the "Democratization of media policy in the digital ecosystems" (2015) research project, this study aims to map the effectiveness of existing tools, practices and attitudes toward decision-making and control in Polish Television (Telewizja Polska, TVP). The study hypothesises that public media enterprises in Poland are not fully prepared for the post-mass media era. Thus, the study examines the potential systemic/regulatory tools, organizational practices, as well as social and mental barriers for change (both of the attitude of policy makers and public media leaders to think beyond the broadcasting model and of the willingness of the public to get involved). To this end, special emphasis is being placed on values and principles of good governance as well as the role and characteristic features of the Polish civil society.

The study examines media regulation, grey literature (corporate documentation, strategies, reports) as well as discussions held during a scientific seminar at the University of Warsaw (October 17, 2014) with participation by scholars, policy makers and public media professionals. Among the salient questions to be addressed are: What are the tools and practices through which members of civil society might get involved? At what stages are the publics able to engage? How can PSM take advantage of the development of online tools offering space for interaction and collaboration? How is it possible to make the public more active and interested in governance and participation?

2. Power Shifts in Media Policy and Public Service Media

The rise of networks, media-like businesses (such as Buzzfeed, Kickstarter, Uber) together with changes in users' behavior, growing market competition and processes of convergence have generated new areas and thus targets for media policy. In the post mass-media era, the old media policy paradigm, which was based on the pyramid of power and a hierarchical management, has recently started to evolve towards a model that is more open and decentralized. Both scholars and practitioners have evidenced the evolution of traditional top down policy towards processes of governance, requiring in particular a change in the nature of power as well as the inclusion of new actors in the production of contemporary media (Rossi & Meier, 2012). Freedman (2014) observes that nowadays power "circulates in a messy rather than a controlled fashion…reflecting the more uncertain and contingent circumstances in which we live" (p. 89). He further argues that new technologies and media create "multi-dimensional mosaic form of power" (Freedman, 2014, p. 97) with power shifts between state authorities and non-state actors being demonstrated by strategic reorganizations, prototyping, collaborations with independent producers, and so on. De Geus (2002) argues the goal is to find a balance between empowering people and providing effective control: "Almost everyone is on favor of decentralization and empowerment—in other words for increasing freedom. But even today, few dare to risk the accompanying loss of control" (De Geus, 2002, p. 140). De Geus also claims that there is a need to develop a "system of corporate governance that provides continuity…, without absolute power concentrated in the hands of either shareholders or management" (2002 p. 197).

Overall, democratization and changing approaches to media policy caused by social change and technological development should be analyzed in relation to goals, collaboration between media stakeholders as well as tools that enable different agents to participate in the creation of media policy. Simultaneously, analysis should take into account values and principles such as openness, accountability, transparency, multidimensionality and independence (Jaskiernia & Głowacki, 2015) (see Figure 1).

Current shifts in media policies have a profound impact on the functioning of PSM and the ongoing searching for a PSM model. Several researchers argue for a more people–centric public media (Clark & Aufderheide, 2009; Jakubowicz, 2008) as well as the overall reinvention and extension of public media for the digital age (Bennett, Strange, Kerr, & Medrado, 2012; Suarez-Candel, 2012). However, national constraints affecting PSM changes have been largely analyzed in relation to external factors such as limitations placed by policy-makers on PSM businesses, interference by Government, or a lack of accountability and transparency (Bajomi-Lazar, Stetka, & Sukosd, 2012; Zankova, 2014). Although some experts and scholars, including

GOALS (Why democratize media policy?)	STAKEHOLDERS (Who should be involved?)
Social/political/economic/cultural goals Empowerment Participation Exchange of views Co-creation and co-accountability	State institutions International organizations Market forces Media Civil society
TOOLS (How to make democratization work?)	**VALUES AND PRINCIPLES (Which values and principles?)**
Public consultations Complaint mechanisms Programming councils of PSM Listeners' and viewers' associations Online media	Openness Diversity of stakeholders and interests Multidimensionality Independence Co-decision and legitimization Transparency and accountability

Figure 1. Selected dimensions of media policy democratization. Source: Based on Jaskiernia and Głowacki (2015, p. 12).

Aslama (2010), Krichels (2014) and Leurdijk (2013), have already looked at emerging approaches to creativity and PSM audiences, there have been few attempts to undertake studies on tools that enable users to formulate, discuss and raise criticism towards the development of corporate strategies and policy proposals. New models of public media governance require examination of both the ways, in which PSM build new partnerships with creative publics as well as internal changes of "structures, processes and behaviours operating throughout the organisation" (Council of Europe, 2012).

3. Participation in Public Service Media

Public service media cannot be understood outside the social, political, economic and cultural environment. A nation's PSM reflect the quality of democracy and public involvement. The empowerment of the public based on participation and collaboration has for long been treated as both a PSM objective, as well as a legitimizing agent for any public media enterprise (Lowe, 2010). However, in the 20th Century when the idea of public service broadcasting was launched and passed through the various stages of development (including the collapse of the PSM monopoly and the introduction of the dual system of broadcasting) relations between public media and civil society were rather asymmetrical and there was no balance of power (Jakubowicz, 2008). If public media is to deliver the right remit it needs to see participation as a driving force for its own activities and operations.

As for relations between the public and the PSM, the notion of participation might be analyzed through both existing practices stimulated by top-down policies as well as the publics' ability to initiate bottom-up activities. Firstly, participation can be evidenced through relations between independent producers, collaborative media-making, letters to the editors, consultation meetings and face-to-face communication. In the broader perspective participatory approaches are to be observed in the audience shares as well as the level of public support in funding PSM (the last indicator is especially important for public media which is funded through a license fee). Finally, civic engagement might be facilitated through public consultations, participation in decision-making and control, as well as the existence of audience councils, feedback loops, complaints mechanisms, and so on. All these patterns are of critical importance as they might create the idea of shared responsibility, trust and the feeling that the public owns a PSM enterprise.

On the other hand, despite the growing number of tools derived from technological development a crisis in democratic participation, with a fall in party membership, reduced involvement in political campaigns and a sharp decline in voting at elections generate questions about the potential and effectiveness of public involvement. As Lowe (2010, p. 12) notes, civic engagement in the internet era might not only be declining but might also be evolving into new forms.

4. Mapping Tools and Practices Enabling Public Participation

Guided by theoretical considerations, the following paragraphs analyse selected tools that enable public to participate in the creation of PSM in Poland. The intention is to identify the potential of existing tools and to further elaborate on the potential and effectiveness of

public involvement. The study draws on practices of public consultations, programming councils, viewers' and listeners' associations, public criticism towards PSM as well as the role of new media and technologies. The focus is mostly on Telewizja Polska (Polish Television, TVP), whose tasks and responsibilities are laid down in the Broadcasting Act of 1992 (Article 21)[1]. TVP1—the first channel of Polish TV holds the largest share of the audience[2]. Both Polish TV and radio are funded through commercial and public revenues. However, the level of evasion of the licence fee is regarded as being one of the highest among the members of the European Broadcasting Union, and as a result, TVP "necessarily relies on commercial/advertising revenue in order to fulfil its public interest objectives" (EBU, 2015, p. 9).

4.1. Public Consultations

Poland has broadly developed the practice of public consultation, by which publics might raise their voices to be heard on matters affecting them. One of the examples created at the state level is the Governmental Portal for Public Consultation in relation to local and regional activities, which through the online platform www.konsultacje.gov.pl, aims to collect opinions on draft legislation and making them available as public information. The list of the projects as of June 2015 included legislation regarding various social and economic issues, such as "Priorities for Industrial Policies (2015–2020+)" and proposals for disclosing prices of goods and services, changes in the business law, and so on. The platform is only open for discussions by anyone who registers to use the service, enabling both institutional and private users to comment on policy proposals. Although the website indicates 100,000 registered users, their engagement with the four projects open for discussion on June 10 2015 was poor: 891 views and just one comment was posted[3].

Regarding media policies, the National Broadcasting Council (NBC)—regulatory authority for electronic media in Poland—allows feedback on a selection of regulations, strategies and projects dedicated to a wide range of issues for media, including those related to PSM. The consultations are open for participation by both private firms and individuals; feedback and comments on policy-related issues are collected via e-mails and regular mail correspondence[4]. The NBC gathers feedback on the list of broadcasting important events; the protection of minors and people with disabilities, the regulations on campaign advertising, and so on. For instance, in the context of the list of important events (open for discussion June 13, 2013 to July 28, 2013), a total of 86 responses were received. Among the stakeholders who participated in this discussion were state authorities and consumers' associations (4), broadcasters and consumers' associations (3), sports associations and owners of rights (5), individuals (48) and anonymous contributions (26)[5]. In a similar vein, the voices of individuals were among the most popular when discussing the proposal to limit TV broadcasting for people with disabilities (April 11, 2013–May 7, 2013). This discussion involved 161, of whom 134 were individuals. The summary of the discussion notes however, that the majority of contributions (128 out of 134) were acquired by circulating a template letter, that did not address any key issues emphasized in the draft proposal[6]. Most recently, financial and programming plans of PSM both on the national and regional level (April 24, 2015–May 25, 2015) each generated two responses, both of which were raised one person, arguing for more financial support to local PSM broadcaster Radio Katowice[7].

Overall, the examples public consultation have proven that the level of publics' participation depend on the topic that is being discussed and the quality of contributions varies. Another issue that arose is the form and stage, at which the public gets involved at the level of media policy creation. Maria Łoszewska-Ołowska (2014) notes that the majority of online platforms for public consultations enable citizen participation predominantly for unchangeable, finished proposals, which therefore do not include public's contribution at the level of document creation. In her

[1] *Ustawa z dnia 29 grudnia 1992 o radiofonii i telewizji* [Broadcasting Act of December 19, 1992]. Retrieved from http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU19930070034

[2] *TVP1 nowym liderem. Duży spadek Polsatu i TVN* [TVP1 is a new leader. A big drop of audience shares of Polsat and TVN]. Retrieved from http://www.wirtualnemedia.pl/artykul/tvp1-nowym-liderem-duzy-spadek-polsatu-i-tvn-m-jak-milosc-hitem-tygodnia

[3] *Rządowy Portal Konsultacji Publicznych* [Governmental Portal for Public Consultations]. Retrieved from www.konsultacje.gov.pl

[4] *Konsultacje* [Consulations]. Retrieved from http://www.krrit.gov.pl/regulacje-prawne/konsultacje-krrit

[5] *Omówienie wyników konsultacji projektu rozporządzenia Krajowej Rady Radiofonii i Telewizji w sprawie listy ważnych wydarzeń* [Discussion of the results of consultations on the draft of the National Broadcasting Councils' regulation towards the list of important events]. Retrieved from http://www.krrit.gov.pl/Data/Files/_public/Portals/0/konsultacje/2013/omowienie-wynikow-konsultacji_2_.pdf

[6] *Omówienie wyników konsultacji projektu rozporządzenia Krajowej Rady Radiofonii i Telewizji w sprawie niższego udziału w programie telewizyjnym audycji z udogodnieniami dla osób z niepełnosprawnością wzroku i osób z niepełnosprawnością słuchu* [Discussion of the result of consultations on the draft of the National Broadcasting Council on the lower share in television program broadcasting facilities for persons visually impaired and persons with hearing disabilities]. Retrieved from http://www.krrit.gov.pl/Data/Files/_public/Portals/0/konsultacje/wyniki-konsultacji-w-sprawie-audycji-z-udogodnieniami.pdf

[7] Data retrieved from Department of Public Service Media at the National Broadcasting Council.

opinion, it is crucial not only to listen to the public, but also how to select the most valued proposals.

4.2. Programming Councils in Public Service Media

The voice of the public in PSM in Poland is supposed to be heard through the programming councils, which were created to provide advice and opinion on the content of public radio and TV. These bodies, which were created both on the national and regional level, are tasked to issue resolutions and statements on the PSM content and to further supervise decision-making processes at the level of Management and Supervisory Boards. Programming councils are tasked to issue opinions on fulfillment of the PSM remit, as defined in article 21 of the Broadcasting Law. Members of the TVP councils are appointed by the NBC. They consist of 15 members, 10 of whom represent parliamentary groups and political parties, while the other 5 are appointed from among people with achievements and experience in culture and media[8].

Discussions on the effectiveness of the PSM programming councils have for long emphasized their weakness and problems, including, for example, the lack of clearly specified competences, the limited impact on PSM, as well as the high level of politicization derived from close relations with political parties' representatives. Teresa Sasińska-Klas (2014) argues the current role of the programming councils is dysfunctional and pathological in view of the aim they were set up. The NBC has recently noted a need for more active involvement of the programming councils in the evaluation of PSM performance[9]. Among the ways their functioning could be improved is changing both the composition and appointment procedures in order to offer space for voices of individuals. Finally, the reform could also support the idea of more tasks and competences, so the programming councils could, for instance, be more active in the discussions on financial plans for PSMs (Zgódka, 2014).

4.3. Complaints

As in many other countries, the practice of the public's participation in PSM is also facilitated through mechanisms offering space for feedback, criticism and complaints on media performance. The tools that are offered here could be split through those referring to provisions derived from media regulation as well as self-regulation, which is related to media ethics, journalism culture and professionalization.

Complaints regarding provisions, as laid down in the Broadcasting Act are collected by the NBC. On the NBC's website, users of digital media in Poland might disseminate their voices through both the traditional means of written correspondence, as well as using the online form, which requires the name of the broadcaster, the title of the program and the broadcasting date. Furthermore, the online submission requires the personal data, name, surname and residential address, of the individual issuing the complaint or feedback. Feedback on the activities of the NBC demonstrated the public's involvement in criticizing media performance. According to the 2014 report, 2411 complaints were submitted to the NBC. The majority of the feedback were complaints regarding the license fee and the programming performance of radio and television (both PSM and private media enterprises). Additionally, the feedback concerned advertising, the operations of cable satellite operators and technical matters relating to broadcasting (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number and topics of complaints submitted to the National Broadcasting Council in 2014.

Topic of complaint	Number of complaints
Licence fee	950
Program	705
Technical matters	147
Advertising	140
Operations of cable and satellite operators	107
Election campaigns	36
Other*	326
TOTAL	**2411**

Note: * includes employment policies, appointment procedures in public service radio and TV companies and funding of PSM[10]. Source: *Sprawozdanie z działalności KRRiT w 2014 roku* [Report from activities of the National Broadcasting Council in 2014]. Retrieved from http://www.krrit.gov.pl/krrit/sprawozdania

Complaints on the quality and objectivity of programming with a reference to PSM values defined in the Broadcasting Law are forwarded to broadcasters[11]. The

[8] *Regulamin Rady Programowej TVP SA* [Terms of Reference of TVP Programming Council]. Retrieved from http://centrumin formacji.tvp.pl/15780343/regulamin-rady-programowej-tvp-sa

[9] *Strategia Regulacyjna na lata 2014-2016* [Regulatory Strategy for 2014-2016]. Retrieved from http://www.krrit.gov.pl/Data/Files/_public/Portals/0/sprawozdania/strategia.pdf

[10] Sprawozdanie z działalności Krajowej Rady Radiofonii i Telewizji w 2014 roku [Report from the activities of the National Broadcasting Council in 2014]. Retrieved from http://www.krrit.gov.pl/krrit/sprawozdania

[11] Article 21 of Broadcasting law of December 29, 1992 states that "Public radio and television shall carry out their public mission by providing, on terms laid down in this Act, the entire society and its individual groups with diversified programme services and other services in the area of information, journalism, culture, entertainment, education and sports which shall be pluralistic, impartial, well balanced, independent and innovative, marked by high quality and integrity of broadcast"—

NBC does not have competences on media self-regulation, and can therefore only ask a media enterprise to respond and explain.

In addition to general ethical standards related to media ethics and journalism professionalization laid down in the Charter of Media Ethics, TVP has adopted principles of journalistic ethics, which defines standards and behavior in relation to information and opinions, information gathering, respecting privacy, scenes of violence, and so on[12]. All ethical standards and rules are being safeguarded by the Ethical Commission which investigates both in response complaints issued by TVP employees and members of the public, as well as on its own initiative. People who are dissatisfied with the programs offered by PSM might raise their comments and complaints directly to the broadcasters. Selected judgments and opinions are made available on the website of TVP[13]. No ombudsman-like institution has been created in the Polish PSM.

Overall, as in the case of public consultation, the level of activity of civil society in the complaints procedures depends on the issue that is being discussed and the tools that offer inclusion and empowerment. Teresa Sasińska-Klas (2014) contends a complaint is an offensive strategy, when one considers it is the only possible way that citizens can influence the programming policies of PSM.

4.4. Viewers' and Listeners' Associations

Although the possibility to create an organization to represent the rights of listeners and viewers was discussed at the early stages of the social, political and media transformations in the early 1990s, representatives of civil society have not managed to make their efforts more institutionalized. In fact, in Poland the institution that could represent civic interests, protect and defend public's rights and further play a role in holding PSM to account (such as The Voice of the Listener and Viewer organization in the United Kingdom) does not exist. Agnieszka Ogrodowczyk (2014), Director of the Strategy Department at the NBC, opines that the establishment of such an initiative could have a positive impact on the quality of the media. The lack of a viewers' and listeners' association is often explained by the weakness of civil society and the level of interests in being actively involved in activities of non-governmental organizations.

4.5. The Potential of New Technologies and Media

The rise of new technologies and media offer new tools and opportunities for the public to get involved in the creation of contemporary media enterprise in terms of decision-making and control. The potential has been recognized by several media-like businesses, such as Facebook, which—through its Facebook Site Governance—has for long consulted on strategies, ethical standards and rules as well as future developments in the platforms with users. Online comments and petitions, blogs, mobile applications and social media have the potential to establish new relationships between the public and PSM.

However, research conducted within the international research project "Media Accountability and Transparency in Europe (MediaAcT)" in 2010–2013 indicated that Polish media organizations have not fully adopted practices enabling civic participation when holding media firms to account. For instance, one of the conclusions from in-depth analyses of online media accountability innovations has indicated the lack of sufficient tools from the internal organizational perspective, which might be explained by financial and organizational limitations; getting involved in the debate on the quality of Polish media might not be regarded as the priority goal (Dobek-Ostrowska, Głowacki and Kuś, 2015; Kuś, 2011). Additionally, the underdevelopment of external initiatives, such as media blogs, citizens' and journalists' websites critically addressing media ethics issues, online documentation of research, podcasts of internal critique sessions, online ombudsman-like institutions, manifest the weakness of the publics, whose role should be to demand media responsiveness and accountability. Citizens' involvement in online media was mostly seen through the Facebook initiatives, which gathered participants interested in a specific topic and were mostly ad hoc and of either a protest or entertainment nature (Kuś, 2011).

5. Missing Link? The Social Dimension

All the examples mentioned above are evidence that both regulatory and institutional approaches cannot be analyzed without taking into account the social dimension, formed by the state of civil society, the willingness to participate and the potential barriers for change (attitudes of PSM leaders and managers included).

The advanced and participatory model of PSM requires the public and citizens who are able to self-organize in order to achieve specific goals for the public good. Although many indices and ranks define Poland among countries with a sufficient level of democracy,[14] the studies conducted over recent years show

Ustawa z dnia 29 grudnia 1992 o radiofonii i telewizji [Broadcasting Act of December 19, 1992]. Retrieved from http://isap.sejm.gov.pl/DetailsServlet?id=WDU19930070034

[12] *Zasady etyki dziennikarskiej w Telewizji Polskiej* [Principles of journalistic ethics]. Retrieved from http://centruminformacji.tvp.pl/15781144/zasady-etyki-dziennikarskiej-w-telewizji-polskiej

[13] *Komisja Etyki: Orzeczenia i opinie* [Ethical Commission: Judgments and opinions]. Retrieved from http://centruminformacji.tvp.pl/15780600/orzeczenia-i-opinie

[14] See for instance Freedom House (2015). *Freedom in the world 2015*. Retrieved from https://freedomhouse.org/report/

the low level of interest in matters of social life, participation in non-governmental organizations and participation in elections (Jakubowicz, 2011). Among the factors that could be used to explain the culture of low level participation are the legacy of communism, a relatively high level of distrust by citizens towards political elites, the perception of the state as a hostile force, uprooting of traditions and patterns of civic engagement, and so on (Kinowska, 2012). Bearing all these in mind, the goals is to have an in-depth examination at the causes of public disengagement as well as the tools, practices, mechanisms and the attitudes, through which PSM will manifest that the role of the public matters. This could be facilitated through ongoing dialogue with the public and maintaining a sufficient level of PSM responsiveness, which might contribute to the quality of public involvement and trust that civil society has in public media.

The social dimension might further require the removal of mental barriers for change in the relation with the leadership and management of PSM and creating the organic structure, in which creative ideas external to a PSM business might flourish. As Głowacki and Jackson (2014, p. 284) note "PSM outlets situated within these cultural and political ecosystems need to firstly solve problems inherited from the past, and specifically those which might interfere with the progression towards positive characteristics, such as independence, pluralism, openness, and inclusion".

6. Values Matter Now

Democratization of media policy and developing a more advanced and participatory model of public media governance has recently been acknowledged by the NBC as one of the regulatory priorities for the period 2014−2016. The regulatory authority has noted a need for new opportunities for evaluation of PSM programming, in which non-governmental organizations participate, and has further recommended the development of new tools for participation[15]. However, any plan and strategy that might lead to strengthening relations between PSM and the public also needs to be analyzed with the redefinition of values and standards, which are of critical importance when discussing patterns of participation in PSM in the Polish case.

Media scholars, practitioners and policy-makers are aware of the need for PSM change in terms of co-decisions, legitimization, accountability and openness, so that public representatives are seen not only as passive audiences but also creative individuals who have a role to play (Jaskiernia & Głowacki, 2015). Similarly, participants of the Warsaw University seminar in October 2014 emphasized a need for discussions on PSM transparency. According to Karol Zgódka (2014) from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage in Poland:

> We cannot merely remind society that it has the obligation to finance them….We have to show clearly how these media are created, why in this and not that way; how the program is formed and enable citizens to influence content creation.

Among the biggest challenges discussed in relation to values and standards of PSM in Poland, scholars and practitioners have argued for strategies and practices promoting a sufficient level of independence. Agnieszka Ogrodowczyk (2014) argues the lack of sufficient level of PSM independence mighty be viewed as one of the causes of low participation and support:

> For 20 years we have had a problem with politicized public service media, which infused the audience with the conviction that these media belong to politicians. So why would members of society engage in these media now if they don't see their role and impact?

Katarzyna Pokorna-Ignatowicz (2014) spoke in similar vein:

> We all know that we have a problem with citizens' participation since the civil society is weakly structured, but I would ask about the causes of this situation and why for 20 years public service media have not managed to convince society that they are for them?

Beata Klimkiewicz (2014) argues the contemporary role of media users is essential, which Teresa Sasińska-Klas (2014) supports:

> We don't have any idea how this crucial social segment could be activated, even though we will need to listen to the opinions of civil society in the processes of democratization.

Sasińska-Klas (2014) calls for the development of a structural analysis, which will be able to diagnose both the strengths and weaknesses of specific components comprising media policy, which would cover the multi-stakeholder approach and further specify the role public should play.

7. Conclusions

New technologies and media together with social, political, economic and cultural changes call for redefini-

freedom-world/freedom-world-2015, and Reporters Without Borders (2015). *2015 World Press Freedom Index*. Retrieved from https://index.rsf.org

[15] *Strategia Regulacyjna na lata 2014-2016* [Regulatory Strategy for 2014-2016]. Retrieved from http://www.krrit.gov.pl/Data/Files/_public/Portals/0/sprawozdania/strategia.pdf

tions of goals, values, media stakeholders and approaches to media policy and the ways, by which the public might get involved and become empowered. Power shifts in the media resulting with the emergence of more user-centric approaches are of critical importance for public media which serve as platforms for civic engagement and PSM remit in relation to education, culture, information and democracy. The PSM, whose task is to support participation and civil society development, is in the twenty-first century required to find new ways to foster participation in the context of its daily internal functioning. This creates space for discussions on the potential and effectiveness of practices, tools and mechanisms, through which the public might get actively involved in the processes of decision-making and control of PSM. The analysis of the current state-of-the-art, more advanced and participatory model of public service media in Poland has emphasized both potentials and pitfalls in relation to regulatory, institutional and social levels of its development.

First, research presented here has pointed out a rather low level of efficacy of the tools and practices, through which public could get involved in the creation of Polish PSMs. This is manifest, for instance, when examining the composition and tasks of programming councils of PSM, which are mainly composed of members of parliament. Among the regulatory and institutional barriers for change, there are the stages, at which the public might get involved in the consultation processes. For example, in the majority of cases, members of the public are asked to provide feedback and comments on projects, strategies and visions that have already been completed (i.e. not during the development process). This failing combined with the lack of media ombudsman-like institution and a viewers' and listeners' association might explain the low level of public engagement.

Secondly, in-depth analysis of civic engagement in creation of PSM in Poland showed that the public very rarely participate in the public consultation, and the level of being active mostly depends on the topic that is being discussed. The existing tools and practices, including consultations and complaints generate the highest level of public response which is usually ad hoc, and while being a recognized form of protest is not necessarily of high quality. New technologies and media have not yet improved public participation in the production process of PSM. This is due to the lack of both internal PSM instruments supporting openness, responsiveness, accountability, transparency and a vision of shared responsibility as well as the that of external bottom-up approaches through which the publics could mobilize themselves to participate.

Overall, the potential of a more advanced and participatory model of public media in Poland has not yet been recognized. Bearing in mind the weakness of participation in the public life, the goal is to find a balance between empowerment and control and to continue the discussions on PSM in relation to regaining trust and convincing the public that it has a role to play. New partnerships between PSM and the public requires ongoing discussions and strengthening the level of responsiveness in order to create PSM which is truly public. The call for more proactive practices and processes should go in line with the definition of values and the role of the public should be the guiding principle in the discussions on the development of Polish model of PSM. This should be further accompanied by issues related to media literacy, and the issues of how to make the publics more interested in the making of public service media.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

Aslama, M. (2010). Re-thinking PSM audiences. Diversity of participation for strategic considerations. In G. F. Lowe (Ed.), *The public in public service media.* Gothenburg: Nordicom.

Bajomi-Lazar, P., Stetka, V., & Sukosd, M. (2012). Public service television in European Union countries: Old issues, new challenges in the "East" and the "West". In: N. Just & M. Puppis (Eds.), T*rends in communication policy research. New theories, methods and subjects*. Bristol, UK, Chicago, USA: Intellect.

Bennett, J., Strange, N., Kerr, P., & Medrado, A. (2012). *Multiplatforming public service broadcasting: The economic and cultural rose of UK digital and TV independents*. London: Royal Holloway, University of London, University of Sussex, London Metropolitan University.

Clark, J., & Aufderheide, P. (2009). *Public media 2.0. Dynamic, engaged publics.* American University: Center for Social Media. Retrieved from http://www.centerforsocialmedia.org/future-public-media

Council of Europe. (2012). *Recommendation CM/Rec (2012)1 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on public service media governance.* Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 15 February 2012 at the 1134th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies. Retrieved from https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1908265

De Geus, A. (2002). *The living company. Habits for survival in a turbulent business environment.* Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press Review Press.

Dobek-Ostrowska, B., Głowacki, M., & Kuś, M. (2015). Poland: Accountability in the making. In *European handbook of media accountability*, forthcoming.

EBU. (2014). Vision2020. Connecting to a networked society. Retrieved from http://ebu-vision2020.tumblr.com

EBU. (2015). Public funding principles for public service media. Retrieved from https://www3.ebu.ch/contents/news/2015/02/psm-funding-ebu-publishes-key-fu.html

Freedman, D. (2014). *The contradictions of media power.* London, New Delhi, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury.

Głowacki, M., & Jackson, L. (2014). Towards a twenty-first century public media: Conclusions. In: M. Głowacki & J. Jackson (Eds.), *Public media management for the twenty-first century: Creativity, innovation, and interaction.* London, New York: Routledge.

Jakubowicz, K. (2008). Participation and partnership: A Copernican revolution to re-engineer public service media for the 21st century. Retrieved from http://ripeat.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Jakubowicz.pdf

Jakubowicz K. (2011). Democracy at 20? Many (un)happy returns. In B. Dobek-Ostrowska & M. Głowacki (Eds.), *Making democracy in 20 years: Media and politics in Central and Eastern Europe.* Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.

Jaskiernia, A., & Głowacki, M. (2015). *Democratization of media policy in the digital ecosystems—The case of Poland. Report from scientific seminar at the university of Warsaw (October 17, 2014).* Warsaw: University of Warsaw.

Kinowska, Z. (2012). Kondycja społeczeństwa obywatelskiego w Polsce [Conditions of civil society in Poland]. *Biuro Analiz Sejmowych*. Retrieved from http://orka.sejm.gov.pl/wydbas.nsf/0/9789F55A271ABAC6C1257AC9004D8BE0/$file/Infos_136.pdf

Klimkiewicz, B. (2014). Speech delivered during scientific seminar "Democratization of Media Policy in the Digital Ecosystems", Warsaw, October 17, 2014.

Krichels, T. (2014). Public media models of the future. Retrieved from http://www.current.org/2014/02/pbs-examines-successes-in-public-service-among-stations

Kuś, M. (2011). *Poland: Waiting for citizens to demand online media accountability. MediaAcT Working Paper No. 8/2011 on Media Accountability and Transparency*. Tampere: Journalism Research and Development Centre. Retrieved from http://www.mediaact.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/WP4/WP4_Poland.pdf

Leurdijk, A. (2013). *Participatory and open public media provision: Dilemmas for public service media.* Paper presented at the ESF Exploratory Workshop "Public Service Media Management: In Search for New Models of Public Service Media in the Era of Social Change and New Technologies", Warsaw, May 12-14, 2013.

Łoszewska-Ołowska, M. (2014). Speech delivered during scientific seminar "Democratization of Media Policy in the Digital Ecosystems", Warsaw, October 17, 2014.

Lowe, G. F. (2010). Beyond altruism. Why public participation in public service media matters. In G. F. Lowe (Ed.), *The public in public service media.* Göteborg: Nordicom.

Ogrodowczyk, A. (2014). Speech delivered during scientific seminar "Democratization of Media Policy in the Digital Ecosystems", Warsaw, October 17, 2014.

Pokorna-Ignatowicz, K. (2014). Speech delivered during scientific seminar "Democratization of Media Policy in the Digital Ecosystems", Warsaw, October 17, 2014.

Rossi, P., & Meier, W.A. (2012). Civil society and media governance: A participatory approach. In N. Just & M. Puppis (Eds.), *Trends in communication policy research: New theories, methods and subjects*. Bristol, UK and Chicago, USA: Intellect.

Sasińska-Klas, T. (2014). Speech delivered during scientific seminar "Democratization of Media Policy in the Digital Ecosystems", Warsaw, October 17, 2014.

Suarez-Candel, R. (2012). Adapting public service to the multiplatform scenario: Challenges, opportunities and risks. Retrieved from http://www.psb-digital.eu/docs/files/PSB-Digital_FinalReport.pdf

Zankova, B. (2014). Governance, accountability and transparency of public service media in contemporary medialized world: The case of Bulgaria. In M. Głowacki & L. Jackson (Eds.), *Public media management for the twenty-first century: Creativity, innovation, and interaction.* London, New York: Routledge.

Zgódka, K. (2014). Speech delivered during scientific seminar "Democratization of Media Policy in the Digital Ecosystems", Warsaw, October 17, 2014.

About the Author

Dr. Michał Głowacki

Michał Głowacki holds a PhD in political science (2009, Wrocław University). He has been awarded scholarships by the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation (CIRIUS), the Swedish Institute (Svenska Institutet), the Research Council of Norway (Norges Forskningsråd) and the Polish-American Fulbright Commission (2013−2014). His research interests are media policy, public service media, accountability, creativity, innovation culture and media governance.

Media and Communication (ISSN: 2183-2439)
2015, Volume 3, Issue 4, Pages 35-44
Doi: 10.17645/mac.v3i4.368

Article

Online Political Campaigning during the 2014 Regional Elections in Poland

Paweł Baranowski

Institute of Political Science, University of Wrocław, 51-149 Wrocław, Poland; E-Mail: pawel.baranowski@uni.wroc.pl

Submitted: 6 June 2015 | In Revised Form: 18 August 2015 | Accepted: 24 September 2015 | Published: 29 December 2015

Abstract
This article is dedicated to the analysis and evaluation of political communication on a regional level. Without any doubt, the Internet revolution affected electoral campaigning on every level. Online campaigning before local elections is often marginalized by political scientists and other scholars researching political marketing. However, the question emerges: are the candidates aware of the possibilities that new media has brought to political communication? Content analysis of all the major online communication tools has allowed the author to analyze the patterns of using websites, official Facebook profiles and Twitter accounts of candidates during the 2014 Lower Silesian Regional assembly elections. The Lower Silesian Voivodeship is among the fastest developing regions in Poland with high Internet penetration rate. Is the Internet campaign treated as a second-class way to communicate with potential voters, or is it perceived as an opportunity to reach electorate online?

Keywords
e-campaigning; Internet; new media; own media; Poland; political communication; regional elections; social media

Issue
This article is part of the special issue "Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media", edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

© 2015 by the author; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

Many political and communication scientists are stressing the role and importance of communication in the politics (Canel, 1999, p. 15; Dobek-Ostrowska, 2007, chapter 4; Gerstle, 1992, p. 13). The period of political campaign before elections is when the communication with the potential voters becomes crucial for incumbents and challengers, who are willing to obtain the mandate.

The classical "golden triangle" of political communication by Richard Perloff (1998, p. 9) assumes, that the discussion within politics is conducted by the leaders, the media and the public. New media and online communication shortens the distance between the leaders and the public, by allowing the establishment of direct, computer-mediated interaction (Harvey, 2014, p. 36). The classical division of political campaigning by P. Norris (1997, pp. 197-198) is taking into account the evolution of communication technology. Thus, we can speak about pre-modern campaigning in the age of the press, modern campaigning in the age of television and post-modern campaigning, which can be observed right now, in the era of new media.

The importance of new technologies in political marketing has been stressed by many Polish scholars. As Garlicki (2010) mentioned, we can observe a significant role of the Internet in the transition from electoral campaigning to permanent campaign. Internet and new media have been present in Polish election campaigns since the nineties. For the first time, it has been used in 1997, during presidential campaign (Plit, 2008, p. 56), although due to low Internet penetration rate in Poland, it was rather a marginal phenomenon. Further electoral campaigns began to develop the use of new media, and gave the very start of post-modernization stage of political campaigning in Poland. However, the 2011 parliamentary elections was the first time, when

Internet was used by a broad spectrum of candidates. Scholars from Poland started to analyze election campaigns online, often criticizing politicians for poor design of websites, which appeared like old, web 1.0 bulletin boards. The revolution of social media and web 2.0 forced candidates to implement interaction and interactivity as a vital element of an election campaign. In relation to the stage of campaigning evolution, Poland has been described by scholars as early postmodern. There are several empirical studies, which are supporting that thesis (Baranowski & Jacuński, 2015; Borek & Jacuński, 2014), however none of the mentioned research has been done based on candidates in regional elections.

A few months after the European Parliament campaign which took place in May 2014, another election was conducted in Poland. The local elections are allowing citizens to choose their deputies to regional assemblies, such as: Voivodeship Sejmik (regional assembly), municipal council and the mayor of the town, city or rural commune. The Lower Silesia Voivodeship Sejmik (Lower Silesia Regional Assembly) is the assembly on provincial level, which has got the constitutional power of adapting the local law on the matters which are not reserved for the central government. It may seem, that the Voivodeship election campaign could be treated as a second-class and less important both for citizens and political actors. However, they could be treated as a warm-up before presidential and parliamentary campaign. The result of regional elections in 2010 (conducted on 21st of November) wasn't the exact reflection of further (9th October) 2011 parliamentary elections, but the ruling party, Civic Platform maintained its first position. Of course, there are a variety of smaller parties and local electoral committees, which are trying to obtain mandates during regional elections.

Polish scholars researching local elections, presented thesis of spatial identity (Bukowski, Flis, Hess, & Szymańska, 2011, pp. 10). According to the authors, the similar conditions of living within the local society allowed for the construction of strong bonds among its participants which may remain even if the conditions of existence would change. Therefore, in addition to the statement, that parliamentary and presidency elections are more important, the regional elections should be treated by local communities as in popular proverb: "*The shirt* is nearer to the *body than* the coat". As for the importance for political actors, apart from the natural tendency of parties to mark their presence in every election, it's enough to mention, that the budget expenditure for Voivodeship Sejmik of Lower Silesia is estimated at 1,4 billion Polish Zloty ("Budżet województwa dolnośląskiego", 2015). Katarzyna Kobielska, scholar researching local governance in Lower Silesia claimed that the game (election campaign to the Voivodeship Sejmiks - PB) is worth the candle (Alberski, Cichosz, & Kobielska, 2013, p. 33). The author concludes that apart from the access to a substantial amount of money, the Regional Assemblies is connected with power and influence, and it is often the first step to the national politics. Not as prestigious as European Parliament elections, but also very important for democracy and political system, local elections had a much smaller budget for the electoral campaign. Especially, as the previous elections had cost political parties a significant amount of money. However, the costs of constructing the website and renting the hosting servers are constantly decreasing. The presence in the social media doesn't consume any financial resources and can be very effective tool of interactive, electoral communication. Have the candidates for the local authorities adopted technological innovations?

2. Research Framework

2.1. Methodology

The empirical method chosen by the author to evaluate the political campaign to Lower Silesia Assembly online is the content analysis. This method allows the researcher to investigate the subject from both a quantitative and a qualitative perspective.

The first step was to construct an original codebook dedicated to regional elections. Codebook consists of three, separate categories. Each category covered a different medium owned by candidates. Categorization key dedicated to the websites consisted of 28 questions, and analyzed the technological features of the page, sharing potential, owners' activity and possibilities of interaction with the candidate. The multimedia potential, newsletter possibility and static information was also taken into account. These issues could indicate the assignment of a webpage to web 1.0 era. Second categorization key with 20 questions investigated Facebook activity: standard popularity indicators, shared content and the intensity of posting. Finally, third categorization key (10 questions) allowed the author to evaluate candidates Twitter accounts. Every category also covered multimedia content in the candidates' entries on every medium.

Research period was set to one month before election date (from 16 October to 16 November 2014), which is the peak time of political campaigning in Poland.

2.2. Sampling

This research is interested in investigating the ways of usage of candidates own Internet tools during electoral campaign to Lower Silesia Voivodeship Regional Assembly (Sejmik). Selected tools are: websites, official Facebook profiles and official Twitter accounts. Private

Facebook accounts were not taken into account for the reason: while making preliminary research, focused on verification of existence of such tools, they were often hard to identify. Author had to make assumptions basing on the actions that could be perceived as stalking: profile photo, shared content or even liked pages to verify, if the account belongs to the candidate. Because of that, the number of private Facebook accounts in Table 1 is for an informative purpose only.

The data that enabled the author to justify making a research of online political communication in the region is a relevant number of inhabitants with access to the world wide web. According to the report published by Polish Central Statistical Office (2014) in October, households in Lower Silesia region that had computers was 78,2 per cent with the average for Poland of 77,1. When it comes to the Internet penetration, the result was also above the average (71,1 per cent) and it amounted to 71,9 per cent.

Social media market in Poland is growing each year. The report titled "Polish Internet Research" is published periodically by Megapanel/PBI and it provides actual data from Polish Internet landscape. The most corresponding report for this research comes was published in January 2015, and it covers the month, when the study was conducted (November). The data shows, that Facebook has sustained its hegemony on social media market share with almost 17 million users (Table 1) and nearly 80% of Internet penetration rate. Next two places in the table belongs to Google+ service and Polish equivalent of American social network service Classmates.com—nk.pl. The reason behind not making a research on these platforms is that high result of Google+ is the effect of high usage of Gmail service in Poland. In addition to nk.pl—constant downtrend since 2010 of this medium connected with huge "migration" to Facebook allows the author to bypass this service, because most likely it's occupied with non-active accounts and it is not a common platform for politicians to communicate with potential voters. Twitter in Poland is considered as an "elite" medium for politicians and journalists. In presented data it has reached the popularity of 2.5 million Polish internet users and penetration rate of almost 12% (Table 1).

Research sample for this study covered 100% of all the candidates. All of the 499[1] names registered by the National Electoral Commission from all 11 election committees from the constituency of Lower Silesia have been taken into account. Table 2 is presenting the overall share of Internet tools during the campaign. After first step of conducting the research, there were 172 identified, official Internet communication tools. The most popular form of online communication among candidates to Regional Assembly was an official Facebook profile. There were 78 identified profiles among 499 candidates, which is 15,6 per cent of overall share. As may be observed in the Table 2, Twitter was second most used tool (9,6 per cent). Websites were slightly less popular with 46 (9,2 per cent). The visible difference of popularity between social media and the websites is explainable by the costs of projecting and establishing a website, which in a comparison to free of charge social media can be a barricade for parties with small financial resources. As mentioned before, substantial number of candidates had private Facebook account.

When it comes to the party-level analysis, the most active election committee on that area was the representatives of ruling party in Poland—Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska)—, who amassed a total of 54 identified tools. Other online active parties also had their representatives in Polish parliament: Left Democratic Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej) with 24 identified tools, Law and Justice with total sum of 23 (Prawo I Sprawiedliwość) and Polish People's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe) with 21. What is interesting, smaller parties such as New Right (Nowa Prawica) or National Movement (Ruch Narodowy) that often complained about marginalization by mainstream media, did not use opportunity to compensate this lack of presence through the Internet. The only exception was election committee of Non-partial Councilmen (Bezpartyjni Samorządowcy), who amassed 23 identified communication tools.

[1] Until the 8 November 2015, the number was equal to 500, but because of tragic accident one of the candidates passed away (Gadawa & Wójcik, 2014).

Table 1. Social media market in Poland.

Social media platform	Users (numbers)	Internauts penetration (per cent)
Facebook	16,850,428	78,57%
Google+	8,754,459	40,82%
nk.pl	4,899,343	22,84%
Twitter	2,528,881	11,79%
Goldenline	1,972,297	9,2%

Source: Own elaboration based on data from Megapanel/PBI research from November 2014.

Table 2. Overall share of Internet tools.

Party name	Candidates	Website	Official Fb	Official TT	Private Fb
Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe	72	7	8	6	35
Demokracja Bezpośrednia	5	0	0	0	1
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość	71	8	12	3	30
Platforma Obywatelska	72	19	20	16	45
Ruch Narodowy	33	0	9	1	11
Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej	70	6	11	7	33
Nowa Prawica	45	0	7	0	12
Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski	25	0	1	1	8
Bezpartyjni Samorządowcy	70	7	6	10	28
Twój Ruch	31	0	4	4	12
Nasza Gmina Lubawka-Kalwaria Lubawska	5	0	0	0	1
Total	499	**46**	**78**	**48**	216

Source: own elaboration.

2.3. Research Questions

After the identification of online communication tools and getting a broad picture of electoral campaigning on a regional level, it became possible to formulate three research questions, which will be analyzed in the following section of this article:

RQ1: To what extend do candidates use new media during election campaign?

The content of the Internet is constantly changing. Web pages have become more interactive, the quality and multimedia potential of uploaded content has become more significant and valuable. The natural element of online landscape, social media, are demanding from its users much more technological awareness and proficiency. Likes, shares, followers and retweets are natural indicators of successful campaign on social media. This question will help to evaluate if the candidates are able to adapt to new conditions of functioning online.

RQ2: Did smaller parties use new media as a form of compensation for their low presence in offline media?

Although during the process of identification of online communication channels there was a substantial difference between the number of tools amassed by election committees represented by parties with representatives in parliament, there are 42 identified media owned by candidates from smaller parties. What is more, during further analysis not all of the communication tools have been qualified for research due to inactivity, and the proportion of owned media between relevant parties and smaller ones will decrease. Answering on that question will help the author to verify, if the parties with smaller financial resources was able to mark their presence in the web.

RQ3: Are the candidates using Internet tools to interact with possible voters?

Web 2.0 revolution changed the rules of communication in the Internet, granting new possibilities for Internet users to interact. Feedback from potential voter could be very valuable for the candidate, especially during regional campaign, where both sides are connected through bonds of spatial identity. By interacting with users on Facebook, candidates could easily expand their network of connections. This question will also verify if the regional election campaign was popular among citizens.

3. Results

After identifying all the active online communication tools, the author has created dataset with all of the quantitative results, which allowed for statistical calculations. All the data shall be broadly described and analyzed from qualitative perspective in this section. The analysis shall be conducted both from communication channel and party level.

3.1. Websites

The identification process allowed the author to gather 46 web pages which were analyzed using a dedicated categorization key. This section shall broadly describe the features and interaction potential of candidates' websites. Back in the era of web 1.0, pages in the Internet seemed to be static and their visual side did not draw user's attention. Nowadays, this tool can be a powerful way of informing, advertising and establishing the contact with potential voters.

In analyzing the research material, it was possible to distinguish pages with an informational function only (bulletin-board like pages) and websites with possibility of posting new entries. 19 analyzed pages (41%)

seemed to be only the Internet visiting cards, while 27 of them enabled candidates to share with their potential electorate the news about their campaign. The average number of posts in the period of last month before the elections was 3,8 with total 163 (Table 3) posts for all the candidates. Only 23 per cent of analyzed pages allowed it's viewers to share entries and materials within a share option (mostly via social media like Facebook, Twitter, Wykop.pl and Google+). What's more, not even a single comment on the website was identified during the research. This may explain the rather high proportion of non-interactive pages, along with the tendency to move dialogue on social media. However, the candidates tried to draw user's attention with additional multimedia content. Most of posted entries (74 per cent) had at least one photograph, image, video or attached link. Newsletter, as a form of staying in touch with the candidate and her or his actions was visible only on two analyzed pages. An Internet discussion forum wasn't identified on any of the analyzed pages.

Non-existent dialogue on the candidates' websites and much higher percentage of social media in identified online tools indicates this channel of communication as dominant in this campaign. This issue also affected the websites, where user could find all the links and embedded plug-ins for profiles of candidates in major social media services. 28 per cent of analyzed web pages had Facebook plug-in with current information posted on profile, but more than half (Table 3) of the research sample had a direct connection with most popular social media service with the link. Twitter was the second most popular social media linked to the pages, with 14 identified links (30 per cent). Other social platforms used by candidates and noticed on the websites were present in eight cases. Youtube.com was linked five times, while least popular services like Instagram or Flicker just once. Based on a research sample of analyzed material, websites owned by candidates reflects the social media market share in Poland.

If the dialogue on the candidates' websites does not exist, the most important feature of this channel during electoral campaign ought to be the information. A typical Internet user and conscious voter should be able to easily find basic data about the candidate on the website. Being a representative in Regional Assembly is strongly connected with actions that should be taken in the specified area. Thus, the programme is the most desirable type of content on candidates' website, but only 59 per cent (27) of analyzed pages had information about planned activities. During every election, the personal aspect of the campaign is important. It's important for the conscious voter to gather the information about the candidate and his life. Personal information was identified on 91 per cent (41) of websites. This kind of data was usually presented in the section dedicated to the candidate him or herself ("About me"). Majority of candidates (87 per cent) provided the information on history of education and even more (91 per cent) about past activities, often connected to the political activity in the region.

The opportunity to contact the candidate via website was identified in 21 cases (46 per cent), where an online contact form appeared. However, the e-mail address was the most popular (60 per cent) method of communication. The least popular ways of communication assumed more direct contact. Phone number and direct address for correspondence was present respectively five and eight times.

When it comes to the party-level analysis, it's significant that the election committees with their representatives in parliament and local authorities made the 85 per cent of the research sample. The only exception was the Non-partial Councilmen committee with seven websites. Civic Platform, currently the ruling party in Poland was most visible in that area with 19 identified web pages (Table 3).

Table 3. The structure and features of websites.

Election Committee	**Link to Facebook (in per cent)**	**Share option (in per cent)**	**Number of entries (one month)**	**Number of comments (one month)**	**Number of entries with multimedia content**
Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (n=7)	**71**	**57**	**37**	**0**	**33**
Demokracja Bezpośrednia (n=0)	na.	na.	na.	na.	na.
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (n=8)	**25**	**0**	**35**	**0**	**14**
Platforma Obywatelska (n=19)	**66**	**22**	**40**	**0**	**26**
Ruch Narodowy (n=0)	na.	na.	na.	na.	na.
Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (n=6)	**66**	**16**	**44**	**0**	**42**
Nowa Prawica (n=0)	na.	na.	na.	na.	na.
Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski (n=0)	na.	na.	na.	na.	na.
Bezpartyjni Samorządowcy (n=7)	**29**	**29**	**7**	**0**	**6**
Twój Ruch (n=0)	na.	na.	na.	na.	na.
Nasza Gmina Lubawka-Kalwaria Lubawska (n=0)	na.	na.	na.	na.	na.
Total (n=46)	**53**	**23**	**163**	**0**	**121**

Source: own elaboration.

3.2. Facebook

The most popular social media service in Poland, Facebook gathered the most candidates during electoral campaign to Lower Silesia Regional Assembly with 78 identified, official fan pages. However, due to lack of activity (not even a single post during research period), the obvious expiration of a page (dedicated to the previous election campaign) or the death of a candidate, fan page research sample shrunk to 73.

While building relations with potential voters on social media, candidates should avoid creating the impression, that their presence there is led strictly by the need of influencing voters. That dependence, which is common knowledge within the marketing discipline, has influenced political communication scholars, who are often describing voters as customers (e. g. Newman, 1999). However, during analyzed campaign 73 per cent (53) of the accounts has been created or activated just for election campaign period (Table 4). This attitude when exposed by the candidates shows, that in majority they have ignored the long-term relation building process. This should affect the basic indicator of popularity on Facebook which is the number of likes on a fan page. The total number of all the likes gathered on Facebook is 73819 (Table 4) with the average of 1011 per page. However, aside with popular politics with likes above the average, one candidate was a research sample stand-off. Robert Winnicki, a young activist from a National Movement is one of the most popular extreme right politicians, which explains his gathering of almost 31 thousand likes by himself. Because of that, author propose, that measure of popularity in that case should be expressed in median, which is 204 likes per fan page.

Another indicator of successful campaign on social media is the use of sharing potential, which is number of Facebook users speaking about the page. This statistic is telling us how many times the users of Facebook mentioned the fan page on their own timeline. If we think of that feature as a possibility to reach multiplied number of users, it is clearly very valuable for the candidate running for the mandate. The total number of users speaking about the candidates fan pages is 21755 (Table 4) with the average of 298. However, in that case the sample stand-off from the National Movement gathered more than a half of the total result, and 11300 users was mentioning his fan page in their posts. The median of this value was much lower than the average, and it was calculated to 50 users per candidate.

The activity of candidates on Facebook (number of entries in research period) was counted at 1444 entries (Table 4.) with an average of 19,8. The median in that case was not far from the average—16 entries. Out of all identified entries, 973 posts contained multimedia content (773 posts consisted of pictures and 202 of videos) and 293 was the link to another Internet page. This means, that 1266 posts (88 per cent) had an additional value and only 178 entries posted during election campaign was just plain text. Therefore, social media became the platform of multimedia sharing.

Facebook users can provide valuable feedback. Features like commenting and sharing can also reveal the success or the weakness of the campaign. However, the simplest way of measuring users' activity on candidate fan pages is the number of comments. There were almost three thousand identified comments during the last month of electoral campaign (Table 4). That number is more than twice that of candidates posts, but if we compare the median of Facebook posts (16) with the median of comments (9), that rather optimistic picture changes. One of the categories in the codebook was related to the non-commented posts. The result is verifying previous assumption, because 925 posts (64 per cent) were not commented at all. Another indicator of users' engagement in the campaign could be the presence of direct questions to the candidate with using the feature of "posts to the page". Only 11 candidates received personally addressed questions, which is only 14 per cent of research sample. All this data leads to the conclusion, that the campaign on Facebook was much more intensive than on websites. However, due to the high percentage of non-commented posts and the statistical distortion caused by stand-off candidate from National Movement, the campaign on dominant social service in Poland seems to reach a very sparse audience.

The party-level analysis of Facebook activity is similar to the activity in the world wide web, with a few exceptions. This time, smaller parties seemed to mark their presence during the online campaign. 23 identified fan pages was owned by the candidates from election committees without their representatives in Polish parliament. The ruling party (Civic Platform) candidates, owned the most of the pages (Table 4).

3.3. Twitter

The research sample for Twitter analysis is 24 Twitter accounts owned by the candidates. The same amount of accounts identified during the initial research turned out to be not active, which means that a single tweet was not identified one month before election date.

The specificity of Twitter analysis implies less complexity than the analysis of websites or Facebook fan pages. Thus, the codebook for Twitter consisted of 10 questions, which will help the author to describe the campaign performed on that service. While observing the attitude of the candidates during campaign period, the same category used for Facebook analysis was applied to this section of research as well. According to gathered data, 11 out of 24 Twitter accounts was created or activated one month before election (Table 5). The basic indicator of popularity for microbloggers is

Table 4. Lower Silesia Regional Assembly candidates on Facebook.

Election Committee	Is the account created/ activated after 1.10.2014? (per cent of accounts)	Number of likes	Number of users speaking about the page	Numbers of entries (one month)	Number of entries with multimedia	Number of comments	Direct questions to candidate (per cent of candidates)
Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (n=5)	**60**	**1109**	**317**	**58**	**37**	**23**	**0**
Demokracja Bezpośrednia (n=0)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (n=12)	**75**	**2703**	**719**	**230**	**155**	**249**	**0**
Platforma Obywatelska (n=19)	**65**	**11043**	**2759**	**403**	**302**	**817**	**20**
Ruch Narodowy (n=9)	**56**	**41007**	**13483**	**142**	**99**	**314**	**11**
Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (n=11)	**91**	**2783**	**786**	**240**	**167**	**148**	**27**
Nowa Prawica (n=7)	**71**	**6340**	**709**	**125**	**84**	**403**	**14**
Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski (n=1)	**100**	**122**	**10**	**8**	**8**	**0**	**0**
Bezpartyjni Samorządowcy (n=6)	**6**	**6612**	**2880**	**206**	**102**	**959**	**33**
Twój Ruch (n=3)	**33**	**2100**	**92**	**32**	**19**	**38**	**0**
Nasza Gmina Lubawka-Kalwaria Lubawska (n=0)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Total (n=73)	**68**	**73819**	**21755**	**1444**	**973**	**2981**	**14**

Source: own elaboration.

Table 5. Lower Silesia Regional Assembly candidates on Twitter.

Election Committee	Is the account created/ activated after 1.10.2014? (per cent of accounts)	Number of followers	Number of observed users	Total number of tweets	Hashtag (per cent of candidates using function)	Retweet (per cent of candidates using retweet feature)
Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (n=4)	**50**	**961**	**1158**	**1367**	**50**	**50**
Demokracja Bezpośrednia (n=0)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (n=2)	**50**	**72**	**108**	**91**	**0**	**100**
Platforma Obywatelska (n=10)	**30**	**4267**	**1846**	**2200**	**60**	**90**
Ruch Narodowy (n=1)	**0**	**4570**	**93**	**752**	**100**	**100**
Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (n=3)	**100**	**57**	**67**	**200**	**67**	**0**
Nowa Prawica (n=0)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski (n=0)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Bezpartyjni Samorządowcy (n=2)	**50**	**199**	**368**	**1125**	**100**	**100**
Twój Ruch (n=2)	**50**	**1374**	**429**	**780**	**100**	**100**
Nasza Gmina Lubawka-Kalwaria Lubawska (n=0)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a
Total (n=24)	**46**	**11500**	**4069**	**6535**	**63**	**75**

Source: own elaboration.

the number of followers. That value for the research sample is 11500 with the average of 480 followers per candidate. However, three candidates amassed almost nine thousand following users, which makes the average misrepresented. The median of followers is more accurate for this case and it is calculated for 110 users. When we take into account the statistic of users followed by the candidates, the total amount in this case is 4069. The total amount and the average won't provide the broad picture again, so it was necessary to calculate median, which is 133 users followed. When we compare these two values it turns out, that candidates followed more often than they were followed.

A small percentage of microblogging candidates and the reverse following tendency may indicate, that Twitter as a tool of electoral communication can be harder to comprehend for the than other channels provided by new media. Using hash-tags (symbol # before the tag) while posting new entry helps the Twitter community to navigate in the thousands of tweets and makes the information easier to find. Retweet means, that the user has posted someone else's entry on his account. The features of retweeting and hashtagging could describe user's advancement in using Twitter. Usage of retweet was noticed in 75 per cent of observations and hashtagging in 63 per cent (Table 5). That allows us to conclude, that the majority of tweeting candidates felt comfortable with this tool, and rather low interest rate in Twitter lies somewhere else.

When we take into consideration affiliation of the candidates, the Civic Platform turned out to be most active in that field again. Smaller parties, like National

Movement or Non-partial Councilmen had only 13 per cent of observed accounts, which again can't allow answering positively on the RQ2.

4. Conclusions

By using content analysis, the author took an aim to investigate the way of using the Internet and social media by the candidates to Lower Silesian Regional Assembly during 2014 local elections in Poland. Almost 72% of Polish households have got access to the World Wide Web. While the Internet revolution has become the routine for most of the citizens, it is often the first place to look for the information about a political candidate. A website can be the basic tool in electoral communication for that matter. Analyzing the websites, the author has focused on the interactivity of the website, the availability of contacting the candidate via website and linking the site with social media profiles. The quality and frequency of updating the site was also analyzed, as well with the availability of basic information on the candidate. The candidate, who is estimating the potential of Internet communication tools should be aware of the fact, that many of potential voters are using Facebook and Twitter for browsing political information as well. After analyzing online political campaign from the regional perspective, it became possible to answer previously constructed research questions.

RQ1 was related to the broad landscape of electoral campaign online. The presumption of this research was that social media would be used as a free-of-charge alternative to websites after a very expensive campaign to the European Parliament. The overall share of Internet communication tools indicates that Facebook and Twitter were indeed twice as popular during the campaign. However, if we take into consideration the percentage of candidates who owned a website, it doesn't even make 10% of the observed population. The significant amount of websites had a form of static visiting card, without a possibility of posting, commenting or sharing content. Regardless of the fact, that most of identified entries on websites had a different kind of multimedia content, they did not meet with a single response from the viewers in a form of comment or any other feedback. All those data may indicate that the weight of the campaign has moved onto the social media. Thanks to the content analysis, it became possible to verify the candidates who are creating their online identity for the long time before the elections and those, who have launched their profiles only for the election campaign period. The Facebook campaign was treated as a "last minute" project. The majority of the candidates either created or activated their account during the last month of the campaign. Along with median of posting one entry per two days it resulted in a rather humble amount of likes and "talking about" indicators.

The second research question was about the election committees representing smaller parties—did they use social media as a form of compensation for the presence in the mainstream media? It is understood, that the lack of presence in the World Wide Web is connected with smaller budgets. However the election committee of Non-partial Councilmen has given the laudable example with being present online with seven websites, social media revolution has granted everyone the opportunity of being noticed, even without substantial financial resources. Smaller parties owned almost one-third of all identified Facebook fan pages, but their high results of amassed likes and "speaking about the page" indicator was not the result of a well-planned and persistent electoral campaign. Research sample stand-offs, who has gathered the number of likes comparable with the national celebrities made the simple average a distorted value. It's also important that Twitter turned out to be *terra incognita* for the representatives of smaller election committees.

RQ3 concerned one of the most important issues connected with the new media, which is the ability to establish an almost instant contact with the candidate. The Regional Election campaign, where constituency is much smaller than in national elections is the time, when potential voters could find the opportunity to contact the candidate very valuable. However, the dialogue on the websites simply doesn't exist. Not a single comment was posted by the Internet users during the election campaign on the websites owned by candidates. Taking into consideration social media, Facebook was the place of dialogue, but the median of posts was much higher than the median of comments. Majority (64 per cent) of all entries posted on Facebook was not commented at all. The opportunity of asking direct questions to the candidate has been only used in 14 per cent of all observations. If we add to that account the situation on Twitter, where the median of the followers gathered by candidates is lower than the median of users that are followed, it is certain, that the online campaign did not draw attention of Internet users and potential voters.

Presented data allows the author to locate political campaigning in the regional level in Poland in the early post-modern era. The lack of interactive websites, amateur-like (in most cases) usage of social media and almost non-existing dialogue online allows to conclude the electoral campaign with the statement that the ineffective actions performed by the candidates in the Internet has met with an adequate response from the its users. Therefore, the author supports previously mentioned assumptions on political campaigns evolution.

Acknowledgments

Author would like to thank prof. Gregory Simons from Uppsala University for insightful comments and linguistic support.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

Alberski, R., Cichosz, M., & Kobielska, K. (Eds.) (2013). *Gra o regiony. Wybory do sejmików województw w 2010 r.* [The game of the regions. The Voivodeship Sejmik's electoral campaign in 2010]. Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego

Baranowski, P., & Jacuński, M. (2015). Development of online political communication in Poland in the context of the 2014 European Parliament election: technological innovation versus old habits. *Central European Journal of Communication.* Wroclaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.

Borek, M., & Jacuński, M. (2014). Parlamentarzysta online: Badanie aktywności polityków w internecie w perspektywie regionalnej [MP online: The analysis of politician's activity in the Internet from the regional perspective]. *Wrocławskie Studia Politologiczne.* Wroclaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.

Budżet województwa dolnośląskiego niższy o 500 mln zł niż w ubiegłym roku [Budget of Lower Silesia region lower by 500 million Polish Zloty than last year]. (2015). Retrieved from http://www.samorzad.lex.pl/czytaj/-/artykul/budzet-wojewodztwa-dolnoslaskiego-nizszy-o-500-mln-zl-niz-w-ubieglym-roku

Bukowski, M., Flis, J., Hess, A., & Szymańska, A. (2011). *Opcja czy osoba. Upartyjnienie versus personalizacja w wyborach samorządowych* [Option or person. Party versus personalization in regional elections]. Kraków: WUJ.

Canel, M. J. (1999). *Comunicacion politica*. Madrid: Tecnos.

Dobek-Ostrowska, B. (2007). *Komunikowanie polityczne i publiczne* [Public and political communication]. Wrocław: Polskie Wydawnictwo Naukowe.

Gadawa, M., & Wójcik, J. (2014, November 7). Tragedia pod Kłodzkiem. Kandydatka PiS-u zginęła w wypadku, walczyła o bezpieczną drogę [Tragedy near Kłodzko. Law and Justice candidate died in traffic accident]. *Gazeta Wrocławska*. Retrieved from http://www.gazetawroclawska.pl/artykul/3638098,tragedia-pod-klodzkiem-kandydatka-pisu-zginela-w-wypadku-walczyla-o-bezpieczna-droge,id,t.html

Garlicki, J. (2010). *Komunikowanie polityczne—Od kampanii wyborczych do kampanii permanentne* [Political communication—From electoral to permament campaign]. Warsaw: Elipsa Publishing House.

Gerstle, J. (1992). *La communication politique*. Paris: PUF.

Główny Urząd Statystyczny [Central Statistical Office]. (2014). Wykorzystanie technologii informacyjno-(tele)komunikacyjnych w przedsiębiorstwach i gospodarstwach domowych w 2014 r. [The usage of information technologies in business and households in 2014]. Retrieved from http://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/nauka-i-technika-spoleczenstwo-informacyjne/spoleczenstwo-informacyjne/wykorzystanie-technologii-informacyjno-telekomunikacyjnych-w-przedsiebiorstwach-i-gospodarstwach-domowych-w-2014-r-,3,12.html

Harvey, K. (Ed.). (2014). *Encyclopedia of social media and politics* (Vols. 1–3). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications. doi:10.4135/9781452244723

Megapanel/PBI Gemius. (2014). Polish Internet research analysis. Retrieved from http://www.pbi.org.pl/pl/aktualnosci/231/polski-internet-w-listopadzie-2014

Newman, B. (1999). *Handbook of political marketing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Norris, P. (1997). *Electoral change since 1945.* Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Perloff, R. M. (1998). *Political communication: Politics, press and public in America.* Manwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Plit, A. (2008). *Komunikowanie polityczne w czasie trwania kampanii wyborczej oraz w okresie między wyborami* [Political communication during electoral campaign and between elections]. Warsaw.

About the Author

Paweł Baranowski

Paweł Baranowski is a Ph.D. candidate at the Institute of Political Science at Wroclaw University. He is the editor of the book reviews section in the *Central European Journal of Communication* and former Secretary of the Polish Communication Association. He has taken part in many international research projects. His scientific interests are focused around political communication, social media and journalism studies.

Annex. List of the election committees from the Lower Silesia Voivodeship during the 2014 Regional Assembly Elections.

Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe—Polish People's Party
Demokracja Bezpośrednia—Direct Democracy
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość—Law and Justice
Platforma Obywatelska—Civic Platform
Ruch Narodowy—National Movement
Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej—Democratic Left Alliance
Nowa Prawica—New Right
Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski—National Polish Revival
Bezpartyjni Samorządowcy—Non-partial Councilmen
Twój Ruch—Your Movement
Nasza Gmina Lubawka-Kalwaria Lubawska—Our Commune Lubawka-Kalwaria Lubawska

Media and Communication (ISSN: 2183-2439)
2015, Volume 3, Issue 4, Pages 45-51
Doi: 10.17645/mac.v3i4.383

Article

One Country, Two Polarised Audiences: Estonia and the Deficiency of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive

Andres Jõesaar

Baltic Film and Media School, Tallinn University, 10120 Tallinn, Estonia; E-Mail: andres.joesaar@tlu.ee

Submitted: 7 July 2015 | In Revised Form: 25 September 2015 | Accepted: 7 October 2010 |
Published: 29 December 2015

Abstract
This article argues that until recent times, the Estonian media policy has mainly been interpreted as an economic issue and it did not account for the strategic need to build a comprehensive media field to serve all groups in society. This has happened despite the fact the Estonian media policy is in line with the European Union (EU) media policy, which should ensure freedom of information, diversity of opinion and media pluralism. Findings of the Estonian case study show that despite these noble aims, Estonia has two radically different information fields: one for Estonian speaking audiences and one for Russian speakers. Events in Ukraine have added to the democratic media policy paradigm a question of national security. Now it is a challenge for the policy makers to unite polarised media fields and how to minimise the impact of Russian propaganda. On the EU level, one supportive measure could be a revision of the Audiovisual Media Service Directive.

Keywords
Estonia; media for minorities; public service broadcasting; Russian language media

Issue
This article is part of the special issue "Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media", edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

© 2015 by the author; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

To establish the background for this paper, a brief overview of Estonian population trends is useful. Before World War II, Estonia was a relatively homogenous nation-state; 88.1 per cent of Estonia's 1.3 million inhabitants were Estonians (Estonian Statistics, 2015). Estonian was the national language. The war led to drastic changes: from the 1940s onwards, after being incorporated into the Soviet Union, Estonia lost nearly one-fifth of its population due to mass repression, war activities and political exile. Mass immigration from the Soviet Union's member republics, especially from the Russian Federation, made Estonia's population multinational in a few decades (Tiit, 2011). The newcomers were mainly Russians, Ukrainians and Belarusians, who spoke Russian. In the Soviet Union, the Russian language had the status of being the language of communication between and within different nations, meaning that in practice Russian was used as the official language. The Soviet era, which lasted for 45 years, brought about the development of two language communities: Estonian and Russian. In 2014 from a total of 1.3 million people, 29.6% of the Estonian population has Russian as their mother tongue (Tammur, Äär, & Meres, 2015). The article confronts the issue of the differences of the media fields of the two languages and researches the consequences of the separation and discusses the possible reasons for the situation. Based on the collected data and analyses, the article makes concrete suggestions for the improvement of the European media policy.

Iosifidis (2013) argues that cultural policy theories understand media and communication from a national perspective and largely neglect the global element, whereas Manning (1999, p. 138) contends that one aspect of globalisation refers to the transnational regulatory systems and the diffusion of a liberal political ide-

ology and institutional forms. Iosifidis (2013) suggests globalisation processes, including market-liberalism and free trade policies, have ended up in a situation where the regulatory agencies shift away from public interest measures and normative principles towards more rigorous, yet narrow, economics-based assessments of market power. This is another reason for the emergence of competition policy as the preferred mechanism to manage issues in media and communication at the expense of sector-specific structure and content (Iosifidis, 2013). Van Cuilenburg and McQuail (2003) argue that the nature of public interest has changed and that new communication policies aiming to serve the public interest are biased towards economic values. Presently, the forces of economic rationality and globalisation have undermined the original national culture of public service broadcasters (Lowe & Martin, 2014). This change in media policy has put extra pressure on policy makers (Curran, 1997; Harcourt, 2005), especially when discussing the remit and funding of public-service broadcasting (Picard, 2002). Set by the Estonian Public Broadcasting Act (2007), one of the obligations of Estonian Public Broadcasting (ERR) is "to meet the information needs of all sections of the population, including minorities". Today, ERR broadcasts in Russian on one radio channel and one daily TV news programme, and thus has arguably enabled ERR to fulfil its obligation towards the minority language audience. Debates consider possible broader offerings, such as a Russian language TV channel, mainly as an economic issue (Ajutrust Konsultatsioonid, 2007). This output aimed to serve 29.5 per cent of the Estonian total population (1.3 million) who declare that their native language is Russian (Estonian Statistics, 2015). In addition, 16 per cent of Russian-speaking people claim they do not understand Estonian at all (Lauristin, Vihalemm, Ainsaar, & Heidmets, 2011). However, as Jufereva and Lauk (2015, p. 63) state, "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".

There are positive examples of cross-border television that is progressive with cultural consequences (Hesmondhalgh, 2013), but the separation of Russian-speaking audiences from the Estonian information field caused by foreign Russian channels creates many challenges for Estonian society. Gitlin (1999) argues whether democracy requires a public or a set of publics, a public sphere or "separate public sphericules". The latter are possible, but according to the Habermasian theory of the public sphere, these sphericules must also have a higher communication space or sphere, otherwise there will be isolated "islands of different groups" in society. There is the argument that if there are no ongoing negotiations among members of different groups, media can act as a facilitator. Media policy should be developed to support these communication processes and to secure media stakeholders' adequate performances. Jõesaar, Jufereva and Rannu (2014) argue the development of Russian-language media in Estonia after regaining the country's independence can be seen as a market failure in an important sector of everyday life. According to Integration Monitoring, 50 per cent of Russian speakers cannot follow media (print, online, radio and television) in Estonian because of an insufficient knowledge of the language (Vihalemm, 2011). Data from studies (Jõesaar, 2014; Saar Poll, 2014; Seppel, 2015) show that linguistically different population groups are in different information fields. These information fields are separated not only by linguistic but also national borders. Any argument must admit that the language division has its roots in the Soviet era, when the non-native population settling in the USSR's republics consumed mostly pan-Soviet media. The establishment of liberal media principles in re-independent Estonia ended undemocratic supervision and gave media independence.

2. Challenges of the Small Market

One of the prerequisites to the aforementioned change was economic independence subjected to free market principles. While media companies targeting an Estonian language audience were able to emerge, the situation for the Russian-language media in the Estonian free market, due to the smaller target audience, proved disadvantageous. Interests of Russian speakers are mainly served by Raadio 4, the Russian language public-service radio channel. The limited size of the target audience, around 350,000 people, makes broadcasting in the Russian language an unprofitable activity for commercial broadcasters; therefore, there are no private nationwide television programmes in Russian. The amount of viewers of national or local Russian language broadcasts is insufficient to rouse the interests of advertisers. In addition, cross-border cable and satellite TV offer fierce competition, making Russia's TV channels accessible to the Russian-speaking audience in Estonia. This however does not fulfil the duties of a democratic media system. Information and debate on the development and functioning of Estonia's society could only come from domestic media. When the availability of creative resources, market conditions and an economic atmosphere are not favouring commercial media, this kind of market failure should be balanced by public service media (Croteau & Hoynes, 2001; Lowe & Nissen, 2011). As already mentioned, ERR has a limited Russian language output. The situation will change after ERR receives extra funding from the state budget for its third TV channel, Russian language ETV+, which will be launched in autumn 2015. After more than two decades of political debate

around the need for a Russian language TV channel (Jõesaar et al., 2014), the ground-breaking political decision was not made on the basis of the recognition of the minority language group's information needs, but was driven by the events in Ukraine and increasing wave of Russian propaganda. In the summer 2014, Estonia was dragged into a conflict situation, which Lonsdale (2004) and Snow (2003) describe as an information war, one declared by Russia on the Western world. Therefore, the issue now is not only about the enhancement of the media system in a democratic society serving all population groups, but also the recent events that have put this issue into the national security domain. Furthermore, the problem of how to handle Russian propaganda and how to avoid its influence on citizens is an EU wide responsibility. In Estonia and in other Baltic states, the influence of Russian propaganda on the Russian speaking audience is a major concern. There is no mutual understanding about the role and possible impact of Russian language television programmes, yet Russian television channels do enjoy significant popularity among Russian speaking audiences (Saar Poll, 2014; Seppel, 2015). How, by whom and to what extent programmes in the EU members states for language minorities are created is a political issue, which is influenced by internal and external security questions, overall economics and EU media policy. The overall aims of the Pan-European media policy are to preserve cultural diversity and safeguard media pluralism. The main European legislative document, the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD) and its predecessor The Television Without Frontiers Directive, does not take into account country-specific circumstances, such as geopolitical location, size of the national media market, economic conditions and the cultural and historical contexts. However, these are important factors, which have a strong influence on media development and performance. In countries with insufficient resources, a market-driven media system is incapable of presenting a full range of political and economic interests in the public domain, especially for language minorities.

3. Broadcasting in Estonia: Two Isolated Information Spheres

From the 29th of July to the 5th of August, 2014, the research company Saar Poll OÜ conducted a national public opinion study (Saar Poll, 2014). In the form of telephone interviews, 1000 people aged 15−74 were surveyed, of whom 505 were Estonians and 495 were Russian speakers. For both groups, the proportional random sampling method was the selection process. Saar Poll conducted the interviews in either Estonian or Russian. To compensate for the differences that arose in the process of comparing the results of the questionnaire and the statistical model, the outcome was weighed across the socio-demographic indicators. In compiling the model of socio-demographic indicators, data from the population register was used, as it was provided on 30.01.2014. The study was commissioned by the Estonian Open Foundation. The topics of the survey were current events, following news and the media, and the importance of different sources of information for the residents of Estonia. One of the research questions of the study was to compare the media worlds of Estonians and Russian speakers.

Results show that Estonia has experienced challenges in providing pluralistic and reliable content for society as a whole, especially for the Russian-speakers and that the frequency of following the news among Estonians and Russian speakers is relatively similar (Figure 1). As expected, there are differences in the sources of information that Estonians and Russian speakers consider important for following current events (Figure 2).

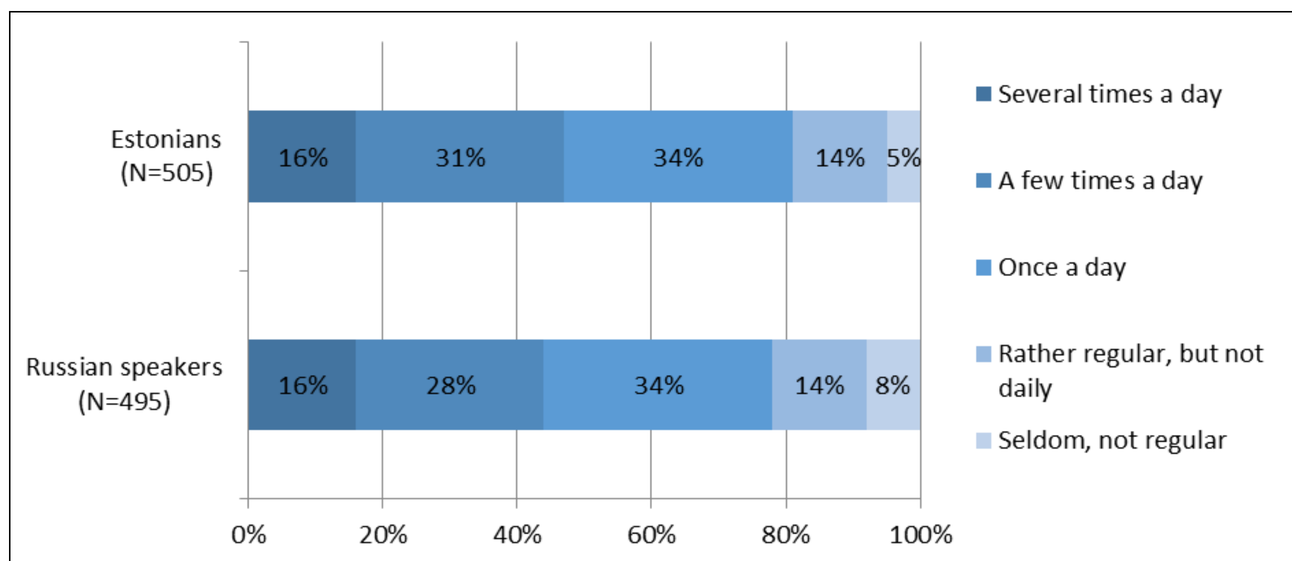


Figure 1. Frequency of following the news. Source: Saar Poll (2014).

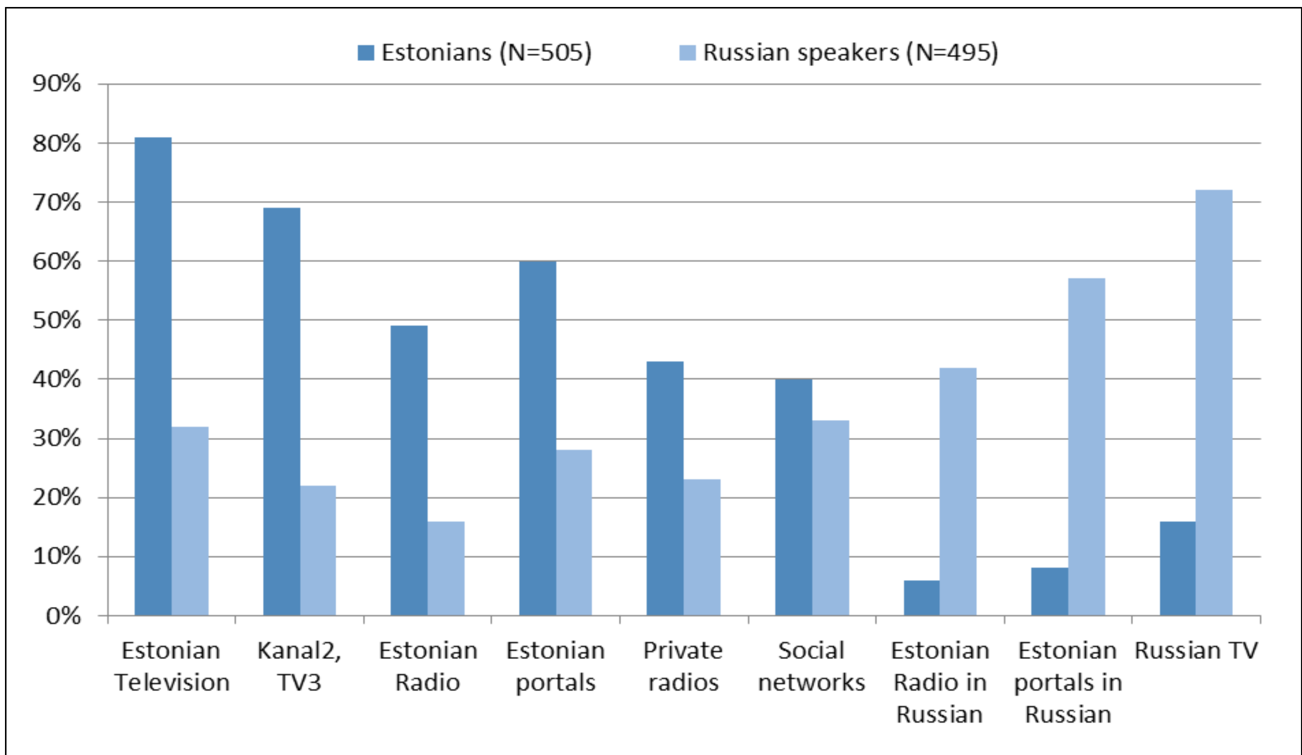


Figure 2. Importance of the media channels among Estonians and Russian speakers. Source: Author's calculation based on Saar Poll (2014).

Television is the prime source for both Estonians and Russian speakers. But, whereas Estonians consider Estonian Television to be the main source of information (81 per cent of respondents consider it very important or rather important), Russian speakers look Russian state television channels (72 per cent of respondents consider it very important or rather important).

Thus, it is possible to argue that the EU media policy aiming to guarantee media pluralism and diversity needed for the development of democracy has failed those member states, in which a significant proportion of the population is strongly attracted to the non-European information field.

The Saar Poll study (2014) also asked participants who, in their opinion, was responsible for shooting down the Air Malaysia flight over eastern Ukraine. A large share of respondents did not know how to respond to the question (40 per cent of Estonians and 47 per cent of Russian speakers). This is evidence of how, regardless of ethnicity, significant proportions of population have difficulty forming an opinion based on the information that they have. Among those respondents with an opinion, a distinct difference is present (Figure 3):

- Estonian respondents stated that either the Russian government (34 per cent of respondents) and/or the Ukrainian separatists (31 per cent of respondents) were responsible.
- Russian speaking respondents primarily stated the government of Ukraine was responsible (38 per cent of respondents).

Another market specific issue is the control of the concentration of media ownership (Doyle, 2002). In Estonia, control over market dominance and measures to minimise the risk caused by the dominant players are absent. Consequently, Russian state channels hold a dominant and almost monopolistic position among Estonia's Russian-speaking audience (Figure 4).

The conclusion is that Estonia has experienced challenges in providing pluralistically reliable content for the Russian-speaking part of society. The result indicates that a significant proportion of the Russian-speaking audience is not inside the national internal information sphere, but is in the Russian state information sphere. Therefore, in Estonia, two radically different information fields exist: one is in line with information provided and shared by free and independent European journalism and the other is in favour of Russian state propaganda. Paradoxically, the legal framework established by the AVMSD guarantees the existence of both. The EU media regulation is aimed to be universal and it does not take into account market-specific aspects. The AVMS Directive should help to achieve the objectives of the EU. The Directive should ensure freedom of information, diversity of opinion and media pluralism, but as shown earlier the Directive has failed to be an efficient tool to protect EU citizens against disinformation from third-party countries, which is disseminated with the aim of gaining political influence over member states' citizens.

The EU media policy is not solely responsible for the situation, because it leaves much of the decision making power to the member states. Estonians have cho-

sen liberal and minimalistic media regulation. The positive outcome of the media policy is that Estonia's press freedom index is high (Freedom House, 2013). On the negative side, the media offering to the Russian-speaking audiences is insufficient. Due to market failures, the Estonian private sector is unable to serve language minorities with pluralistic media content. Successive governments have paid little attention to this issue and have shown only moderate desire to grant the necessary funds for the ERR; for which reason ERR has been unable to fulfil its remit to serve minority interests. Today, the situation has changed, but it is evident that it will be hard for the ERR at once to rectify deficiencies of the past two decades.

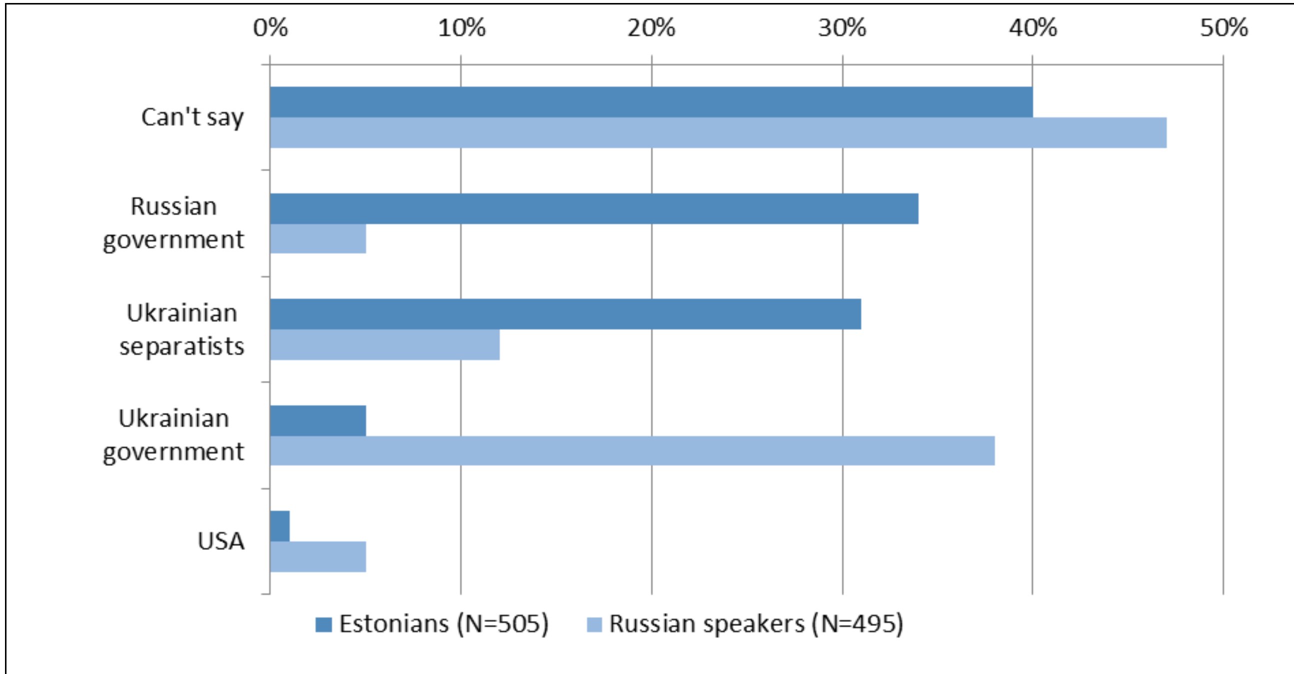


Figure 3. Response to the question: In your opinion, who is responsible for shooting down the Air Malaysia plane? (N = all respondents. Since each respondent could give more than one answer, the sum of percentage can be over 100). Source: Saar Poll (2014, Figure 19).

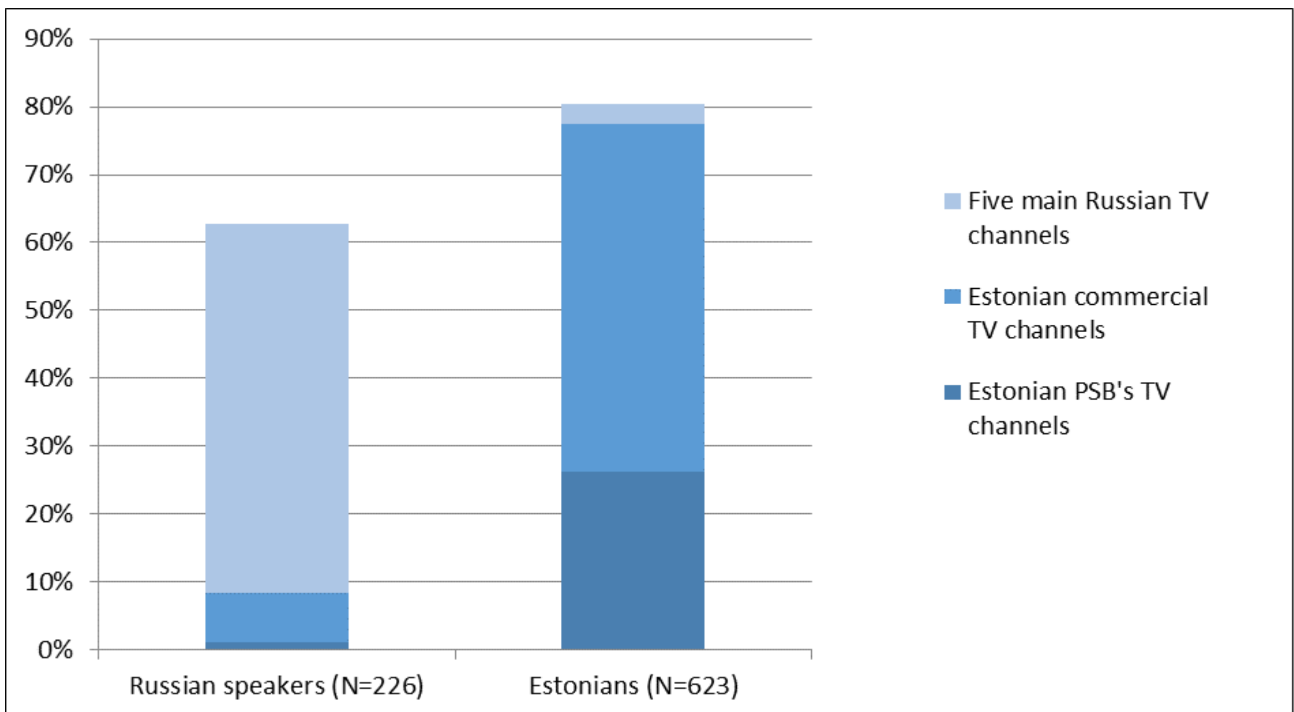


Figure 4. Average weekly share of viewing in Estonia in 2014. Age group 4+, Estonians and Russian speakers. Source: Author's calculations based on TNS Emor data (2015).

This article argues that the Estonian government's "idealisation" of market forces, which is supported by the EU's media policy and driven by a common market ideology, has limited the offering of quality local content and does not take into account media companies' actual abilities to provide a large range of media services for all of society.

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, the AVMSD should be revised to prevent unfair competition that stems from third-party countries. In addition, tools should be developed to avoid undue media concentration and to compensate for market failures. The unfair competition posed by the rebroadcasting of Russian television programmes should actually go under competition law, but it is extremely difficult to take any action against third-party country broadcasters on that legal basis. In case competition law is hard to implement, other measures should be targeted to reinforce the Estonian audiovisual media sector; in particular, public service media should be developed. Additional financial resources should help the ERR to make the transition from a traditional public service broadcasting (PSB) company into a public service media company, introducing new innovative services on all platforms (Ibrus & Ojamaa, 2014) and to better serve the interests of the Russian-speaking population. On the EU level, there are no binding mechanisms dictating the minimum funding level a member state should guarantee for the PSB. There are no EU financial instruments, as there are, for example, solidarity funds for infrastructure development dedicated to the enhancement of the public service media. Decisions on the remit, funding model and funding level of PSB are left to a member state.

Without the support of the EU's strongly binding legal instruments, Estonia's PSB would lack the funding required to achieve the same powerful and legitimate position as Western European and Nordic PSBs (EBU, 2015). Under these circumstances, instead of the European Commission's concerns of possible violations of the state aid regulation in the context of overfunding PSBs (European Commission, 2009), there should be legal instruments to ensure that PSBs are not underfunded. In cases of underfunding, it is clear that PSB remits might not be fulfilled, as citizens' rights to receive democratic and pluralistic content are not protected.

Acknowledgments

A very special thanks goes to Open Estonian Society Foundation and its chairwoman Mrs. Mall Hellam for supporting the idea to conduct focused research on Current Events and Different Sources of Information.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

Ajutrust Konsultatsioonid. (2007). *Teostatavusuuring Venekeelse elektroonilise meedia tarbijate infovajaduse rahuldamise võimalustest. Aruanne Rahvastikuministri büroole* [Electronic information needs of Russian speaking audience. Feasibility study]. Tallinn: Ajutrust Konsultatsioonid.

Croteau, D., & Hoynes, W. (2001). *The business of media: Corporate media and the public interest.* Thousand Oaks: SAGE publications.

Doyle, G. (2013). *Understanding media economics*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

EBU (2015). *Funding of public service media 2014*. Geneva: European Broadcasting Union.

Curran, J. (1997). Rethinking the media as a public sphere. In P. Golding & G. Murdock (Eds.), *The political economy of the media. Communication and the common good* (pp. 120-150). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.

Doyle, G. (2002). *Media ownership: The economics and politics of convergence and concentration in UK and European media*. London: SAGE Publications.

Estonian Statistics (2015). Estonian population. *www.stat.ee.* Retrieved from http://pub.stat.ee/px-web.2001/Dialog/varval.asp?ma=RV0222&ti=RAHVASTIK+SOOper cent2C+RAHVUSE+JA+MAAKONNA+JpercentC4RGIpercent2C+1percent2E+JAANUAR&path=../Database/Rahvastik/01Rahvastikunaitajad_ja_koosseis/04Rahvaarv_ja_rahvastiku_koosseis/&lang=2

European Commission. (2009). New communication on state aid to PSB. European Commission, 2 July 2009. *Official Journal C 257* of 27.10.2009.

Freedom House. (2013). 2013 Freedom of the press data. *www.freedomhouse.org.* Retrieved from http://www.freedomhouse.org/report-types/freedom-press#.U1UPsFV_tK8

Gitlin, T. (1999). Public sphere or public sphericules? In J. Curran & T. Liebes (Eds.), *Media, ritual and identity* (pp. 168-174). London: Routledge.

Harcourt, A. (2005). *The European Union and the regulation of media markets.* Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press.

Hesmondhalgh, D. (2013). *The cultural industries* (3rd ed.). London: SAGE Publications.

Ibrus, I., & Ojamaa, M. (2014). What is the cultural function and value of European transmedia independents? *International Journal of Communication*, *8*, 2283-2300.

Iosifidis, P. (2013). *Global media and communication policy.* London: Palgrave McMillan.

Jõesaar, A., Jufereva, M., & Rannu, S. (2014). Media for Russian language minorities: The role of Estonian

Public Broadcasting (ERR) 1990–2012. *Central European Journal of Communication, 7*(2), 81-100.

Jõesaar, A. (2014). PSB: Home alone in a narrowcasting era? Case Study: Estonian Public Broadcasting. *Informacijos Mokslai/Information Science*, *70*, 69-84.

Jufereva, M., & Lauk, E. (2015). Minority language media and journalists in the context of societal integration in Estonia. *Media Studies, 6*(11), 51-66.

Lauristin, M., Vihalemm, P., Ainsaar, M., & Heidmets, M. (Eds.) (2011). *Estonian human development report 2010/2011*. Tallinn: Eesti Koostöö Kogu.

Lonsdale, D. (2004). *The nature of war in the information age Clausewitzian future.* London, New York: Frank Cass.

Lowe, G. F., & Nissen, C. (Eds.) (2011). *Small among giants. Television broadcasting in smaller countries*. Gothenburg: Nordicom, University of Gothenburg.

Lowe, G. F., & Martin, F. (2014). The value and the values of public service media. In G. F. Lowe & F. Martin (Eds.), *The value of public service media* (pp. 19-40). Gothenburg: Nordicom, University of Gothenburg.

Manning, S. (Ed.) (1999). Special issue on globalization. *Journal of World-Systems Research, V*(2), 137-142.

Picard, R. G. (2002). *The economics and financing of media companies*. New York: Fordham University Press.

Saar Poll. (2014). *Current events and different sources of information*. Tallinn: Open Estonian Foundation & Saar Poll. Retrieved from http://oef.org.ee/fileadmin/user_upload/Current_events_and_different_sources_of_information_ED__1_.pdf

Seppel, K. (2015). Meedia ja infoväli [Media and information field]. In K. Kallas, R. Vetik, J. Kruusvall, E. Saar, J. Helemäe, L. Kirss, C. Leppik, K. Seppel, K. Kivistik, & P. Ubakivi-Hadachi (Eds.), Eesti *ühiskonna lõimumismonitooring 2015* [Monitoring of Integration in Estonian Society in 2015] (pp. 87-97). Tallinn: Institute of Baltic Studies, Tallinn University and PRAXIS Centre for Policy Studies.

Snow, N. (2003). *Information war: American propaganda, free speech and opinion control since 9-11.* New York: Seven Stories Press.

Tammur, A., Äär, H., & Meres, K. (2015). *Statistical yearbook of Estonia 2015*. Tallinn: Eesti Statistikaamet.

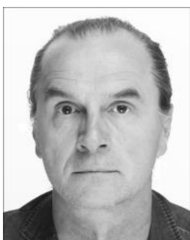
Tiit, E.-M. (2011). *Eesti rahvastik: Viis põlvkonda ja kümme loendust* [Estonian population: Five generations, ten censuses]. Tallinn: Eesti Statistikaamet.

TNS EMOR. (2015). *Teleauditooriumi mõõdikuuring* [TV audience survey]. Tallinn: TNS Emor. Retrieved from http://www.emor.ee/teleauditooriumi-moodikuuring-2

Van Cuilenburg, J., & McQuail, D. (2003). Media policy paradigm shifts. Towards a new communications policy paradigm. *European Journal of Communication*, *18*(2), 181-207.

Vihalemm, P. (2011). Meedia ja Infoväli [Media and the information field]. In *Integratsiooni Monitooring* [Integration monitoring report] (pp. 87-97). Tallinn: SA Poliitikauuringute Keskus Praxis.

About the Author



Dr. Andres Jõesaar

Associate professor Dr. Andres Jõesaar is a head of media and communication study area at Tallinn University Baltic Film, Media, Arts and Communication School. In parallel he is also heading the media research department of Estonian Public Broadcasting and is a member of The Group of European Audience Researchers (GEAR) at European Broadcasting Union. He has been a member of the Council of Europe's expert groups and active in other various national (including OSCE) and international expert and working groups. Main research areas are media policy and economy and new media/media convergence. Andres Jõesaar has PhD on media and communication from the University of Tartu.

Media and Communication (ISSN: 2183-2439)
2015, Volume 3, Issue 4, Pages 52-61
Doi: 10.17645/mac.v3i4.348

Article

Czech Journalists' Refreshed Sense of Ethics in the Midst of Media Ownership Turmoil

Roman Hájek *, Sandra Štefaniková, Filip Láb and Alice N. Tejkalová

Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague, 11001 Prague, Czech Republic; E-Mails: roman.hajek@fsv.cuni.cz (R.H.), sandra.stefanikova@fsv.cuni.cz (S.Š.), filip.lab@fsv.cuni.cz (F.L.), alice.tejkalova@fsv.cuni.cz (A.N.T.)

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 31 May 2015 | Accepted: 25 August 2015 | Published: 29 December 2015

Abstract
In recent years, the Czech Republic has seen the largest changes in media ownership since the early 1990s. Most striking was the purchase of one of the largest publishing houses *Mafra* by the tycoon Andrej Babiš in June 2013, followed by the takeover of the Czech branch of *Ringier* by other Czech businessmen later that year. The first case in particular instigated immense discussion about the economic and ethical crisis facing Czech journalism since Babiš is also a powerful political figure (currently the Minister of Finance). In response, a significant number of leading, well-known journalists left media owned by big business and launched projects of quality or "slow" journalism which had until that point been merely discussed theoretically. This paper—based on the results of the Czech part of the Worlds of Journalism Study project—addresses the shift in the ways journalists perceive their roles and ethical responsibilities before and after the 2013 ownership changes. We also present the manner in which these changes are reflected in emerging media projects. It seems that those journalists not affected by the ownership change tend to view journalism ethics and the ability of journalism to exert power more seriously than before.

Keywords
Czech Republic; ethics of journalism; journalism; journalistic roles; ownership change; pressures on journalism

Issue
This article is part of the special issue "Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media", edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

© 2015 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

Speculations that Andrej Babiš, the leader of the political movement *ANO 2011* and one of the richest businessmen in the Czech Republic, was interested in purchasing an established publishing house were not rare in 2013. Already in March 2012, Babiš had started his own title *5plus2*, a local weekly that quickly spread across the country, becoming the core of the new publishing company *AGF Media*. From the very beginning, Babiš's activities in the sphere of media were considered part of his broader intention, namely to support his political ambitions. Thus, when it was announced in June 2013 that he had purchased one of the largest media companies *Mafra*, the publisher of quality newspapers *Mladá fronta Dnes* and *Lidové noviny* among others, a wild discussion about the freedom of the press in the Czech Republic broke out. Debate further escalated after the parliamentary elections of that year in which Babiš's party *ANO* became the second most powerful political party with Babiš himself appointed as the Minister of Finance. According to Darrell West's Global Billionaires Political Power Index (West, 2014), this development made Babiš the 5th most politically powerful billionaire in the world.

With these events, the character of media ownership reached the status of an important public issue. Babiš, however, was neither the first, nor the last

Czech billionaire to enter media business. In 2008 the coal baron Zdeněk Bakala acquired the publishing house *Economia* and by 2013 he had also purchased *Centrum Holdings*, which operates an independent and popular online news daily *Aktualne.cz*. In November 2013, two Czech electric power billionaires and their financial group *J&T* bought the Czech branch of *Ringier* publishing house, which runs the leading tabloid daily *Blesk*, for instance. These changes are in line with the general trajectory of the evolution of media ownership in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). As Štětka (2012) shows, in recent years media companies from CEE have often been taken over by local businessmen who in turn become new media moguls. The entrance of these new players on the media market is closely related to the complicated financial situations of large Western media companies. Many of these companies bought CEE media shortly after the fall of Communist regimes, consolidated them economically and helped promote Western norms of journalism. But with the 2008 economic crisis and consequent declining economic situation of the media, Western owners frequently pulled out of CEE media markets, thereby creating space for new kinds of owners, many of them without clear motivations for the use of media power. These media rearrangements have gradually raised questions about the utilization of news media for political (or other) purposes, or their "Berlusconization" (Wyka, 2007).

In the Czech context, this story of media takeover has additional consequences. After the ownership changes, many journalists decided to leave established newsrooms and start their own projects which promote the values of "quality," "independent" or "slow" journalism. These new projects usually define themselves against media owned by politically motivated businessmen and publically declare their watchdog role and obligation to serve the public (Hájek & Štefaniková, 2014). It is necessary to add, however, that these new outlets are quite low cost and their impact is rather limited (at least compared to the nationwide dailies). Journalists involved in these projects also lack the security and background of large media companies, which is the downside of their freedom (Hájek, 2014). Regardless, we may suppose changes within the media market have given rise to changes within the journalistic profession.

Currently (September 2015), the most powerful media companies (concerning cross media ownership) in the Czech Republic include *Mafra* and *Empresa Media. Mafra* is owned by Andrej Babiš's Agrofert Holding and runs nationwide dailies, a chain of regional weekly newspapers, radio stations, online news outlets, a commercial TV station and on-demand online video service. *Empresa Media* is owned by Jaromír Soukup and China Energy Company Limited, and possesses weeklies, lifestyle magazines, online news outlets, online platforms and commercial TV in its portfolio. Other influential media groups on the market are the *Czech News Center* owned by the investing company J&T (which runs the most read tabloids, the only Czech sports daily, online news outlets, lifestyle and sports magazines, internet TVs) and *Economia* controlled by another Czech billionaire Zdeněk Bakala (its media outlets include a business daily, online news outlet, weeklies, specialized business and media magazines).

This paper addresses changes in the media market by exploring journalists' attitudes to their profession before and after the major takeover of Czech media by new owners in 2013. The aim of the research is to show to what extent the ownership change has influenced the character of journalistic work and its perception. Further, using the survey data from the Czech part of the international research project Worlds of Journalism Study, it investigates whether there are any significant differences in this regard between those who were personally affected by the ownership change and those who were not.

2. Owners' Influence on the Media

There is no doubt that the type of media ownership influences at least to a certain extent the daily work of journalists as well as their outcomes. The trajectory may not be as straightforward as Herbert Altschull (1995) once suggested in his second law of journalism which states that "the content of the news media always reflects the interests of those who finance the press system." (Altschull 1995, p. 440) However, media ownership underlies many of the internal and external factors and influences that shape the working conditions of journalists in particular and the journalistic profession in general (Hanitzsch et al., 2010; Hanusch, 2009; McManus, 1994).

With regards to the working conditions of journalists, studies have argued that media owners do not directly influence conditions and do not interfere with daily editorial operations (Lukes, 1974). On the other hand, there could be a significant amount of subtle and indirect ways owners control and direct the orientation of news media in favor of their own and affiliated interests, such as by changing work organization, replacing senior and middle management, or increasing emphasis on the efficiency of media production (McNair, 1998). In his recent analysis of over 200 news media from 32 countries, Hanretty (2014) shows the control of editorial mechanisms and freedom is much stronger in the case of news media owned by local owners when compared with media that are part of ownership groups that own multiple outlets in the same media market. He emphasizes the possible advantages of international ownership groups, which are less vulnerable to political pressures than those with local owners. This is of special importance in the context of CEE countries. The departure of Western owners from the

Central and Eastern European media market, recent research stresses, has changed the operation of news media and the structure of editors and working routines, thereby possibly influencing the quality of the outlets' production (Hume, 2011; Štětka, 2013, 2015).

When evaluating the consequences of change in media ownership, we should also bear in mind repercussions extend beyond the media affected by the change, especially in the case of large media companies. Since media outlets operate in a highly competitive market and emphasize the efficiency of media production, they tend to respond quickly to any shift in the market. Thus, once one outlet changes its policy, its effect can indirectly be felt and adapted to by others, or to put it differently, the change of one title's journalistic milieu (Hanitzsch, 2011) may change the milieu of all journalistic corps. There is now evidence from several countries that the gradually more competitive environment has led to increasing tabloidization (Cashin, 2004; Esser, 1999; Štětka, 2013), automatization, preference for popular soft news referring to celebrities and a decrease in quality of news production (Bantz, 1997; McManus, 1994). In such conditions, serious political and economic issues are slowly vanishing, especially from the online news (Dragomir, 2003; Volek, 2011). Journalistic professionalism is also undermined since the media favor inexperienced and thus cheaper journalists and amateurs instead of experienced professionals (Sasinska-Klas, 1994). In CEE countries, which have always faced economic struggles due to relatively small markets, this development is even more evident and its consequences more threatening to the quality of journalism (Štětka, 2013).

3. Conditions of Czech Journalism

Although the fall of Communism in the Czech Republic in 1989 is usually called the *Velvet revolution*, as Jirák and Köpplová (2012) argue, the transformation of the media system and journalism was rather evolutionary. Certainly many journalists, especially those in high positions, were forced to leave the profession, often replaced by workers with only limited (or even no) journalistic experience and education. However, for quite a long time these "new" people worked in "old" law, economic and mental structures which changed quite slowly. For instance, the detachment of journalists from political power that is considered one of the key journalistic norms was not applied in the first years of democracy since journalists and politicians thought they both were participating in transformative processes (Hájek, Vávra, & Svobodová, 2015). Later on, many of these practices, performances and norms changed but to a large extent the development of media and journalism in this early democratic stage formed the profession up until now.

One feature of Czech journalism that has its roots in this time is a lack of professionalism. In the early 1990s many people with no education in journalism or communication entered the field and despite this they often gained respect by reporting on the important milestones of the transformation of the country. This contributed to the shared opinion that journalistic education provides no additional value for those who would like to work in media (see Volek & Jirák, 2006). Even a recent study (Tejkalová & Láb, 2011) shows that a large number of journalists still have education in areas other than journalism.

Low professionalism is perpetuated by the position of the professional journalistic organization. In the 1990s, the Syndicate of Czech Journalists was established on the grounds of the previous journalistic unions. Nonetheless, the position of the Syndicate is very weak. The majority of Czech journalists have never joined it, and its position has not been respected by journalists, and therefore nor by society (Moravec, 2009).

As Hallin and Mancini (2004) argue, the relatively low level of journalistic professionalism undermines the autonomy of journalists and makes them more vulnerable to external influences. Professional autonomy may also be negatively influenced by corporate and commercial pressures (Hanitzsch & Mellado, 2011). Economic pressures among others were perceived by Czech journalists as the most important for their work at least at the beginning of the 21st century (Metyková & Císařová, 2009), whereas the realm of politics seemed to be less important for them. In the context of recent media acquisitions, however, the interconnection of political, economic and media power in the case of Babiš may change the situation.

Another feature of Czech journalists is their low level of self-identification with the profession. The Western model of watchdog or advocacy journalism is not as firm a part of journalistic identity as in Western countries (Volek, 2010). Moreover, many journalists view their job as only a kind of intermezzo in their further careers (Volek & Jirák, 2006). For example, a considerable number of well-known journalists have entered politics and are keeping important posts in state administration. Czech journalists routinely cultivate good relationships with state—political, executive and police—representatives. This mutually advantageous cooperation offers reporters access to exclusive material, while at the same time guarantees visibility of certain actors or topics in the news media (Jirák & Trampota, 2008; Metyková & Císařová, 2009; see also Volek, 2010).

4. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The aim of this paper is to explore whether the takeover of several influential Czech media in 2013 has had consequences for the working conditions of Czech journalists and their perception of the journalistic pro-

fession. We thus focus on three research questions:

RQ1: How have journalists' working conditions differed after the media ownership change?
RQ2: How have journalists perceived changes in their roles?
RQ3: How have pressures on journalists' work changed?

To answer these questions we use data collected in the Czech Republic within the larger framework of the collaborative and cross-national research project Worlds of Journalism study (details described below). The survey was conducted in two phases with a year between them. The most important media ownership change (Babiš's acquisition) took place exactly in the middle of the period between the first and second phase of data gathering, the other change following a few months later (still before the second phase of interviews). We thus could trace the transformation of journalists' working conditions and perceptions at the time it was happening. Based on previous research on owner's influence on media and the development of Czech journalism in the post-1989 period, we propose the following hypotheses. For all of them, we expect certain differences between the titles affected and not affected by the ownership change.

The first hypothesis refers to the tendency of new owners to reduce costs and economize the functioning of their newly acquired titles (Štětka, 2012):

H1: The journalists' position in titles affected by the ownership change would become more vulnerable and the amount of their work would increase.

Drawing on Hanretty's (2014) conclusions that family or individual ownership leads to stricter control of newsrooms and lower journalistic autonomy, we suppose a similar development in a Czech context:

H2: The autonomy of journalists in titles affected by the ownership change regarding the issues they work on would decrease.

Finally, based on the development of the Czech media system after the ownership changes and the proclaimed journalistic values of the newly established journalistic projects, we expect shifts in journalists' perceptions of their roles and working conditions:

H3: After the ownership change, the journalists from titles *not affected* by it would start to stress the active and critical role of journalism more.
H4: After the ownership change, the journalists from titles *affected* by it would perceive external influences on journalism as more important than before.
H5: After the ownership change, the journalists from titles *not affected* by it would perceive development tendencies in Czech journalism more negatively than those affected by the change.

5. Methodology

The analysis uses survey data gathered for the Czech part of the international project, Worlds of Journalism Study (WoJ, www.worldsofjournalism.org). The total number of journalists involved in the study reached 291. For the purpose of the project, professional journalists were defined as those who earned at least half their incomes from journalistic activities, either as media employees or as freelancers. A standardized questionnaire based primarily on Likert scales was used, each interview taking from 30 to 45 minutes. More than two thirds of the interviews were conducted face to face, while the remaining third took place via telephone or email.

The Czech part of WoJ was divided in two stages. The first (135 interviews) took place from October 2012 to January 2013, the second from the end of 2013 until March 2014. In both stages, journalists from all ranges of news media (local as well as national, all types of media from television to print) were included. In the period between the two stages, the important ownership changes (in *Mafra* and *Ringier*) were complete; therefore, the data reflect the dynamics of journalism transformation at that time. We thus analyze and compare the sample in two parts, the pre-change and post-change period. We further differentiate between journalists from media that underwent ownership changes (41 from the pre-change period, 47 from the after-change period) and those that did not (94 from the pre-change period, 109 from the after-change period).

6. Results

The objectives of this study were to discover the impact of notable ownership changes in the Czech media market on journalists' working conditions, their perception of their societal roles and their attitudes towards external pressures that shape the professional milieu. For measurement we used independent samples t-test with the significance for the hypotheses determined at $p < 0,05$.

H1: The journalists' position in titles affected by the ownership change would become more vulnerable and the amount of their work would increase.

The first hypothesis was based on evidence that new media owners in CEE countries tend to cut down on costs, economize production and direct the media outlet as if it were a normal business to serve the owner's

purposes with no public accountability (see Štětka, 2012). The Czech case seemed to be similar. Particularly in the example of *Mafra* publishing house, many journalists publicly expressed their worries about the future of its titles, referring to the plans of the new owner to merge them with his regional titles and thus to reduce the number of journalists working in the company. To test this hypothesis we used a battery of questions focused on the stability of their position (working full-time/part time, permanent/temporary position, having other paid jobs) and the basic characteristics of their work (number of newsrooms they worked for, level of their specialization and number of items produced).

This hypothesis was supported by our research. The ownership change influenced the working conditions of journalists working in titles affected by it. While the number of journalists working in permanent positions only slightly decreased in media untouched by the change, the situation among the employees of media affected by the ownership change differed dramatically. As we can see from Table 1, 51% of those within the sample working in permanent positions in media that changed owners fell to just 36% after the change. This is a key factor that raised considerable insecurity among the journalists working for media that changed owners and the additional data only support this tendency.

Many journalists from the media affected by the ownership change started to work for more newsrooms in order to support themselves. Even if they kept their position, they tended to report a steep increase of produced or edited items per week. Moreover, while we can find that among journalists untouched by the ownership change there was a trend towards specialization, those affected by the change had to work on more topics than before.

H2: The autonomy of journalists regarding the issues they work on would decrease in the titles affected by ownership change.

In this hypothesis we focused on the level of personal autonomy of the journalists in their newsroom, which we presumed would decrease in the titles affected by ownership change. In addition to the evidence from literature (Hanretty, 2014), a wide discussion in the Czech Republic centered on Andrej Babiš's treatment of his new titles. Concerns about Babiš's direct influences on content and editorial decisions contributed to the presumption that journalists working in his titles would have diminished autonomy. In our questionnaire we asked the journalists about their perceived level of personal autonomy to select their stories and to process them according to their preferences, expecting both of them to decrease.

However, as we can clearly see from Table 2, Hypothesis 2 was not supported within our sample. The autonomy of journalists regarding the topic and the form of issues they worked on did not decrease in the titles affected by ownership change and media untouched by the ownership change remained at a similar level. Thus the general perception (but not supported by any data) of decreasing autonomy expressed within discussions of Czech media professionals especially on social networking sites does not match the actual perception of the journalists themselves. This may have been caused by an unwillingness of the journalists affected by the ownership change to respond negatively on this topic (although they were guaranteed anonymity). Also, the time between the ownership change and the gathering of our data was rather brief and the changes may not have been as visible at the beginning. Or it is possible that regarding journalists' autonomy, the situation in the media affected by the ownership change is not as bad as portrayed by the other media.

Table 1. The change of general working conditions of journalists before and after the media takeover in 2013.

	Journalists working for titles that did not change owner		**Journalists working for titles that changed owner**	
	Before (n = 94)	After (n = 109)	Before (n = 41)	After (n = 47)
Proportion of journalists working full-time	79%	88%	87%	89%
Proportion of journalists working in permanent positions	64%	61%	51%	36%
Proportion of journalists performing paid work other than journalism	32%	20%	15%	21%
Proportion of journalists working for more than 1 newsroom	20%	12%	15%	21%
Proportion of journalists working on a specific beat	18%	23%	37%	28%
Proportion of journalists producing/editing more than 5 items weekly	77%	51%	68%	81%

Table 2. Perception of journalistic autonomy before and after the media takeover in 2013 (means, independent samples t-test).

	Journalists working for titles that did not change owner				Journalists working for titles that changed owner			
	Means		Sig.	Std. Error Difference	Means		Sig.	Std. Error Difference
	Before (n = 94)	After (n = 109)			Before (n = 41)	After (n = 47)		
Perceived autonomy in selecting stories	3,82	3,81	n/s	,131	4,07	4,13	n/s	,130
Perceived autonomy in emphasizing certain aspects of the story	4,04	3,84	n/s	,120	4,15	4,17	n/s	,142

Note: values: 1 = no freedom at all; 5 = complete freedom.

Table 3. Perception of journalistic role before and after the media takeover in 2013 (means, independent samples t-test).

	Journalists working for titles that did not change owner				Journalists working for titles that changed owner			
	Means		Sig.	Std. Error Difference	Means		Sig.	Std. Error Difference
	Before (n = 94)	After (n = 109)			Before (n = 41)	After (n = 47)		
Be a detached observer	4,39	4,60	n/s	,116	4,54	4,66	n/s	,136
Monitor and scrutinize political leaders	3,20	3,51	n/s	,185	3,51	3,76	n/s	,241
Monitor and scrutinize business	2,86	3.29	*	,172	3,12	3,39	n/s	,250
Set the political agenda	2,91	2,81	n/s	,171	2,88	3,07	n/s	,220
Influence public opinion	2,74	2,58	n/s	,176	2,68	2,48	n/s	,240
Be an adversary of the government	1,56	1,63	n/s	,129	1,49	1,36	n/s	,165

Note: significance level * p < ,05; values: 1 = unimportant; 5 = extremely important.

H3: After the ownership change, the journalists from titles not affected by it would start to stress the active and critical role of journalism more.

Since the majority of new titles established after the 2013 ownership changes clearly endorse an active role of journalism within society and the need to more effectively control the political and business elites of the country, we proposed that a more critical role of journalism would be stressed by those working for media not affected by the change.

As shown in Table 3, Hypothesis 3 was not supported by statistically significant results. Nonetheless, a shift towards higher sensitivity to the increasingly active and more critical role of journalists is visible among the journalists from both media with and without ownership changes. Despite the fact there is little or no statistical significance in the actual data, we can see some interesting tendencies when comparing the situation before and after the ownership changes.

The most significant and only statistically relevant result shown in Table 3 is the perceived journalistic role to monitor and scrutinize business among the journalists from titles which did not change owner. Such a result is not surprising given the climate at the time of our research in which there were large expectations for the future development of the Czech media landscape and heightened concern that the media was slowly losing their watchdog role. Babiš's takeover of *Mafra* is usually described as a strategic act to support his political as well as business interests. Babiš's alarming concentration of power also raised questions about his business activities, which may be the reason for this result.

Apart from this statistically significant difference, more subtle but still visible shifts concerning other journalistic roles also appear, such as to behave as a detached observer and the commitment to monitor and scrutinize political leaders. These roles were perceived as more important after the change, regardless of the media ownership changes. This was probably caused by the fact that shortly after the changes all journalists were more attentive and sensitive to their roles and aware of future development.

H4: After the ownership change, the journalists from titles affected by it would perceive external influences on journalism as more important than before.

At the same time as the new owners were entering the media market, a wide debate on the increasing role of media owners, politicians, businessmen and other external influences shaping the journalistic profession took place. Therefore, we hypothesized this would be reflected in the data. To test the hypothesis, we used a battery of questions focused on various external influences.

As summarized in Table 4, this hypothesis was not supported within our sample—there is no statistical

Table 4. Perception of influences on journalism before and after the media takeover in 2013 (means, independent samples t-test).

	Journalists working for titles that did not change owner				Journalists working for titles that changed owner (n = 88)			
	Means		Sig.	Std. Error Difference	Means		Sig.	Std. Error Difference
	Before (n = 94)	After (n = 109)			Before (n = 41)	After (n = 47)		
Editorial supervisors and higher editors	3,52	3,65	n/s	,129	3,55	3,43	n/s	,231
Managers of the news organization	2,91	3,18	n/s	,146	2,88	3,15	n/s	,256
Owners of the news organization	2,50	2,71	n/s	,159	2,53	2,61	n/s	,280
Editorial policy	3,36	3,50	n/s	,130	3,08	3,54	n/s	,236
Time limits	3,71	3,87	n/s	,120	3,73	3,70	n/s	,203
Journalism ethics	4,32	4,50	n/s	,098	4,46	4,46	n/s	,167
Media laws and regulation	3,99	3,92	n/s	,132	3,93	3,73	n/s	,258
Government officials	1,56	1,58	n/s	,105	1,54	1,39	n/s	,146
Politicians	1,85	1,86	n/s	,129	1,78	1,80	n/s	,219
Business people	1,60	1,69	n/s	,113	1,59	1,57	n/s	,181

Note: values: 1 = not influential; 5 = extremely influential.

Table 5. Perception of the changes in journalism before and after the media takeover in 2013 (means, independent samples t-test).

	Journalists working for titles that did not change owner				Journalists working for titles that changed owner (n = 88)			
	Means		Sig.	Std. Error Difference	Means		Sig.	Std. Error Difference
	Before (n = 94)	After (n = 109)			Before (n = 41)	After (n = 47)		
Ethical standards	2,52	2,89	**	,120	2,59	3,06	n/s	,261
Journalists' freedom to make editorial decisions	3,05	3,15	n/s	,102	3,00	3,21	n/s	,199
Credibility of journalism	2,52	2,68	n/s	,116	2,57	2,66	n/s	,231
Relevance of journalism for society	3,22	3,08	n/s	,121	3,14	2,88	n/s	,189

Note: significance level ** $p < 0,01$; values: 1 = decreased a lot; 5 = increased a lot

significance in the data. The results show little or no difference between the periods or groups of journalists from media that did and did not change owners. The only visible (though not statistically significant) shift is in the perception of the influence of owners and editorial policy by those affected by the ownership change. This is quite understandable since (as we discussed above) the situation after the ownership change was filled with uncertainty and worry of journalists working for the titles with new owners.

H5: After the ownership change, the journalists from titles not affected by it would perceive development tendencies in Czech journalism more negatively than those affected by the change.

Finally, we were interested whether the current turmoil in Czech media somehow affected the way journalists think about their profession in a long-term perspective. Since a large amount of criticism of the current situation has come from the media not affected by the change, we expected that the journalists from these media might perceive the development in a more negative way. Namely, we expected ethical standards, journalists' freedom and the relevance and credibility of journalism to decline.

Data presented in Table 5 suggest more the opposite to be true. Both groups of journalists tend to be optimistic and perceive an increasing journalistic freedom, growing importance of ethical standards and rising credibility of journalism. Only the relevance of journalism is declining in both cases. The role of ethical standards deserves special attention because the difference before and after the ownership change is highly statistically significant in the group of journalists not affected by the change. Overall, the data suggest that the ownership turmoil may not have raised scepticism among journalistic corps but rather awakened an interest in normative values of journalism. Thus the current situation is not merely one-dimensional and despite all the negatives voiced in public debates it may also bring something positive. The emphasis on ethical

standards in our data, together with a plea for more responsible, organized and professional journalism, which resounds among many Czech journalists, may be a starting point for a new development stage of Czech journalism.

7. Conclusion

Journalism is an ever-changing field that continuously adapts to the larger framework of the society it works within. In recent years, one of the most important aspects Czech journalists have faced was a major media ownership change in which influential (mostly printed) media was taken over by Czech businessmen. This development raises many questions about the quality, ethics and responsibility of journalism to its citizens, especially when new owners are more or less clearly involved in politics (e.g. Andrej Babiš). What Czech journalism faces is thus not only a storm on the media market, but also a potentially dangerous merging of political and economic power. During the time this article was written, speculations appeared that Penta, an originally Slovak investment group with a strong position in the Czech Republic, was interested in buying the Vltava-Labe-Press group, the last newspaper publishing company owned by a Western consortium on the Czech media market (it owns a network of local dailies entitled *Deník*). A top manager of Penta distinctly stated their desire for news media in their portfolio stems from the certainty that it would be worse for anyone to "irrationally attack" them (ČT24.cz, 2015). This is just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what is happening now in Czech journalism and doubtless under such conditions the journalistic profession (and its norms and values) is inevitably changing.

Our study examined whether the media takeover affected the working conditions of Czech journalists and their perception of the journalistic profession. Evidence is based on a survey with journalists conducted before and after the most important media ownership changes in the last decade, which took place in 2013. Although the findings do not give a clear answer about the tendencies, they portray quite clearly the instability and uncertainty of Czech journalism.

Regarding our research questions, working conditions seem to be perceived tougher in the titles affected by the ownership change. Rather than specialized in one area, journalists working in titles affected by ownership change are forced to work on more topics. At the same time, they feel insecure about their employment as the number of permanent positions has decreased dramatically. They also often work for more than one newsroom or perform other paid jobs besides journalism to supplement their salaries. On the other hand, the autonomy of journalists or their perception of external influences did not change in a statistically significant way despite the evidence from literature and public discussions concerning this issue. The opposite group of journalists (those not affected by the change) seem to emphasize a more critical role of journalism in society after the ownership change and stress a rising importance within the journalistic role to monitor and scrutinize business. These journalists also tend to perceive an increasing role of ethics and normative standards of journalistic performance in general in Czech conditions.

The data, nonetheless, do not allow us to draw any strong conclusions. It is important to remember that the study is the first large-scale empirical attempt to examine the real impact of media ownership changes on the working conditions of Czech journalists. It also should be pointed out that the original purpose of the Worlds of Journalism research data collection was to map the situation during the years 2012–2014. The fact that between the two stages of data collection the media landscape changed significantly was a fortunate coincidence which this article takes advantage of. An obvious weakness is that the second phase of data collection took place shortly after the ownership changes and thus some changes may not yet have been traceable.

Taking into account the character of our data, what we can come away with is a reminder of the importance of avoiding clear and simplifying conclusions. The current developments in Czech media have raised criticism and can easily lead to negativism and scepticism. However, as the popular idiom suggests, every cloud has a silver lining. In this case, journalists (mostly those not affected by the change) seem to show a refreshed sense of the importance of journalistic ethics. The ownership turmoil thus can also lead to a renewed interest of Czech journalists in the values and sense of their profession as well as their normative role within society. Among mostly negative news this can be good news.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest in the research.

Acknowledgements

This research was supported by the project SVV IKSŽ FSV UK 260 231. The authors would like to thank all the people involved in gathering data for this research, namely to Kateřina Písačková, Vojtěch Soudný and Veronika Trestrová.

References

Altschull, H. (1995). *Agents of power: The media and public policy.* White Plains: Longman.

Bantz, C. (1997). News organizations: Conflict as a craft-

ed cultural norm. In D. Berkowitz (Ed.), *Social meanings of news* (pp. 123-137). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Cashin, A. (2004). Reining in free media. In A. Cashin & J. Jirsa (Eds.), *Thinking together. Proceedings of the IWM junior fellows' conference, winter 2003* (Vol. 16, pp. 1-11). Vienna: IWM Junior Visiting Fellows' Conferences.

ČT24.cz (2015, May 25). Vláda českých podnikatelů nad soukromými médii bude úplná. *ČT24.cz*. Retrieved from http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/media-it/312690-vlada-ceskych-podnikatelu-nad-soukromymi-medii-bude-uplna

Dragomir, M. (2003). *Fighting legacy: Media reform in post-communist Europe*. Washington: The Atlantic Council of United States.

Esser, F. (1999). "Tabloidization" of news. A comparative analysis of Anglo-American and German press journalism. *European Journal of Communication*, *14*(3), 291-324.

Hájek, R. (2014, December 29). Česká žurnalistika hledá nové cesty. *European Journalism Observatory*. Retrieved from http://cz.ejo-online.eu/3208/svoboda-tisku/ceska-zurnalistika-hleda-nove-cesty

Hájek, R., & Štefaniková, S. (2014, September 20). Czech Republic: New owners and newsroom changes. *European Journalism Observatory*. Retrieved from http://en.ejo.ch/media-politics/media-ownership-newsroom-change-czech-republic

Hájek, R., Vávra, J., & Svobodová, T. (2015). Threats to mutual trust: Czech local politicians and local journalists in the era of professional political communication. *Medijske Studije*, *6*(11), 36-50.

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems: Three models of media and politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hanitzsch, T., Anikina, M., Berganza, R., Cangoz, I., Coman, M., Hamada, B., Hanusch, F., Karadjov, C. D., Mellado, C., Moreira, S. V., Mwesige, P. G., Plaisance, P. L., Reich, Z., Seethaler, J., Skewes, E. A., Noor, D. V., Yuen, K. W. (2010). Modeling perceived influences on journalism: Evidence form a cross-national survey of journalists. *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, *87*(1), 5-22.

Hanitzsch, T. (2011). Populist disseminators, detached watchdogs, critical change agents and opportunist facilitators: Professional milieus, the journalistic field and autonomy in 18 countries. *International Communication Gazette*, *73*(6), 477-494.

Hanitzsch, T., & Mellado, V. (2011). What shapes the news around the world? How journalists in 18 countries perceive influences on their work. *International Journal of Press/Politics*, *16*, 404-426.

Hanretty, C. (2014). Media outlets and their moguls: Why concentrated individual or family ownership is bad for editorial independence. *European Journal of Communication*, *29*(3), 335-350.

Hanusch, F. (2009). A product of their culture. Using a value systems approach to understand the work practices of journalists. *The International Communication Gazette*, *71*(7), 613-626.

Hume, E. (2011). Caught in the middle: Central and Eastern European journalism at a crossroads. A report to the Center for International Media Assistance. *Center for International Media Assistance.* Retrieved from http://cima.ned.org/publications/research-reports/caught-middle-central-and-eastern-european-journalism-crossroads

Jirák, J., & Köpplová, B. (2012) Two decades of free media in the Czech Republic: So what? Remarks on the discourse of post-1989 media transformation. In P. Gross & K. Jakubowicz (Eds), *Media transformations in the post-communist world* (pp. 183-194). Lanham: Lexington Books.

Jirák, J., & Trampota, T. (2008). O vztahu médií a politiky v komparativní perspektivě. In D. Hallin & P. Mancini (Eds.), *Systémy médií v postmoderním světě* (pp. 9-23). Prague: Portál.

Lukes, S. (1974). *Power: A radical view*. London: Macmillan Publishers.

McManus, J. H. (1994). *Market-driven journalism: Let the citizen beware?* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

McNair, B. (1998). *Sociology of journalism*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Metyková, M., & Císařová, L. (2009). Changing journalistic practices in Eastern Europe: The cases of Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia. *Journalism*, *10*(5), 719-736.

Moravec, V. (2009) Samoregulace žurnalistiky v České republice po roce 1989 jako součást mediálního systému. In T. Trampota (Ed.), *Česká media a Evropská unie: 20 let smazávání hranic* (pp. 127-157). Prague: Metropolitní univerzita Praha.

Sasinska-Klas, T. (1994). The transition of mass media in Poland: The road to liberalization. *The Electronic Journal of Communication*, *4*(1).

Štětka, V. (2012). From multinationals to business tycoons: Media ownership and journalistic autonomy in Central and Eastern Europe. *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, *17*(4), 433-456.

Štětka, V. (2013). Media ownership and commercial pressure. *Media and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*. Retrieved from http://mde.politics.ox.ac.uk/images/Final_reports/stetka_2013_final%20report_posted.pdf

Štětka, V. (2015). The rise of oligarchs as media owners. In J. Zielonka (Ed.), *Media and politics in new democracies: Europe in a comparative perspective* (pp. 85-98). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tejkalová, A., & Láb, F. (2011). The relationship between journalism studies and media professionals in the Czech Republic. *Otázky žurnalistiky*, *54*(1/2), 35-45.

Volek, J. (2010). Czech journalists after the collapse of the old media system: Looking for new professional self-image. In B. Dobek-Ostrowska, M. Głowacki, K.

Jakubowicz, & M. Sükösd (Eds), *Comparative media systems. European and global perspectives* (pp. 171-194). Budapest: Central European University Press.

Volek, J. (2011). Between quality and tabloid press strategies: Czech journalism 20 years after the collapse of the centralised non-market media system. In B. Dobek-Ostrowska & M. Głowacki (Eds.), *Making democracy in 20 years: Media and politics in Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 249-271). Wroclaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego.

Volek, J., & Jirák, J. (2006). Vybrané atributy profesního sebepojetí českých novinářů. *Mediální studia*, *1*(1), 21-38.

West, D. M. (2014, September 15). Global Billionaires Political Power Index. *Brookings*. Retrieved from http://www.brookings.edu/research/interactives/2014/billionaires-global-political-power-index

Wyka, A. W. (2007). Berlusconization of the mass media in East Central Europe: The new danger of italianization. In *Third Annual Conference Idea Exchange: Mediums and Methods of Communication in Eastern Europe, Russia, and Central Asia*. University of Pittsburgh, USA. Retrieved from http://www.kakanien-revisited.at/beitr/emerg/AWyka1.pdf

About the Authors

Roman Hájek

Roman Hájek is a lecturer and PhD student at the Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague. He focuses on journalism studies and political communication. The specific areas on his interests include local journalism and audience perception of politics.

Sandra Štefaniková

Sandra Štefaniková is a PhD candidate of Media Studies at the Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague. Currently, she is working on her doctorate thesis dealing with the relationship between media, culture, and political authorities in the non-democratic political systems. At the same time, she is working on research concerning the transformation of Czech photojournalism in the last twenty years.

Dr. Filip Láb

Filip Láb is an associated professor at the Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague. He specializes in visual culture, visual communication, photojournalism, theory and praxis of traditional and digital photography, transition from analogue to digital photography, new functions of visual materials in media.

Dr. Alice Němcová Tejkalová

Alice Němcová Tejkalová is the director of the Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University in Prague, and a principal investigator of the Czech part of Worlds of Journalism Study project. Publications include the monograph “The Other Athletes” (2012), the articles “The Undressed Newsroom: The application of visual ethnography in media research” (2014) and “Framing the National Indebtedness” (2013), and the book chapters “Foreign Correspondents in the Czech Republic” (2015), and “Journalist Education and Truth in the Digital Age” (2014).

COGITATIO

Media and Communication (ISSN: 2183-2439)
2015, Volume 3, Issue 4, Pages 62-75
Doi: 10.17645/mac.v3i4.341

Article

Comparing Czech and Slovak Council Newspapers' Policy and Regulation Development

Lenka Waschkova Cisarova

Department of Media Studies and Journalism, Masaryk University, 602 00 Brno, Czech Republic;
E-Mail: cisarova@fss.muni.cz

Submitted: 29 May 2015 | In Revised Form: 24 September 2015 | Accepted: 3 November 2015 |
Published: 29 December 2015

Abstract

Council newspapers form an integral part of European media systems and, as such, have been analysed for their important contribution to the development of local politics. However, despite a recognition of the media's important democratic function in the transition countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) after the fall of socialism, the consideration of council newspapers' political role in the Czech Republic and Slovakia have been largely absent in debates surrounding the development of regulatory frameworks until recently. Interestingly, debates regarding local government transparency emerged recently (2011) in the United Kingdom, resulting in the *Code of recommended practice on local authority publicity*, underscoring the importance of this issue. However, developments in the aforementioned situations demonstrate divergent outcomes in such considerations: the British addressed the causes, the Czechs addressed the symptoms, and the Slovaks have yet to make any headway. This article utilizes qualitative analysis of policy and regulation documents to compare the trajectories of media policy and regulation of council publicity in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, ultimately contrasting it with developments in the UK, suggesting possible future trajectories for the development of this type of regulation in the CEE countries.

Keywords

council newspapers; Czech media; media; politics; press regulation; Slovak media; UK media policy

Issue

This article is part of the special issue "Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media", edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

© 2015 by the author; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

Recently, the deputy mayor in a small Czech town stated during informal conversation that the council newspaper in the town operates as the most independent news source available to the public, suggesting its editorial independence from town hall oversight. In fact, the articles appearing in this publication are often written by politicians or municipality officials themselves, leaving the editor with nothing but the singular function of collecting articles and handing them over to the editorial board the majority of which is composed of local politicians. This story clearly illustrates the conundrum of council newspapers in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

The problem resides in the ambiguous nature of the *council newspaper*[1] and its problematic operation as *local medium*[2] or *council publicity tool*[3]. Even though

[1] Council newspaper is understood as a periodical publication published by village, town, district or regional municipalities. No information is available about the exact number and structure of council newspapers in the Czech Republic (according to estimations, there are over 1,000 of them; see Oživení (2010)).

[2] Local newspaper is understood as a newspaper published and distributed in the village, town, district and regional area. Czech commercial local newspapers were analysed in 2009, there were 132 local newspaper titles, 73 of which were owned by one ownership chain, cf. Waschková Císařová (2013).

[3] Council publicity tool is understood as a publication produced as a public relations instrument for municipalities, such as

council newspapers remain an integral part of European media systems, they differ in key features from other types of media (e.g. ownership models, financing, newsroom structure, content production, relationship with local politics). Moreover, this ambiguous function of council newspapers has surprisingly weathered the post-socialist transition in most of the CEE countries since 1989. Despite the close scrutiny and reorganization of the media's relationship to politics being a key feature of these transitions, council newspapers (particularly in the Czech Republic and Slovakia) have been largely absent from consideration in relation to debates on the development of regulatory frameworks.

In this article, I outline the problematic relationship between council newspapers and local politics, qualitatively analysing media policy and regulation documents as a means to compare the trajectories of media policy and regulation of council newspapers in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. I then compare the findings with the situation in the UK as a means to consider possible future pathways for the development of this type of regulation in the CEE countries. Finally, I argue that such analyses are pivotal for understanding the real terms of the relationship between media and local politics and similarly imperative for determining the future media policies in CEE societies that will impact the democratic health of media in the region.

The analysis will focus on the following questions: What are the nature and impact of council newspapers as media in the Czech Republic and Slovakia? Do council newspapers serve the public or special interests? Can they still be considered local media or are they rather council publicity tools? How do the developmental trajectories of media policy and regulation of council newspapers in the Czech Republic and Slovakia differ from one another when considering the media and political system transition after 1989? What may be considered "good practice" in council newspapers policy and regulation?

2. Relationship between Council Newspapers and Local Politics

The changing relationship between media and politics was an unsurprisingly fundamental feature of the post-socialist transitions in the Czech Republic and Slovakia[4]. It was reflected mainly in the interrelated changes that occurred within policies regarding media regulation, media ownership and initiatives to foster greater media independence.

Efforts to ensure the independence and freedom of the media after the post-socialist revolutions produced an understandably liberal nature within the tenets of the Press Act (see Jakubowicz (2007)). Similarly, during this time, the municipality acts[5]—which, among other things, sought to facilitate citizen engagement with political communication—created the conditions and framework for the emergence and development of council newspapers (Svatošová, 2006).

The changes in the relationship between the media and politics became most apparent at the national level, with the reconfiguration of the state ownership of the media, media privatization and the transformation of the state owned television and radio into a public service model (see Šmíd (2004)). Institutions, which deviated from these proscribed media model changes, were subsequently and publicly addressed, particularly in relation to the public service media (e.g. regarding the Czech television "crisis" in 2000, see Šmíd (2004); regarding the merging of Slovak television and Slovak radio, see ČT24 (2010).

It is important to point out, however, that serious discussion about the unusual position of council newspapers in the Czech and Slovak media systems only began more clearly much later, after 2006. At this time, scrutiny and reflection related to the national media transformation had largely faded and there was finally an opportunity for examining the relationship between media and politics on the local level. The configuration and dynamics of local media markets and the municipality's role in relation to them is seldom found in the academic and public discussions and publications focused on the media transition before 2000. Sükösd and Bajomi-Lázár (2003) point out this anomaly as one of the nine major problem areas in contemporary CEE media, framing it as an ownership monopoly issue:

> Media monopolies at the county, city, district, town and village level are so common that they are often taken for granted. In some countries, local governments indirectly own local television stations and newspapers. As these are the exclusive channels of institutionalized communication at the local level (Internet use is growing relatively slowly), their performance is often biased in election campaigns. (Sükösd & Bajomi-Lázár, 2003, p. 21)

The authors go on to describe a rather general problem regarding council newspapers in the CEE countries. It is quite usual in the Czech Republic and Slovakia that the municipalities publish their own newspapers (see be-

councils' press releases etc.; see Zavattaro (2010).

[4] Czechoslovakia split in 1993. The media conditions (i.e. the rules applied) were similar not only up to that time, but also after the breakup where each system was reconfigured in relation to the general conditions of the post-socialist transitions in the region. For insight into transition see Jakubowicz (2007).

[5] There are three municipality acts in the Czech Republic—*Zákon o obcích*; *Zákon o krajích* (2000); *Zákon o hlavním městě Praze* (2000) and three in Slovakia—*Zákon o obecnom zriadení* (2014); *Zákon o samosprávnych krajoch* (2001); *Zákon o hlavnom meste SR Bratislave* (1990). See more later.

low). The analysis suggests, that this development creates a unique media situation: 1) these newspapers remained owned by the municipalities during the privatization of the state media; 2) they retain close ties with local politicians in opposition to the developing media tenets and initiatives which seek to eliminate political influence in media; and 3) they are often produced by municipality officials or politicians in contrast to the principles of professional journalism which have been implemented since 1989.

We should ask whether these media serve the public or special interests? Can they be considered local media or rather council publicity tools? Clarifying these distinctions is profoundly important for assessing the relationship between council newspapers and local politicians and more important, for developing an adequate legal framework regarding judicial oversight.

When trying to define council newspapers as local media, problems arise, as their characteristics (ownership patterns, business model, organization, and production settings) differ significantly from all other Czech and Slovak media. Council newspapers are the only media paid for by the "state" (in this case, by the municipalities). The only media with a distant relationship with the state are the Czech and Slovak public service media (in both cases television and radio), while the Parliaments can potentially influence public service Acts and oversight authorities. However, council newspapers cannot be classified as public service media[6], because they do not have this status in the regulatory framework and in their own internal rules.

Moreover, council newspapers, while receiving money from the municipalities are simultaneously participating in the market competition for readers and advertisers (see Marťák (2013)). As such, they are government funded competitors for the commercial local media[7], which continue to struggle to survive in light of the 2008 financial crisis and declining local advertising revenues (Engel, 2009; Fenton, Metykova, Schlosberg, & Freedman, 2010). In addition, municipality officials and/or local politicians contribute more significantly to the content production of these newspapers than any professional journalists (see Oživení (2010) and Kamenský (2010)). This fact strongly suggests the potential of misusing council newspapers for distribution of municipality government opinion. This potential bias (the failure to provide a plurality of opinion) conflicts with the fact that these media are financially supported by taxpayers. As Fenton et al. (2010) point out in their study of the UK local media, local municipality ownership of local news media "*is not only undemocratic but an unsustainable and ineffective* use of taxpayers' funds[8]" (p. 5, original emphasis). The authors go on to describe the municipal press as a propaganda tool, citing their research respondent:

> It's more a propaganda for council. If you look at it, there's nothing about community as such like an input and it looks so very, it doesn't look like a newspaper to me, it looks like some sort of election leaflet, which they've pushed through the door. (Participant, Kings Cross elderly group; Fenton et al., 2010, p. 26)

These are strong arguments for the opinion that council newspapers should be rather considered council publicity tools, a point underscored by their method of financing (the municipality establishes its public image through public money), production structure (content prepared by municipality officials, spokespersons or the PR department staff, overseen by an editorial board consisting of local politicians) and business model (council newspapers are often free sheets distributed directly to citizens' mailboxes)[9] (see below and Oživení (2010)).

Staci Zavattaro (2010) argues that council newspapers are part of council publicity, stating they are:

> one of the various ways in which cities are selling themselves as commodities; another way cities try to control shaping their social realities; "counter-

[6] Council newspapers were at first considered as public service media even in the analysis of NGO Oživení. However the analysis came to the conclusion, that the analysed council newspapers did not fulfil the principles of public service media (Oživení, 2010, p. 14, cf. Marťák, 2013).

[7] An unusual example of the possible cooperation between commercial local newspapers and a local municipality is the case of the *Finchburg Star*, a newspaper published in a suburb of Madison, Wisconsin, USA. Commercial publications were closed down but the local municipality in 2014 realized that the community needed its local newspaper. Consequently, it "embarked on an experiment: With a one-year direct financial boost from city hall—about $30,000 to cover monthly postage, plus the shuttering of a city newsletter that competed for ad dollars—the paper would return to print". After one year of this experiment, "the Finchburg Star is now printing a monthly edition and mailing it to the more than 12,000 residences and businesses in town. All of the paper's revenue these days comes from advertising, though it is still getting some city support: municipality officials committed $16,800" (see Hutchins (2015)).

[8] Fenton et al. (2010) suggest a better way of spending taxpayers' money for local information—namely to establish local government subsidies for local news-hub start-ups, which could come from local government advertising.

[9] There are exceptions, e.g. the council newspaper *Kopřivnické noviny* published by the municipality in the town Kopřivnice with roughly 20,000 inhabitants. This newspaper utilizes a standardized newspaper layout and is sold at the newsstands (see http://www.koprivnice.cz/index.php?id=koprivnicke-noviny-koprivnice). The hybrid nature of council newspapers particularly comes into relief in this case, as it strongly resembles a commercial newspaper although it is not (cf. Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity (2011)).

strategies" that public administrators use to cut out the media, which…has become increasingly hostile toward governments. (Zavattaro, 2010, pp. 192, 200)

Referring to the aforementioned, we can conclude that council newspapers perform as a function of localized political advertising and marketing. The question remains how do the trajectories of media policy and regulation of council newspapers in the Czech Republic and Slovakia differ in relation to the media and political system transition after 1989. While the Czech Republic identified the core of the council newspapers' problem and tried to solve it, Slovakia identified the same problem but did nothing.

3. Differences in Czech and Slovak Council Newspapers' Policy and Regulation Development

As previously stated, the problem of understanding council newspapers as media was utterly neglected in the Czech and Slovak media transition[10] and it remains a neglected area in media and journalism analyses up to the present day. Only after council newspapers were initially criticized by non-profit organizations in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia after 2006 as potential sites for undue political influence, power, and potential corruption, were the questions regarding their nature and impact raised.

While the questions were recognized as serious in both contexts, the response differed in the respective contexts with regard to addressing the vague nature of council newspapers and their potential for abuse by local politicians. In the Czech context, they prescribed a solution without adequately considering the implications that might accompany it; in the Slovak context, they have yet to implement a solution. This raises the question, how exactly the trajectories of media policy and regulation of council newspapers in the Czech Republic and Slovakia differ during the societal transition after 1989.

3.1. The Czech Republic: Searching Solutions without Adequately Considering Implications

In the Czech Republic the first critic of the council newspapers[11] was the non-profit NGO called *Oživení* in 2006, as part of their program focused on disclosing the potential abuse of local politicians' power (Oživení, 2010). After analysing one hundred regional, town and village municipality publications, the following findings were observed. First, municipalities annually spend hundreds of millions of Czech crowns (millions of Euros) on publishing council newspapers. Second, dissenting opinion with the municipality government perspective was present in only 27% of analysed council newspapers. Third, more than 20% of the analysed articles were anonymously attributed; concurrently the less anonymity observed in the respective newspapers, the more plurality was observed in their content. Fourth, in 75% of the analysed newspapers, the editorial board was composed of municipality officials; only 8% of the analysed newspapers had opposition politicians as members of the respective editorial boards. Finally, the investigators found that the more the newspapers' production processes were outsourced and the more opposition politicians were present on the editorial board, the more pluralistic was the content (Oživení, 2010, pp. 7-16).

These findings are similar to the data[12] from a deeper case study using mixed methods on the narrow area of the ten biggest towns in one region (Olomouc region) in the Czech Republic (see Table 1). The analysed council newspapers are mostly freesheets, published by municipalities themselves with unclear cost structure (Kamenský, 2010, cf. Oživení, 2010).

The authors from the NGO Oživení point out that the state of council newspapers "severely restricts local democracy" (2010, p. 6), because there is a clear conflict of interest when local politicians control information about themselves, which is published at the expense of public money (2010, p. 11). The possible abuse of council newspapers is summed up by Svatošová (2006), who outlines five questionable practices related to council newspapers: 1) the ban on publishing critical views on municipality governance; 2) unpaid promotion of local economic actors; 3) unclear procurements related to the newspapers' production; 4) biased reporting on the outcomes of municipality governance; and 5) unilateral campaigns for solving particular local problems.

[10] Several Bachelors and Masters theses are focused on the topic of council newspapers (Černá, 2010; Černý, 2014; Červenková, 2011; Hándlová, 2011; Kamenský, 2010; Šedá, 2009, 2013).

[11] Even the Czech professional journalists' organization (*Syndikát novinářů ČR*) was unaware of this problem. The organization has actually accepted municipality officials working for council newspapers as its members (SNČR, 2004). The organization later admitted the potential problem with the close relationship between council newspapers and local politics and commented on this issue that municipality officials should not be considered professional journalists (Jelínek, 2005) and that council newspapers should be distanced from the municipality as much as possible (SNČR, 2006; cf. Oživení, 2010; SNČR, 2013).

[12] There is lack of complex data about council newspapers in the Czech Republic. Even Oživení could not collect data about the overall structure of council newspapers. Only partial information is available about specific Czech regions. These data are from the year 2009, which is valuable in comparison with the findings of Oživení and Transparency International Slovakia.

Table 1. Selected council newspapers' features in the Czech Republic.

Town	Population	Title	Type	Print copies	Period (per year)	Distribution	Publisher	Costs (per year in 000 CZK)
Olomouc	100 373	Radniční listy	freesheet	55 000	12	by mail, free of charge to households	municipality	4 152
Přerov	46 503	Přerovské listy	freesheet	20 700	11	by mail, free of charge to households	municipality	850
Prostějov	45 378	Radniční listy	freesheet	24 000	12	by mail, free of charge to households	private company, contract with municipality	1 965
Šumperk	27 754	Šumperský zpravodaj	freesheet	14 000	22	by mail, free of charge to households	municipality	811
Hranice	19 302	Hranická radnice	private freesheet supplement	n.a.	52	free of charge on special distribution places	municipality	500
Zábřeh	14 099	Zábřeh	freesheet	6 300	23	by mail, free of charge to households	municipality	791
Šternberk	13 834	Šternberské listy	paid newspaper (price 7 CZK per copy; 21 000 sold copies per year)	1 200	21	sold in local newsstands and shops	municipality	582
Uničov	12 098	Uničovský zpravodaj	paid newspaper (price 2-3 CZK per copy; 38 313 sold copies per year)	2 150	20	sold in local newsstands and shops	municipality	200
Jeseník	12 096	Jeseník město a lázně	paid newspaper (price 10 CZK per copy; 9 000 sold copies per year)	850	12	sold in local newsstands and shops	municipality	350
Litovel	10 063	Litovelské noviny	paid newspaper (price 8 CZK per copy; 14 880 sold copies per year)	1 300	12	sold in local newsstands and shops	municipality	435

Source: Kamenský (2010).

Qualitative interviews with journalists from three media outlets published in Prague 6, Prague 21 and Buštěhrad revealed that these newspapers had been established as alternatives to the council newspapers: "The municipally owned media were being denounced for being biased and favouring the government" (Hájek & Carpentier, 2015, p. 6). Moreover, the team that established *Buštěhradské listy,* originally worked in the council newspaper *Buštěhradský zpravodaj* but had resigned due to political pressures.

In the spring of 2012, after publishing a critique on the local government, the editorial board became the object of severe political pressure. The organizational structure of the municipal title was changed so that the local government could have more control. As a consequence of this change, the editorial board decided to resign and to establish a new, independent title. (Hájek & Carpentier, 2015, p. 7)

However, as the analysis of regulation development shows, the NGO Oživení considered the problem from the beginning as a political one and proposed the formulation of new anti-corruption amendments to the

municipality acts (Zákon o obcích, 2000; Zákon o krajích, 2000; Zákon o hlavním městě Praze, 2000) (cf. Černý, 2014, pp. 19-20). The second part of the proposed changes was the formulation of an amendment to the Press Act (Oživení, 2010, p. 18). The proposal uses the term “public service periodical press” and supports regulation leading to objectivity, impartiality and the publishing of pluralist opinion.

The authors[13] of the amendment proposal from the NGO Oživení later enacted their recommendations—the council newspapers’ anti-abuse measures—as a part of the *Governmental anti-corruption strategy for the years 2011 and 2012*. However, the only means of implementation of this measure at the time was the Press Act amendment (Strategie vlády, 2011, p. 18). Moreover, the government version of the Press Act amendment, which was presented in the Chamber of Deputies in February 2012[14] (Sněmovní tisk 603, 2012), had a distinctly different content (Stenografický zápis 36. schůze PSP, 2012; Stenografický zápis 57. schůze PSP, 2013). There were three important parts to this proposed amendment—council newspapers were referred to as the “periodical press of the local government unit” (not “public service periodicals”); people who could publish alternative opinions no longer included every citizen, but only members of municipality council, including those from the opposition; and the publisher was obliged to present objective and impartial information (Sněmovní tisk 603, 2012). This version of the Press Act amendment was later approved by Parliament and is in force since November 2013 (Sněmovní tisk 603, 2012; Tiskový zákon, 2013). The amendment of the Press Act changed the original, liberal tone of the Act—e.g. the objectivity and impartiality regulation is not applied to the commercial press, only to council newspapers (see Tiskový zákon (2013)).

Thus, the intention of the NGO Oživení to solve the problem between local politics and council newspapers led only to the Press Act amendment. Ultimately it did not solve anything but rather complicated the understanding of council newspapers as local media instead of the more acceptable understanding of them as council publicity instruments.

The final form of the Press Act also provoked journalistic criticism, mainly in relation to the absent penalties and oversight, or out-of-date definitions of the media, with regulation relating only to print and not audiovisual or new media (see Vrána (2012) and Knajfl (2012)). The municipality acts remained unchanged regarding the original proposal related to council newspapers regulation.

Understandably, deeper insight into the actual changes within the functioning of council newspapers related to the regulation changes have yet to be ascertained, as the amended Press Act has only been in force since the end of 2013. However, specific consequences of the Press Act amendment are described in a case study analysis[15] conducted in 2014. Černý (2014, pp. 74-76) outlines three primary conclusions: 1) the council newspapers’ editors-in-chief did not change their way of communication with municipality government, as the local politicians from the leading party are yet dominating in the council newspapers; 2) opposition politicians have slightly better access to the council newspapers—about roughly half of the responding editors-in-chief actively seek and incorporate views from opposition politicians, often in special sections; 3) the structure of the newsroom, editorial board and journalists’ routines have not changed. To the point, editors-in-chief address issues of objectivity and impartiality by promoting access for the opposition within the editorial board. Moreover, all municipality council members can publish their views in the council newspapers’ special section. Similarly, they can do so by the so called “advice method” where the opposition have information in advance about the content and topics in the council newspapers so as to adequately respond to them in their own texts. However, respondents within the case study admitted that they use the latter “advice method” more often than any active sourcing of opposition politicians.

Specific cases demonstrate that the Press Act amendment has not brought plurality, objectivity and impartiality in the council newspapers. These cases appeared most often before and after the first municipality elections (in autumn 2014) after the Press Act amendment went into effect. For example, in some council newspapers, the opposition parties have had problems to secure pre-election political advertising since the ruling party bought up all available advertising space in advance (Kremr, 2014; Ševčíková, 2014).

Moreover, even success in the municipal elections has not guaranteed access to the council newspapers. Consequently, one new local party, which obtained the second highest number of votes and gained one fifth of the municipality council membership in the city borough Praha 10, decided to establish their own alternative newspaper[16] (Dobré noviny, 2015; cf. Hájek & Carpentier, 2015), stating their reasoning as follows:

> We face censorship twenty-five years after the Vel-

[13] The director of the NGO Oživení analysis and author of the Press Act amendment is Oldřich Kužílek, an ex-politician, now working for the NGO (taj, 2010).

[14] For a detailed description of the Press Act amendment development see Šedá (2013) and Černý (2014).

[15] The case study research design involves qualitative in-depth interviews with the editors-in-chief of eight council newspapers (Černý, 2014).

[16] Their original plan was to collect 80,000 Czech crowns (€2,900) through a website for publishing one issue (which was achieved within 10 days), ultimately, 124,183 Czech crowns (€4,500) was collected from 175 people (Dobré noviny, 2015).

> vet Revolution….The council newspaper published by the Praha 10 city borough is the mouthpiece of the councillors and the mayor. They consider this newspaper as their personal advertising for public money. Citizens and opposition councillors have no access to the council newspapers. (Dobré noviny, 2015)

On the other hand this situation also stimulated stronger public reflection and action related to the problem of council newspapers. For example, anybody can now rate all council newspapers in the Czech Republic through the webpage www.hlasnatrouba.cz [in English: mouthpiece], which was launched in March 2015 by the NGO Oživení as a continuation of their council newspapers' analysis project. This NGO similarly plans to repeat the content analysis of council newspapers in 2015 (Kameník, 2015).

In summary, council newspapers' development in the Czech Republic was correctly identified as problematic through the NGO analysis, resting upon their unclear status (council publicity tools or local media) in the Czech media system. In attempting to redress this issue, the NGO proposed mainly the municipality acts amendments. As my analysis shows, the outcome did not produce the expected solutions, but rather further complicated the matter of council newspapers' status. The proposed solution obviously failed to address how various political opinions during the legislative process could be fairly promoted. The ongoing problem with the status of council newspapers in the Czech Republic and their relationship to local politics suggests that the issue has only become more entrenched.

3.2. Slovakia: No Solutions on the Horizon

The development of the Slovak media began conterminously with the Czech media—namely the law and developments were the same up to 1993, including identifying and addressing concerns related to council newspapers. In Slovakia however, council newspapers' status was not perceived as a problem in need of solutions.

In November of 2007, the Slovak branch of the NGO Transparency International ordered a public opinion research report concerning council newspapers. The findings showed that a quarter of the respondents considered council newspapers as propaganda tools for municipality leaders (Rončák, 2008, p. 1).

Subsequently, Transparency International conducted a content analysis of thirty council newspapers published by municipalities in Slovak villages, towns and boroughs, which produced results similar to the findings from Oživení's analysis in the Czech Republic and case study from the Olomouc region (cf. Oživení, 2010; Kamenský, 2010). The Slovak analysis revealed that council newspapers are published mainly by municipalities themselves or by their organizations. In only two cases were the municipalities outsourcing their council newspapers' production. Problems were identified related to reporting the actual costs of publishing council newspapers (wages, overheads etc.), leading to speculation that these numbers are deliberately obscured.

Rončák (2008) provides basic information about the structure and features of thirty analysed titles. Five of them from the biggest towns (see Table 2) show clear similarities with the Czech examples (Table 1) the majority of which were published by the municipalities themselves, with a similar interval of publication or unclear cost structure.

Again, local politicians from the leading parties were identified as having direct influence on the council newspapers content, being members of editorial boards or working directly in the newsrooms (even the mayor was sometimes editor-in-chief). Municipality officials rather than professional journalists were found most often to work in the council newspapers' newsroom. Finally, the local opposition was found to have no voice in the council newspapers, with some council newspapers explaining this by their intention to be "deliberately apolitical" (Rončák, 2008, pp. 2-3).

Table 2. Selected council newspapers' features[17] in Slovakia.

Town	Population	Title	Periodicity (per year)	Publisher	Costs (per year in 000 SK)
Zvolen	50 000	Zvolenské noviny	52	private company, 100% owned by municipality	400
Nové Zámky	42 262	Castrum Novum	52	municipality	900
Šal'a	24 500	Šal'a	12	municipality	n.a.
Vranov nad Topl'ou	23 000	Vranovský hlásnik	10	municipality	130
Snina	21 325	Naša Snina	12	municipality	30 (without distribution costs)

Source: Rončák (2008).

[17] There is a similar lack of complex data about council newspapers in Slovakia as in the Czech Republic. Only partial information about 30 selected titles from the Transparency International Slovakia analysis is available (Rončák, 2008), from the year 2007.

Lukáš Marťák (2013) produced a deeper analysis[18] of Slovak council newspapers and reached similar (and at times sharper) conclusions as Transparency International. According to his analysis, "in the Slovak council newspapers today, forms of control are present which remind people of the previous regime. It is as if the media in the post-communist environment is still tied up in the same practices" (pp. 104-109). Marťák posits that council newspaper journalism performs as a "political servant":

> The disruption of their independence is still present, as well as the abolition of their right to freedom of action and interference by the most powerful local politicians. It is clear from our findings that municipal politicians have real power and they have actual power even in relation to council media. The problem may arise, when municipality leaders consider the council medium as "their own baby". This opinion is threatening in relation to their powers, because it is only through these statements that they are able to deny the mission of the mass media. Beyond words or thoughts, the danger to council media (funded by citizens) comes from politicians' deeds. Mayors are often the murderers of council newspapers. When the newspapers are dead from the denial of basic journalistic values, they provide the long-standing funeral of the medium. (Marťák, 2013, p. 105)

Despite similar findings regarding council newspapers as in the Czech Republic, no specific steps towards any solution were taken in Slovakia. Seven years after Transparency International's analysis, its author, Ivan Rončák, reflects:

> It was just a small research project, probing into the current state….We did not have the ambition to bring about the legislative initiative, but rather only to contribute to the public debate. The initiative is generally unconsidered in the political environment (e.g. political parties). I have worked with the findings in the drafts of anti-corruption measures, but there was no independent trajectory to produce legislative change. (Rončák, 2015)

The author added that this council newspapers analysis was part of the solution to the problems in local politics (regarding corruption). He confirmed that the Slovak insights into council newspapers came from the assumption that council newspapers are publicity tools for municipality politicians.

As the regulation analysis revealed, the Slovak council newspapers are, from the legislative point of view, defined as other periodical publications and are regulated by the Press Act. There is no special section for these types of print media, as the Slovak Press Act (Tlačový zákon, 2008) is similarly liberal and similarly structured as the Czech Press Act. Akin to its Czech counterpart are the municipality acts (Zákon o obecnom zriadení, 2014; Zákon o samosprávnych krajoch, 2001); Zákon o hlavnom meste SR Bratislave, 1990), which allow municipalities to publish council newspapers.

A significant difference in the Slovak media policy compared to the Czech media policy is the existence of the Press Council of the Slovak Republic (*Tlačová rada Slovenské republiky*), which provides ethical oversight to all newspapers, including council newspapers. However, when the Council receives complaints regarding a newspaper's impartiality or bias, its sanctions are rather symbolic (Rončák, 2015). The Press Council recently discussed two complaints regarding council newspapers, and in both cases the decision was that newspapers did violate the journalistic code of ethics. The problem was mainly a failure to provide space for oppositional viewpoints in the council newspapers' content (Rozhodnutie TSRS 07, 2008; Rozhodnutie TSRS 08, 2008).

The regulation and policy analysis resulted in findings, which demonstrated that no significant changes regarding greater regulation of council newspapers was subsequently enacted, despite several controversial revelations pertaining to their use. One can assume that council newspapers in Slovakia are understood as local media, not council publicity tools, due to the oversight of the Press Council. But the oversight authority does not have adequate decision-making powers.

There are also other controversies concerning council newspapers in Slovakia, which underscore the need to clearly and officially classify the status of council newspapers. A local online journalist characterizes the council newspaper in his city as competition paid for by citizens' taxes: "It serves the propaganda purposes of the mayor and the municipality leaders from the taxpayers' money. Impartiality should be implemented through the new editorial board, but the space devoted to the mayor, however, has not diminished and still forms a substantial part of the newspaper" (Bučko, 2013).

Politicians have also complained about the bias of the council newspapers. For example, a mayor candidate complained before the municipal elections that the council newspaper in the Bratislava borough of Petržalka "does not provide free or objective information about the political rivals of the current mayor…,

[18] This analysis was based on qualitative interviews (23) with three types of respondents: 1) municipality political leaders; 2) local politicians, members of municipality councils, members of committees for media, members of council newspapers' editorial boards; and 3) journalists, respectively employees of council newspapers; in three county towns in eastern Slovakia in 2012. An additional method was the use of focus group interviews with selected experts (see Marťák, 2013, pp. 11-16).

although the municipality paid over €100,000 towards its publication" (Nechala, 2014).

There was even a nationwide conflict caused by the council newspaper *Náš kraj* published by the regional municipality in Banská Bystica. The new regional governor was accused of using council newspaper for his own self-promotion, including hate speech (Repa, 2014) and his admiration for the fascist Slovak state (Vražda, 2014). In 2014, a criminal complaint against this council newspaper was filed by the district prosecutor on the suspicion of having committed an offense regarding the denial of the Holocaust and approval of the crimes of political regimes. The police later dismissed the complaint (Mab, 2014) and the council newspaper is still published under a slightly altered name (Bystrický kraj, 2014, 2015). According to Slovak Transparency International, this was an unprecedented situation:

> [The regional governor] distributed from the council monthly partial propaganda leaflets to an extent unparalleled by any of his predecessors. Not only are there the traditionally numerous photos of the regional governor and unlimited space for interviews with him, but personal attacks on opponents were added without publishing reactionary commentary, all the while celebrating the wartime Slovak Republic. We call for a cessation of funding for such council monthlies through public money. (as cited in Roháček, 2014)

4. Comparison: When Two Do the Same Thing, It Is Not the Same Thing

As demonstrated, Czech and Slovak council newspapers face similar problems. Analyses demonstrate how they differ from the professional press in myriad ways—their business models, employees, content, etc.—so that they can fairly be defined as council publicity tools. However, from the legislative viewpoint, Czech council newspapers are regarded as media, while in Slovakia, no resolution was proposed and council newspapers are still seen as local media.

A "good practice" solution to the problem of council newspapers remains to be ascertained in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Adopting the western media model is hardly a solution in light of the critiques found in Hallin and Mancini's (2005, p. 218) path dependent premise of media system development, and those advocating against any CEE transition to a Western media model as "final destination" (Sükösd & Bajomi-Lázár, 2003, p. 15). Moreover, problems related to media development are more widely shared by a variety of national media systems regardless of their status as "in transition" or "developed" (see Waschková Císařová, 2013; Sükösd & Bajomi-Lázár, 2003).

Consequently, it is also important to consider the Czech and Slovak council newspapers' development within a comparative framework in relation to council newspaper policy changes in the United Kingdom. While the Czech and Slovak approach has been identifying the problems and—in the Czech case—addressing the indications, the British approach can be viewed as actually addressing the root causes.

4.1. United Kingdom: Deeper Insight Brings a Clear Solution

Interestingly enough, the debate about council newspapers in the United Kingdom occurred at the same time and for the same reasons as in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Similar problems were identified in relation to the status of council newspapers—namely a need for objective information for local readers without producing the conditions for unfair competition with the local commercial media (a point underscored by the 2008 financial crisis) (see Explanatory Memorandum to The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, 2011).

The policy documents and regulation analysis reveal, that in-depth debates about the transparency of local government in the United Kingdom resulted in the 2011 *Code of recommended practice on local authority publicity*[19] clearly indicating the importance of this issue. This solution from the very beginning sought to define council newspapers as local politics publicity tools (not media), yet more precisely and in detail name the consequences of such a definition regarding the council newspapers' very existence within the broader media system. The Publicity Code is applied to municipalities' publication of free newspapers and newssheets and these publicity tools should be lawful, cost effective, objective, even-handed, appropriate, have regard for equality and diversity, and be issued with care during periods of heightened sensitivity (Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, 2011, p. 2). Moreover, the Publicity Code sets the rules (among others) to solve local authority publicity problems: assess their value for taxpayers money; assess the content as to whether it provides balanced

[19] *The Code of recommended practice on local authority publicity* came into force as part of the *Local Government Act* on 31st March 2011 and the Publicity Code regulates municipal publicity only in England. There was extensive debate about the Publicity Code content, and the whole policy is a part of a larger project *Making local councils more transparent and accountable to local people* (Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, 2011). The Publicity Code was reviewed in 2010 (350 responses) utilizing the opinions of experts; publishers; people from newspapers; business etc. Moreover, as was stated, "there will be a post implementation review of the Publicity Code in 3 to 5 years after it comes into effect" (Explanatory Memorandum to The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, 2011, paragraph 8, 12).

and factually accurate information, guards against overt political statements; and insures that any publicity describing the council's policies and aims is as objective as possible, concentrating on the facts or explanations or both; oversees that public money is not used for political campaigns; insures that in political controversies all positions are presented; insures that any local authority publicity should not seek to emulate commercial newspapers in style or content; and that the local authority publicity should identify itself as a product of the local authority (Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, 2011, p. 3, paragraph 10, p. 4, paragraph 15-16, 19, p. 5, paragraph 28, 30).

The more particular rules related to council newspaper publishing were the rule of periodicity and content, which sought to solve the problem of unfair competition for commercial local newspapers:

> Where local authorities do commission or publish newsletters, newssheets or similar communications, they should not issue them more frequently than quarterly, apart from parish councils, which should not issue them more frequently than monthly. Such communications should not include material other than information for the public about the business, services and amenities of the council or other local service providers. (Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, 2011, p. 5, paragraph 28)

There is an oversight authority with the adequate decision-making powers—compliance to the Publicity Code is overseen by the *Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.* In this role Eric Pickles, attracted attention[20] in April 2014 for publishing a press release about those councils, which were breaking the Publicity Code rules. He reported that five councils of various London boroughs were given a fortnight to explain why steps should not be taken to stop their "propaganda on the rates", mainly due to their lack of objectivity or balance, while publishing council newspapers more often than four times a year (Press release, 2014). The Secretary announced, that he was prepared to take further steps against those councils that undermine local democracy (Press release, 2014). One year later (in March 2015), the Secretary issued proceedings in the Court seeking to enforce the Publicity Code in the Royal Borough of Greenwich (to only maximally publish council newspapers quarterly instead of weekly; see Government response, 2015). Another four councils were sent notices again in March 2015 (see Policy, 2015).

However the British journalists' organizations find themselves in the strange position of commenting on the development of the Publicity Code and trying to stand up for the local commercial newspapers on one hand, and often also representing the council newspapers' journalists on the other hand. For example the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) faced this conundrum after its general secretary Michelle Stainstreet said "there was "no case at all" for Communities Secretary Eric Pickles to be given statutory power over them. She also denied that council newspapers are used to deliver political messages or that they divert advertising revenue from local papers" (Hollander, 2013). This opinion angered journalists in local commercial newspapers in light of council newspapers' competitive advantages in the marketplace. Moreover, Amanda Brodie, the chair of another professional organization (the Chartered Institute of Journalists) stated: "We are astonished that the NUJ has come out against the proposed legislation, which is aimed at supporting local newspapers, and can only help to safeguard journalists' jobs. This is not a political issue, as the NUJ seems intent to make it" (Hollander, 2013).

Thus, the British policy, having identified the problem regarding unfair competition with council newspapers sought specific solutions through a series of initiatives (public debates, numerous analyses), a clear line of council publicity, and a commitment to enforce compliance of the rules. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia the NGOs identified the problem of unclear classification and possible misuse of council newspapers. In both states, however, council newspapers are still understood as local media, even though the analyses show their close relationship with the local politics and significant differences from the professional media. The second problem of policy and regulation development in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is the absence of an oversight authority with adequate decision-making powers. In these problems, the Czech and Slovak states would do well to follow the British "good practice" policy and regulation development.

5. Conclusions

The British policy concerning council newspapers contrasts the Czech and Slovak policies. While problems were identified in all three countries, only in Britain were specific initiatives taken to establish an oversight authority. However, any initiatives for strengthening state regulation over the media are met with skepticism in CEE countries because of their experiences under socialism.

In summary, we can state that Czech and Slovak council newspapers serve the special interests of local

[20] The media quoted Eric Pickles strict assessments: "It is scandalous that bloggers have been handcuffed for tweeting from council meetings, while propaganda on the rates drives the free press out of business. Only Putin would be proud of a record like that….'Town Hall Pravdas' not only waste taxpayers' money unnecessarily, they undermine free speech" (Press release, 2014).

politicians. They can therefore be considered as council publicity tools and they should become part of the local policy and regulation with appropriate oversight authority.

The British example indicates that the CEE countries can benefit from the experience of their western counterparts concerning the issue of council newspapers. The Czech Republic and Slovakia should more effectively address the anomalies in their media policy in ways that provide real solutions for the development of democratic media practices, while at the same time remaining sensitive to the proclivities of the context.

If the development of the CEE media and societies is to continue along a democratic path, it remains pivotal to continue examining the terms of the relationship between media and politics along all levels of society, especially if there is to be a promising path forward regarding the media's role in fostering and securing more inclusive democratic practices in the CEE countries.

Acknowledgments

The author acknowledges the support of the VITOVIN project (CZ.1.07/2.3.00/20.0184), which is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the budget of the Czech Republic.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

Bučko, M. (2013, July 9). Radničné noviny sú vyhodené peniaze daňovníkov. [Publishing council newspaper is wasting public money]. *bbonline.sk*. Retrieved from http://bbonline.sk/blog/radnicne-noviny-su-vyhodene-peniaze-danovnikov

Bystrický kraj. (2014). [Council newspaper Bystrický region]. Retrieved from http://www.vucbb.sk/Úrad/Informáciepremédiá/ČasopisyBBSK.aspx

Bystrický kraj. (2015). [Council newspaper Bystrický region]. Retrieved from http://www.vucbb.sk/Úrad/Informáciepremédiá/ČasopisyBBSK.aspx

Černá, M. (2010). *Zpravodaje pražských městských částí* [Council newspapers in Prague districts]. (Bachelor thesis). Brno: Masarykova univerzita.

Černý, A. (2014). *Novela tiskového zákona a její reflexe v redakcích vybraných pražských radničních periodik (Případová studie)* [Press Act amendment and its reflection in selected Prague council newspapers' newsrooms (case study)] (Master thesis). Brno: Masarykova univerzita.

Červenková, A. (2011). *Mediální mapa zpravodajů měst a obcí na Hodonínsku* [Media map of council newspapers in Hodonín district] (Bachelor thesis). Brno: Masarykova univerzita.

Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. (2011). Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5670/1878324.pdf

ČT24. (2010, December 15). Slovenský parlament rozhodl: Veřejnoprávní rozhlas a televize se sloučí [Slovak Parliament decided: Public radio and television will merge]. *ČT 24.* Retrieved from http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/media-it/110066-slovensky-parlament-rozhodl-verejnopravni-rozhlas-a-televize-se-slouci

Dobré noviny pro Prahu 10. (2015). [Good Newspaper for Prague 10]. Retrieved from https://www.startovac.cz/projekty/dobre-noviny-pro-prahu-10

Engel, M. (2009). Local papers: An obituary. *British Journalism Review,* 20(55), 55-62. doi:10.1177/0956474809106672

Explanatory Memorandum to The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity. (2011). Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5671/1840982.pdf

Fenton, N., Metykova, M., Schlosberg, J., & Freedman, D. (2010). *Meeting the news needs of local communities.* London: Media Trust. Retrieved from http://www.mediatrust.org/uploads/128255497549240/original.pdf

Government response. Greenwich council newspaper. (2015). Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/news/greenwich-council-newspaper

Hájek, R., & Carpentier, N. (2015). Alternative mainstream media in the Czech Republic: beyond the dichotomy of alternative and mainstream media. *Continuum: Journal of Media and Cultural Studies.* doi:10.1080/10304312.2014.986061

Hallin, D. C., & Mancini, P. (2005). Comparing media systems. In J. Curran & M. Gurevitch (Eds.), *Mass media and society* (pp. 215-233). London: Hodder Arnold.

Hándlová, M. (2011). *Mediální mapa obecních periodik na území Pardubického kraje a případová studie struktury redakcí a redakční práce* [Media map of council newspapers in the Pardubice region, case study of newsrooms' structure and editorial work] (Master thesis). Brno: Masarykova univerzita.

Hollander, G. (2013, July 19). NUJ accused of defending 'Pravdas' against journalism. *Press Gazette.* Retrieved from http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/nuj-accused-defending-'pravdas'-against-journalism

Hutchins, C. (2015, February 27). How one town's government brought the local paper back to life. *Columbia Journalism Review.* Retrieved from http://www.cjr.org/united_states_project/fitchburg_star_city_hall.php

Jakubowicz, K. (2007). *Rude awakening. Social and media change in Central and Eastern Europe.* Cresskill: Hampton Press.

Jelínek, M. (2005). Noviny, které platíme, aniž je chceme

[Newspapers, that we don't want, but we pay them]. *Mediažurnál,* září, 1, 3. Retrieved from http://www.bezkorupce.cz/aktuality/noviny-ktereplatime-aniz-je-chceme

Kameník, M. (2015). Unikátní monitoring cenzury radničních zpravodajů uveřejněn. Občané mohou sami nahlašovat problematické zpravodaje [The unique monitoring of council newspapers' censorship was published. Citizens can report problematic council newspapers]. Retrieved from http://www.bezkorupce.cz/blog/2015/03/12/unikatni-monitoring-cenzury-radnicnich-zpravodaju-uverejnen-obcane-mohou-sami-nahlasovat-problematicke-zpravodaje

Kamenský, S. (2010). *Mediální mapa radničních periodik v Olomouckém kraji* [Media map of council newspapers in Olomouc region] (Bachelor thesis). Brno: Masarykova univerzita.

Knajfl, E. (2012, March 20). Prostor v radničních novinách dostane i opozice [The opposition also get the space in the council newspapers]. *Události v regionech.* Retrieved from http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/regiony/169027-prostor-v-radnicnich-novinach-dostane-i-opozice

Kremr, T. (2014, August 4). Opozice: Radniční zpravodaj v Králově Poli si koupila ODS [The opposition: Council newspaper in Královo Pole was bought by ODS party]. *Brněnský deník*. Retrieved from http://brnensky.denik.cz/zpravy_region/opozice-radnicni-zpravodaj-v-kralove-poli-si-koupila-ods-20140804.html

Mab. (2014, April 20). Polícia doanalyzovala mesačník Náš kraj. Dôvod na trestné stíhanie nevidí! [Police finished analysis of council monthly Our Region. They don't see the reason for criminal prosecution]. *Plus7.dni.sk*. Retrieved from http://wwww.plus7dni.sk/regiony/stredne-slovensko/kotleba-si-pomohol-namiesto-zruseneho-mesacnika-vytvoril-bystricky-kraj.html

Marťák, L. (2013). *Mestské periodiká a politika—Stav a možné riešenia* [Council newspapers and politics—Status and possible solutions] (Doctoral dissertation). Ružomberok: Katolícka univerzita v Ružomberoku.

Nechala, P. (2014). *Bajan zneužíva Petržalské noviny, Nechala ho za to žaluje na súde* [Bajan abuses Petržalka council newspaper, Nechala is suing him for it]. Retrieved from http://nechala.blog.sme.sk/c/368251/bajan-zneuziva-petrzalske-noviny-nechala-ho-za-to-zaluje-na-sude.html

Oživení. (2010). *20 let demokracie: Kraje, města, obce na rozcestí mezi korupcí a vládou práva. Výzkumy, analýzy a legislativní návrhy* [20 Years of Democracy: Counties, cities, municipalities at the crossroad between corruption and the rule of law. Researches, analyses and legislative proposals]. Retrieved from http://www.osf.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c5/a346/f20/20_let_demokracie.pdf

Policy. (2015). Local council transparency and accountability. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/making-local-councils-more-transparent-and-accountable-to-local-people/activity

Press release. (2014). Eric Pickles takes action to defend the independent free press. Retrieved from https://www.gov.uk/government/news/eric-pickles-takes-action-to-defend-the-independent-free-press

Repa, M. (2014, May 20). Kotleboviny [Council newspaper and regional governor Kotleba]. *Pravda.sk*. Retrieved from http://nazory.pravda.sk/komentare-a-glosy/clanok/318288-kotleboviny

Roháček, F. (2014, April 8). TIS: Kotleba spravil zo župného mesačníka propagandistický plátok [TIS: Regional governor Kotleba made from a regional council newspaper propaganda tool]. *bbonline.sk.* Retrieved from http://bbonline.sk/tis-kotleba-spravil-zo-zupneho-mesacnika-propagandisticky-platok

Rončák, I. (2015). E-mail communication, March 2015.

Rončák, I. (2008). Radničné noviny—tlačené periodiká vydávané samosprávami (správa z monitoringu) [Council newspapers—print periodicals published by municipalities (monitoring report)]. *Transparency International Slovensko website*. Retrieved from http://www.transparency.sk/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Radničné-noviny–-tlačené-periodiká-vydávané-samosprávami.pdf

Rozhodnutie TRSR 07. (2008). [Decision No. 07, Press Council of the Slovak Republic]. Tlačová rada Slovenskej republiky. Retrieved from http://trsr.sk/rozhodnutia/Page-20

Rozhodnutie TRSR 08. (2008). [Decision No. 08, Press Council of the Slovak Republic]. Tlačová rada Slovenskej republiky. Retrieved from http://trsr.sk/rozhodnutia/Page-20

Šedá, A. (2009). *Zpravodaje měst a obcí na Brněnsku—charakteristika mediální krajiny.* [Council newspapers in Brno region—characteristics of media landscape]. (Bachelor thesis). Brno: Masarykova univerzita.

Šedá, A. (2013). *Radniční periodika jako součást mediálního systému* [Council newspapers, part of media system]. (Master thesis). Brno: Masarykova univerzita.

Ševčíková, L. (2014, September 30). Passer prý zneužil radniční tisk pro svou propagaci. Radnice to odmítá [Passer allegedly abused council newspaper for his own promotion. Municipality refuses this]. *Parlamentní listy*. Retrieved from http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/zpravy/Passer-pry-zneuzil-radnicni-tisk-pro-svou-propagaci-Radnice-to-odmita-337252

Šmíd, M. (2004). Czech Republic. *Media ownership and its impact on media independence and pluralism.* Ljubljana: SEENPM, Peace Institute. Retrieved from http://www.mirovni-institut.si/media_ownership/index.htm

SNČR. (2004). Stanovisko členské komise k členství novinářů z časopisů vydávaných úřady [Czech professional journalists' organization opinion on membership of council newspapers' journalists]. *Mediažurnál*, březen, 6.

SNČR. (2006). Stanovisko Syndikátu novinářů k radničním tiskovinám [Czech professional journalists' organization opinion on council newspapers]. *Mediažurnál*, červenec, 1-2.

SNČR. (2013). Stanovisko k novele tiskového zákona [Czech professional journalists' organization opinion on the Press Act amendment]. *Mediažurnál*, *4*, 15.

Sněmovní tisk 603. (2012). [Parliamentary Press No. 63, Press Act amendment]. Novela zákona—tiskový zákon. Retrieved from http://www.psp.cz/sqw/historie.sqw?T=603&O=6

Stenografický zápis 36. schůze, 20. Března. (2012). [Stenographic record of 36. Parliamentary meeting, March 20, 2012]. (2012). Poslanecká sněmovna, Parlament ČR. Retrieved from http://www.psp.cz/eknih/2010ps/stenprot/036schuz/36-5.html#494

Stenografický zápis 57. schůze, 8. srpna 2013. (2013). [Stenographic record of 57. Parliamentary meeting, August 8, 2013]. Poslanecká sněmovna, Parlament ČR. Retrieved from http://www.psp.cz/eknih/2010ps/stenprot/057schuz/s057064.htm

Strategie vlády v boji proti korupci na období let 2011 a 2012. (2011). [Governmental anti-corruption strategy for the years 2011 and 2012]. Retrieved from http://www.mvcr.cz/soubor/strategie-vlady-v-boji-proti-korupci-na-obdobi-let-2011-a-2012-pdf.aspx

Sükösd, M. & Bajomi-Lázár, P. (2003). The second wave of media reform in East Central Europe. In M. Sükösd & P. Bajomi-Lázár (Eds.), *Reinventing media. Media policy reform in East-Central Europe* (pp. 13-27). Budapest: CEU Press.

Svatošová, H. (2006). *Vydávání tzv. "radničních novin" v právních souvislostech.* [Publishing council newspapers in a legal context]. Retrieved from http://www.iure.org/sites/default/files/article/downloads/33_vydavani_radnicnich_novin_v_pravnich_souvislostech.pdf

taj. (2010, September 6). Kocáb s Jochem se shodli. Novým zmocněncem by mohl být Kužílek [Kocáb and Joch agreed. Kužílek could be a new commissioner]. *idnes.cz*. Retrieved from http://zpravy.idnes.cz/kocab-s-jochem-se-shodli-novym-zmocnencem-by-mohl-byt-kuzilek-p5v-/domaci.aspx?c=A100906_130042_domaci_taj

Tiskový zákon. (2013). [Czech Press Act]. Zákon 46/2000 Sb. o právech a povinnostech při vydávání periodického tisku a o změně některých dalších zákonů (tiskový zákon), změna 305/2013 Sb. Retrieved from http://www.mkcr.cz/cz/media-a-audiovize/periodicky-tisk/zmena-tiskoveho-zakona--tzv--radnicni-periodika-199168

Tlačový zákon. (2008). [Slovak Press Act]. Zákon č. 167/2008 Sb. o periodickej tlači a agentúrnom spravodajstve a o zmene a doplnení niektorých zákonov (tlačový zákon). Retrieved from http://old.culture.gov.sk/uploads/a6/74/a674978243efa444ce2aef17d63a5391/zakon-c.-167-2008-tlacovy-zakon-uplne-znenie.pdf

Vrána, K. (2012, August 29). Změní se žalostný stav radničních novin? Novela je má otevřít opozici [Will change the poor level of council newspapers? The Press Act amendment should open newspapers for the opposition]. *Reportéři ČT.* Retrieved from http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/domaci/193704-zmeni-se-zalostny-stav-radnicnich-novin-novela-je-ma-otevrit-opozici

Vražda, D. (2014, April 11). Kotleba prišiel o million eur pre úrad i časopis Náš kraj [Regional governor Kotleba lost one million Euro intended for regional municipality and council newspaper Náš kraj]. *sme.sk.* Retrieved from http://bystrica.sme.sk/c/7168000/kotleba-prisiel-o-milion-eur-pre-urad-i-casopis-nas-kraj.html

Waschková Císařová, L. (2013). *Český lokální a regionální tisk mezi lety 1989 a 2009* [Czech local and regional press between 1989 and 2009]. Brno: Munipress.

Zákon o obcích. (2000). [Czech Municipality Act]. Zákon 128/2000 Sb. o obcích. Retrieved from http://portal.gov.cz/app/zakony/zakon.jsp?page=0&nr=128~2F2000&rpp=15#seznam

Zákon o krajích. (2000). [Czech Regional Municipality Act]. Zákon 129/2000 Sb. o krajích (krajské zřízení). Retrieved from http://portal.gov.cz/app/zakony/zakon.jsp?page=0&nr=129~2F2000&rpp=15#seznam

Zákon o hlavním městě Praze. (2000). [Czech Act on the capital Prague]. Zákon 131/2000 Sb. o hlavním městě Praze. Retrieved from http://portal.gov.cz/app/zakony/zakon.jsp?page=0&nr=131~2F2000&rpp=15#seznam

Zákon o obecnom zriadení. (2014). [Slovak Municipality Act]. Zákon č. 369/1990 Zb. o obecnom zriadení. Retrieved from http://www.minv.sk/?zakon-snr-c-369-1990-zb-o-obecnom-zriadeni

Zákon o samosprávnych krajoch. (2001). [Slovak Regional Municipality Act]. Zákon č. 302/2001 Zb. o samospráve vyšších územných celkov (zákon a samosprávnych krajoch). Retrieved from http://www.zakonypreludi.sk/zz/2001-302

Zákon o hlavnom meste SR Bratislave. (1990). [Slovak Act on the capital Bratislava]. Zákon č. 377/1990 Zb. o hlavnom meste SR Bratislave. Retrieved from http://www.minv.sk/?zakon-snr-c-377-1990-zb-o-hlavnom-meste-sr-bratislave&subor=149282

Zavattaro, S. M. (2010). Municipalities as public relations and marketing firms. *Administrative Theory and Praxis*, *32*(2), 191-211. doi:10.2753/ATP1084-1806320202

About the Author

Dr. Lenka Waschková Císařová

Mgr. Lenka Waschková Císařová, Ph.D. works as assistant professor at the Department of Media Studies and Journalism, Faculty of Social Studies, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. Her research focuses on journalism studies, media ownership, local media and transformation of media markets.

Media and Communication (ISSN: 2183-2439)
2015, Volume 3, Issue 4, Pages 76-90
Doi: 10.17645/mac.v3i4.344

Article

Voice of the Church: A Debate about Religious Radio Stations as Community Broadcasters

Gabriella Velics [1,*] and Urszula Doliwa [2]

[1] Department of Communication and Media, University of West-Hungary, 9700 Szombathely, Hungary;
E-Mail: velicsg@btk.nyme.hu
[2] Department of Humanities, University of Warmia and Mazury, 10-725 Olsztyn, Poland;
E-Mail: urszula.doliwa@uwm.edu.pl

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 30 May 2015 | In Revised Form: 14 October 2015 | Accepted: 3 November 2015 |
Published: 29 December 2015

Abstract
In the Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue passed on 11 February 2009 by the Council of Europe, stations run by religious institutions were explicitly excluded from the community media definition, as being too dependent on the Church. But the reality seems to be far from this definition. In practice, in many countries the religious radio stations officially belong to—or even dominate—this sector. In 2011 a new period began for community broadcasting in Hungary. While most of the former community media broadcasters could not find resources with which to operate, the community media landscape was dramatically overwhelmed by religious broadcasters both on regional and local levels. The legally-recognised third tier of broadcasting in Poland called 'social broadcasting' is actively and exclusively used by religious radio—seven stations broadcast locally and one is a powerful nationwide radio station called Radio Maryja. The authors gathered information and points of views from radio experts, organizations and activists living and working in different EU and non-EU states about the place of religious broadcasting in the community media sector. Two case-studies (Hungary and Poland) may be of interest for countries considering the introduction or reorganisation of regulations regarding community broadcasting.

Keywords
community radio; Hungary; media policy; Poland; religious broadcasters

Issue
This article is part of the special issue "Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media", edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

© 2015 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

In the Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue passed on 11 February 2009 by the Council of Europe, stations run by religious institutions were explicitly excluded from the community media definition, as being too dependent on the Church. However, Church radios easily get community broadcasting licences in some countries of the EU. This article has been inspired by the unclear situation of religious broadcasting in the community media sector, a growing number of religious broadcasters in the legal framework of community media service (közösségi médiaszolgáltatás) in Hungary, as well as the third sector of broadcasting in Poland, known as *social broadcasters* (nadawcy społeczni), which is monopolized by religious stations. Some inspiration has also resulted from the round table of media experts and practitioners from the community media field organised by the authors on 8th November 2014 during the Bundesverband Freier Radios congress in Berlin/Potsdam

Zukunftswerkstatt Community Media 2014, where representatives from several countries (Austria, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, UK) met. It was a unique chance to collect data about the relation between community media and religious stations in Europe. During this conference several questions were raised: Should we consider religious radios as community broadcasters or different entities? What are the arguments for and against including church radio in the community sector? What kind of licences do religious radio have country by country?

In this article we concentrate on radio community broadcasting. When we talk about community media and community broadcasting we mainly have community radio in mind. One of the reasons for this is that according to the 2012 mapping made by Community Media Forum Europe, community radio outnumbers other forms of community broadcasting in Europe (CMFE, 2012)[1]. The other reason is the fact that there are only radio community broadcasters in Poland and Hungary[2].

2. Religious Broadcasting versus Community Broadcasting: Definitions

There are several factors, which play a significant role in the perception of the community media concept. The histories of the sector in a particular state, as well as the current community media practices are important here. Also, the existing legal framework determines the way of thinking about community media to a large extent. The place where you live is important—for example the experience of communist regimes deeply affects the level of development and understanding of community media in Central and Eastern Europe (Doliwa & Rankovic, 2014). Apart from the abovementioned factors, community media seems to be such a complex and diverse phenomenon that it defies clear-cut descriptions.

However, undoubtedly there are some definitions, which play a primary role, when characterizing what the community media is and what it is not. The authors analyse those definitions looking for some tips suggesting whether religious broadcasting should be or should not be considered as part of community broadcasting, and conditions that must be fulfilled by a religious broadcaster to become a fully-fledged part of this sector. In the European context one should include—in the set of the definitions important for understanding what community media is—the Community Radio Charter for Europe adopted on 18 September 1994 in Ljubljana, Slovenia at the first AMARC Pan-European Conference of Community Radio Broadcasters (AMARC, 1994). It is worth underlining that in this document—formulated by representatives of community media—religious stations as a form of broadcasting usually owned by Church are highlighted as those not belonging to the sector. Point four of this document states that community media *are editorially independent of government, commercial and **religious*** [emphasis added] *institutions and political parties in determining their programme policy*. Also other elements of this definition may prove to be difficult to fulfil by religious broadcasters as for example: *free flow of information and opinions, providing a right of access to minority and marginalised groups and promoting and protecting cultural and linguistic diversity; providing a right of reply to any person or organisation subject to serious misrepresentation; operate management, programming and employment practices which oppose discriminations and which are open and accountable to all supporters, staff and volunteers*. Fulfilling those requirements might be difficult for religious broadcasters because the mission of such stations is often connected with promoting values and religion represented by the Church. It is not impossible, yet difficult to imagine that, for example, a Muslim or Catholic station would broadcast programmes, which hurt their principles, such as an LGBT programme.

A similar problem with accessibility and diversity of the programmes can be observed also in stations defining themselves as radios addressing their programme not to a local community but the community of interest, which is not a rarity in community broadcasting. How to *answer to the needs of groups at present marginalised or ignored by mainstream radio while at the same time avoiding the ghettoization that separate channels might create* is a real challenge for such stations, already identified by Peter Lewis in 1984 (p. 148). We should remember that this definition is a list of some aspirations that community media representatives have agreed on. As it was admitted by Sally Galiana, the President of AMARC Europe, *AMARC is aware of the fact that the situation is sometimes completely different at a country level from AMARC definitions and documents (e.g. European Charter for Community Radio) and AMARC Europe doesn't want to impose its regulations* (Galiana, 2014).

Community media as an important sector of broadcasting in Europe has been also recognized by several European institutions—first of all the European Parliament, which in 2008 adopted a Resolution of the Community Media in Europe (2008/2011(INI)). In the definition, which we can find in this document adopted by representatives of all member states of the European Union, there are no elements which can be recognized as a suggestion that religious broadcasters should be excluded from the sector. Of course, some of the postulates may be difficult to fulfil for religious broad-

[1] In 2012 there were 2237 community radio stations counted in 29 European countries (with only 521 community televisions).
[2] The exceptions are two cable TV channels with a special licence for social broadcasting in Poland.

casters, for example; being *open to participation in the creation of content by members of the community, who may participate in all aspects of operation and management* (European Parliament, 2008). Yet one can find many other examples of community stations around Europe with similar difficulties.

In another important document at the European level—the Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue passed on 11 February 2009 by the Council of Europe, stations run by religious institutions were, again, excluded from the community media definition. The features of community media are characterized in this document as follows:

> Independence from government, commercial and *religious* [emphasis added] institutions and political parties; a not-for-profit nature; voluntary participation of members of civil society in the devising and management of programmes; activities aiming at social gain and community benefit; ownership by and accountability to the communities of place and/or of interest which they serve; commitment to inclusive and intercultural practices (Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, 2009).

When talking about this definition it is worth knowing how it was created and what the principles for people working on this definition were. The Community Media Forum Europe (the organisation representing community broadcasters in Europe) has been working as an observer in the Steering Committee on the Media and New Communication Services (CDMC) of the Council of Europe since December 2007 and contributed actively to drafting this Declaration, cooperating with AMARC Europe. As it was reported by Nadia Belardi—a vice-president of Community Media Forum Europe and one of the co-creators of this document—the draft of this document was to some extent prepared by the Secretariat of the Steering Committee and based on the previous studies, especially the one made by Peter Lewis, entitled *Promoting Social Cohesion* (2008). Yet the definition must have come from the observers representing the sector. Nadia Belardi reported the process of adding the element about the exclusion of stations dependent on religious institutions as follows:

> independence from religious institution was a very important topic especially for the delegation from France because of the Islamic debate in this country. So probably that is what political representatives had in mind when they were thinking about religious institutions, not necessarily the Catholic Church. Perhaps it is my personal interpretation, but I would say that the biggest fear was funding and legalizing media that can make propaganda for values and practices that go against the democratic values of the European Union and Council of Europe. I don't think that the topic of Catholic or Christian Church radios ever came up to be honest. If there was any discussion we were talking about what is happening in the Balkans, ex-Yugoslavia and the role of the media played there in creating disinclination between various religious communities there. That was a concern. That's what was behind it (Belardi, 2014).

All aspects considered, one can say that religious broadcasting is treated as being outside the community sector in some definitions taken from important European documents dealing with this subject matter. However, it is worth underlining that there is no universally accepted definition of community media. Even the authors of those definitions admit that the character of some of them is often aspirational and far from the real situation in some countries. That is why, when talking about religious broadcasting as part of the community media sector, it is important to look not only at definitions created at the pan-European level but also at opinions of media experts and community media activists as well as at practices and regulations in various countries.

3. Opinions of Media Experts and Community Media Activists about Religious Broadcasting as Part of the Community Media Sector

A round table of media experts and practitioners from the community media field was organised by the authors of this article on 8th November 2014 during the Bundesverband Freier Radios congress in Berlin/Potsdam Zukunftswerkstatt Community Media 2014[3]. Most of the participants declared: religious broadcasters should not have access to the community media sector. The reasoning was diverse but often included arguments such as dominant ownership, not a non-profit character, dogmatic voice etc.

> My militant opinion: religion is private and should be excluded from public service and non-commercial media sector—Michael Nicolai, Germany.
>
> For me the ownership is a key. In my opinion community radio cannot be owned by the Church—

[3] Participants of the round table discussion: Austria: Judith Purkarthofer—CMFE and University of Vienna ; Germany: Lutz Helm—Radio Blau; Michael Nicolai—AMARC Europe and Radio Corax; Hungary: Joost van Beek—Central European University, Ireland: Sally Galiana—AMARC Europe and Near FM, Ciarán Murray—CMFE and Near FM; Italy: Nadia Belardi—CMFE; The Netherlands: Pieter de Wit—CMFE; Spain: Miriam Meda—AMARC Europe and Spanish Community Media Federation; Sweden: Christer Hederström—CMFE; United Kingdom: Jaqui Devereux—CMFE and Community Media Association; Pakistan: Shujaat Ali Khan—Hazara University.

Judith Purkarthofer, Austria.

> Accessibility is a key. It is not about excluding religious groups; they exclude themselves because you are not a community broadcaster when you are not accessible to every member of the community. But it is true that we have to reflect cultural realities of different countries. In some of them religion plays a very important role in the society—Sally Galiana, Ireland.

However, the participants of the round-table discussion were also open to talking about forms of religious content acceptable for them in the community media sector. Most of them declared that religious minority groups should have an opportunity to be involved in a local community radio, and prepare programmes alongside other groups, but not to dominate a station. They also strongly believed in the power of self-standards of the radio, which give the same conditions to any group involved in broadcasting. It was even stated it depends on how much they involve no-faith or other-faith members of the community. It was also underlined that religious broadcasters should fulfil all or most of the criteria, as outlined by international documents. Thus including them into the community media sector is acceptable when religious groups work open-mindedly and share the values of the community media. However, the biggest concern was raised by the fact that they operate only in the dominant religious manner and communicate different issues solely in a dogmatic way.

> If they haven't got a discussion full of hate speech, I think they should integrate into the program of community stations. But I cannot find any sense in being separated (mainly for themselves) from the rest of the community. I don't agree with the concept of 'religious radio'—Miriam Meda, Spain.
>
> Religious minorities should have the opportunity to take part in community radios if they do not advocate discrimination, e.g. homophobia—Lutz Helm, Germany.
>
> You don't expect to have one dogmatic opinion in community media, that is why religious broadcasting shouldn't be one of the forms of community broadcasting. They fulfil some of the criteria but not all, and it's not the good way to let a dominant voice rule in the backstage—Ciarán Murray, Ireland.
>
> If they are 'community oriented' but not 'community governed', that should not be good enough—Pieter de Wit, The Netherlands.

Another feasible suggestion emerged during the discussion—religious broadcasters should have an opportunity to obtain a different kind of licence, not the same as community broadcasters, so they could be regulated and measured by different standards.

> I think they should get their own licence, separate and different from community radio, as they don't fulfil basic requirements to be included in the community radio sector. I wouldn't say that they don't have the right to broadcast but I think that they should have a separate licence because they cannot fulfil the accessibility issue so they cannot have a community radio license—for example religious licences or special interest licences because they are not community radios. In Ireland it is possible to ask for "special interest licence" for example—Sally Galiana, Ireland.

However, introducing a scheme for religious broadcasting different than for community media may cause, in Christer Hederström's opinion, some problems, which he summarized as follows:

> It is very important when you lobby in different institutions to lobby for a not a very complicated model because when politicians have 5-7 different sectors it is very difficult for them to sort it out. That is why it is sometimes better to let religious groups broadcast in the framework of community broadcasting, especially when they share the frequency with other groups like in Scandinavia. But they shouldn't have their own community radio station. The Nordic and Netherland model is fine. Religious groups (or any other groups) shouldn't be able to have a monopoly on a community radio frequency or a community TV channel.

4. Religious Broadcasting as Part of the Community Media Sector

It is worth emphasising that religious broadcasting as part of the community media sector has a long tradition in non-European countries which were not only pioneers in the development of community broadcasting but maintain a strong sector to this day—especially the USA and Australia. In Australia there are more than 360 community radio licences and over 80 community television licences (Community Broadcasting Association of Australia et al., 2010). Christian stations make up almost 10 per cent of all community radio stations, with 36 full-time Christian stations. In America religious broadcasters are mostly active in the form of Low Power Broadcasting—small scale community radios. LPFM stations are authorized for non-commercial educational broadcasting with a power of 100 watts or less (Federal Communications Commission, 2014)[4]. Accord-

[4] Federal Communications Commission, Low Power FM Broadcast Radio Stations, http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/low-

ing to the data from 2009: 46% of licences in the USA for LPFM were given to religious broadcasters (Connolly-Ahern, Schejter, & Obar, 2012).

In practice, religious radio stations in many European countries also officially belong to the community sector. In the UK there are several different religious radios (Muslim[5], Christian[6], Panjabi[7], etc.) working under a strict licensing regime for community media. As with all the other community broadcasters, they have to show in what sense the community can benefit from their station and, after fulfilling these criteria, they have to aim at social gain, etc. no matter if the community broadcaster is religious or not.

In Sweden only some religious programmes are broadcasted on community channels, but there is no church community radio there. Religious organisations have the right to broadcast on community radio or community TV alongside other organisations, as usual by sharing the opportunity in a given settlement or area. As it was explained by Christer Hederström in Potsdam: *In general it's very difficult to take control over a community radio frequency because they have to share the frequency with other groups interested in broadcasting in the city, that's why there is no problem with religious broadcasting in Nordic countries.* However, there is another tendency observed in Sweden—minority radio stations are becoming more and more religion-oriented.

In Austria religious broadcasters belong to the private radio sector (Radio Maria[8], Radio Stefansdom[9]) and are not allowed to apply for the community radio funding[10]. The criteria of such a financing scheme were developed in cooperation with the Association of Austrian Community Radios.

In Ireland, one Christian radio station (Life FM)[11] has a community radio licence and is a member of CRAOL, the Community Radio Forum of Ireland. This is the same type of community licence that campus radio and Irish language radio use, and is legally called a 'community of interest station.' In Ireland it is possible to apply for a 'special interest licence', which is different from the community radio licence. The only other Christian radio, Spirit Radio[12], broadcasting in Ireland, has such a licence and broadcasts on a quasi-national basis.

In the Netherlands there are no religious radio broadcasters except for those transmitting on mid-wave (AM), but, as in Germany, they are not part of the community radio system. To understand the Dutch case: there are no separate licences for religious groups, young groups etc., there is only an opportunity to apply for a local community licence controlled by representatives of different groups present in the given community.

The German religious sector[13] was given non-commercial licences and such stations are subsidized by taxes, using public money even if they are eventually active in the framework of commercial broadcasting. This does not, however, seem to be fully acceptable for members of the society. As Michael Nicolai summarized it in Potsdam: *They do private radio with public money, which is something weird*.

The case of Spain is very complex and self-contradictory. The Spanish legal regulation[14] recognized community media, but did not specify if community media can be cultural, religious, etc. In practice community broadcasters exist, but they do not have community media licences. *Community broadcasters in Spain are illegal no matter if they are religious or not*—summarized Miriam Meda. In a country where one of the largest national radio stations (COPE[15]) is 50% owned by the Catholic Church, currently regional and national laws regarding audiovisual broadcasting do not speak about religious communities or religious broadcasting[16].

To sum up, some countries treat religious broadcasting as a form of community media, some of them allow religious stations to broadcast on the basis of slightly different regulations or in the commercial broadcasting scheme. This is related to the history of broadcasting in particular countries, their political system and culture of the society, as well as the degree of its religiousness. Yet the existence of religious broadcasting in the legal framework constructed for community broadcasting should not be treated as something very uncommon. The problem becomes more serious when the religious broadcasting begins dominating other forms of community broadcasting, which seems to be the case in Poland and Hungary. In this article, we

---

power-fm-broadcast-radio-stations-lpfm

[5] Unity FM (Birmingham): http://www.unityfm.net

[6] Flame FM: http://www.flamefm.co.uk

[7] Desi Radio (Southall, London) http://www.desiradio.org.uk

[8] Radio Maria: http://www.radiomaria.at

[9] Radio Stefansdom: http://www.radiostephansdom.at

[10] Austrian Media Regulation: https://www.rtr.at

[11] LifeFM: http://www.lifefm.ie/life/Index.html

[12] Spirit Radio: http://www.spiritradio.ie

[13] Radio Horeb: http://www.horeb.org
Münchener Kirchenradio: http://www.muenchner-kirchennachrichten.de/muenchner-kirchenradio.html
Domradio: http://www.domradio.de
Radio Maria: http://www.phonostar.de/radio/radiomaria/deutschland

[14] Ley 7/2010, de 31 de marzo, General de la Comunicación Audiovisual. General Law on Audiovisual Communication. (31.03.2010.) Retrieved from http://noticias.juridicas.com/base_datos/Admin/l7-2010.html

[15] COPE: http://www.cope.es

[16] Radio Maria: http://www.radiomaria.es
In Catalonia, there is one Adventist station: http://eud.adventist.org/news/detail/date/2014/09/11/spain-adventist-radio-station-obtains-important-licence

bring evidence to prove this argument by outlining the historical and sociological background of this phenomenon, as well as analysing the legal framework of the third sector of broadcasting in these countries. The current situation of the religious broadcasters existing as part of community broadcasting sector in Poland and Hungary is also described.

5. Hungary

The history of the Hungarian community broadcasting sector can be divided into four periods: before 1996, 1996–2002, 2002–2010, and since 2011.

Before 1996, broadcasting was a state monopoly, there were only a few pirate radio stations broadcasting during the events of 1956 in Hungary and 1968 in Czechoslovakia (Cs. Kádár, 2004, pp. 17-22). Alternative broadcasting could be heard for the first time in Hungary after the change of the regime in 1991. Tilos Radio (Forbidden Radio) began broadcasting on 21 August 1991, working as a pirate radio at first.

The first media law of the new era—Act I of 1996 on radio and television broadcasting (Parliament of the Republic of Hungary, 1996)—adopted by the Parliament at the end of 1995, dealt with the community radio stations on a financial basis and labelled them as 'non-profit purpose programme providers'. The conditions in Act I of 1996—such as strictly for non profit operation (§ 2 (34)) and only 3 minutes advertisement in each programme hour (§ 16 (5))—led the emerging community media sector into a serious crisis, and by the turn of the millennium, community radio broadcasting had lost its importance. It was the era of emerging local commercial radio stations.

In 2002 the National Radio and Television Commission, seeing the unsatisfactory situation in the community sector, launched an application system for the so called 'small community radio' stations, with limited technical parameters e.g. the output of the transmitter must not be over 10 Watts and the height of the antenna must not be over 30 meters, with a typical maximum coverage area: one kilometre stereo and two kilometres mono.

All these regulations may be viewed in two ways. The new application system made it possible to create non-profit local broadcasting as a unique phenomenon in Eastern Europe, with relatively simple legal and technical conditions, but on the other hand, the strictly limited parameters did not ensure effective operation. By the end of 2010, 68 small community radio stations were already broadcasting in 53 areas across Hungary. A number of small community radio stations can be found in small villages or disadvantaged areas outside big cities where several mainstream local radio stations also operate (ORTT Database, 2008). Surprisingly, more small community stations have been launched in the eastern part of the country, where people are struggling with economic and social problems, than in the western, so-called 'rich' part of Hungary (Gosztonyi, 2007).

Each period is characterised by particular features, but to understand the quick growth of religious community radio stations this article mainly focuses on the changes around 2010. Although the Church has a smaller place in the everyday life of most of the Hungarians compared with Polish people, Fidesz—Hungarian Civic Alliance (former Alliance of Young Democrats) and Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) in coalition won two supermajorities in the National Assembly (both in 2010 and 2014 elections) and have a majority in Parliament. This explains well the growing number of licences won by religious broadcasters. This article examines Act CLXXXV of 2010 on media services and mass media (Parliament of the Republic of Hungary, 2010), as this regulation changed every single aspect of the life of community radios, and contains—unlike the previous regulation—an unconventional vision of community media. In Hungary, community radio was legitimised and functioning from 1996. By the end of 2010 there were 68 small community radio stations across the country, none of which was a religious radio station. Since the beginning of 2011, the new law has made it much more difficult for them to operate, and the number of community radios fell to 44. On the other hand, this created the chance to establish religious community broadcasters. Many people claim that there is a danger that the real principles of the community radio will be lost in Hungary, and as data shows the present practice might easily lead to the disappearance of genuine community radio activity in Hungary and business and religion oriented community radio will flourish.[17]

5.1. A New Approach to Community Media in Hungary

After the general elections in the spring of 2010, life in Hungary changed in a number of ways. Legislation and enactment accelerated[18] and non-governmental voices had limited influence during these processes. A new era began for community broadcasting in Hungary as the 2010 law CLXXXV relating to Media Services and Mass Media was passed on 22 December and came into force on 1 January 2011 (Brouillette & van Beek, 2012). On the one hand, the sector was satisfied with the fact that the community media service as such was codified, on the other hand the Hungarian Federation of Free Radios realized that the definition was formulated inappropriately in the regulations. Paragraph 66

[17] To give a brief summary of the 20 years of community broadcasting in Hungary seems impossible taking into account the length of this article, but there are several publications for those who are interested (Brouillette & van Beek 2012, Gosztonyi, 2009, Velics, 2012a, 2012b.).

[18] 150 new or amended acts came out during the first year.

of Chapter IV in the new media law gives a brief overview of the community media service category and some criteria, but it lacks several important elements, which are distinctive characteristic features of community radio activity, and as a new element it named the religious communities as target audience:

> **Act CLXXXV of 2010 on Media Services and Mass Media** (Parliament of the Republic of Hungary, 2010)
> **Chapter IV, Article 66.**
> Community Media Service Provision
> (1) Linear community media services are intended to serve or satisfy the special needs for information of and to provide access to cultural programmes for
> a) certain social, national, or ethnic minority, cultural or religious communities or groups, or
> b) residents of a given settlement, region or coverage area, or
> c) in the majority of their transmission time programmes aimed at achieving the objectives of public service media service provision set in Article 83.

The new law does not contain the previous 'small community radio' category[19]. Furthermore, this new regulation includes almost impossible requirements for the volunteer-based radio stations: regular coverage of the news of a given social or local community, providing cultural programmes, at least four-hour long programme every day, 66% of public service content, 50% of the music played must be Hungarian, etc. Stations still have the possibility of broadcasting six minutes of advertisements in a one programme hour. (Act CLXXXV of 2010. §66. and §36 (1)) This new regulation also provided profitable advantages for local and regional broadcasters: a possibility to apply for registration as a linear community broadcaster with access to financial resources previously only intended for the community stations, as well as exemption from the broadcasting licence fee. The community media sector was aware of the hidden governmental intentions such as drawing a new media landscape and minimalizing the risk of critical-alternative voices; it was clear as a potential consequence from the very beginning. At the same time the sector was a bit short-sighted and focused only on the already coexistent players, but was totally unaware of the other risk, that a large number of new organizations would show interest in community media, and the new players, e.g. church radios, would step on the stage unexpectedly.

Apart from the difficulties, which came from the regulators, most community radio stations were and still are suffering from financial difficulties. Since the global financial crisis began, the Hungarian economy has become more vulnerable, the support coming from local business or from the local government has started to dwindle. The resources, which used to be available for non-profit organizations both on local and national levels, are diminishing. By mid 2011 some of the not-for-profit organizations, such as tele-cottages and owners of the community radio stations had run out of financial resources. However, the main changes went through by licensing.

5.2. Regulatory Angle in Hungary

During the first working period (01.01.2011–20.10.2011) of the newly established National Media and Infocommunications Authority[20] there were 109 applicants for 35 community licences, and only a few winners. According to the database of the Hungarian Media Council (HMC Database, 2012a, 2012b) the following new stations got permits for broadcasting as community broadcasters:

> *Local and regional level[21]: 19 community radio licence (12 went to church radio)*
> 5 stations of Lánchíd Rádió (close to governing party)
> 7 stations of Mária Rádió (catholic mission)
> 2 stations of Katolikus Rádió (catholic)
> 3 stations of Európa Rádió (reformed)
> 1 station of Sárrét FM
> 1 station of Friends-Lan, private company
> *Small community category: 8 new stations*
> 3 applications from private companies
> 3 applications from individuals
> 2 applications from local cultural associations.

By the end of December 2011 the majority of those stations, which had received a new linear community

[19] Licence is valid until expiry date, renewal is possible only under the new conditions.

[20] The National Media and Infocommunications Authority participates in the implementation of the Government's policy—as defined by law—in the areas of frequency management and communications. The Authority comprises the following entities with independent powers: President of the National Media and Infocommunications Authority, the Media Council of the National Media and Infocommunications Authority and the Office of the National Media and Infocommunications Authority. The Authority reports to Parliament on its activities on an annual basis. In relation to the communications sector, the Authority is responsible for ensuring the smooth and effective functioning and development of the communications market, for safeguarding the interests of the users and of those pursuing communications activities, for fostering the development and maintenance of fair and efficient competition within the electronic communications sector, and for the supervision of legal compliance of the conduct of organizations and persons pursuing communications activities. (Act CLXXXV of 2010 § 109-110.)

[21] For comparison the two "old" community radios in this category: Tilos Rádió and Civil Rádió have had good international reputation as free radios for 20 years.

media service provider status were professional, local, regional commercial-style or religious radio stations. They paid employees and editors and operated without volunteers or a genuine community of radio listeners. On the local and regional level 19 new permits were mostly given to those who had strong links to the church or the governing party.

The situation was similar at the beginning of 2012, when the database of the Hungarian Media Authority included only 44 small community radio stations, new ones and remaining old ones together—in the face of the previous number (68) the loss was big (HMC Database, 2012a). Furthermore, a new phenomenon is prevailing nowadays. Those companies and organizations, who want to build a media-empire, establish one or two companies using them to apply for a licence in different sites, and after gaining the licence they easily get more sites and frequencies for expanding the coverage area. They can then broadcast mainly the same content on different sites. Act CLXXXV of 2010. §71 (1) refers to the maximum number of licences as follows:

> Those authorised to provide analogue linear radio media services based on a public contract or broadcasting agreement shall have the right to simultaneously provide
> a) maximum one national analogue linear radio media service,
> b) maximum two regional and four local analogue linear radio media services, or
> c) maximum twelve local analogue linear radio media services.

This means cheaper operations (only a small number of staff on each site, apart from the central staff), larger coverage area (all over the country) and more potential audience, which makes them preferable for the advertisers, etc. However, while it seems a good business model, in the meantime the main feature of community radio has been lost. Volunteer based operation is questionable, access is limited; plurality of opinions and attitudes is disappearing.

According to the database of the Hungarian Media Council saved on 17. October 2014, there are 20 broadcasters on regional level: 15 community and 5 commercial (See Table 1. Colours were used to highlight the dominance of different churches).

Among regional community broadcasters there are still two internationally well-known community radio stations: Tilos Radio and Civil Radio. They have the licences but there is a risk of losing them, as the authority tries to find weak points in their renewal applications. Tilos and Civil have been operating for more than 20 years with a common feature: using only one frequency on one coverage area: Budapest. Among the newcomers, the big winners are church radio stations and Lánchíd Rádió, whose ownership is said to be related to Infocenter Ltd., the right-wing owner of the sole commercial radio station that can be heard throughout the country: Class FM (Nagy, 2012, p. 5). Lánchíd Rádió uses 9 frequencies covering mainly the western part of the country. The Catholic Church established two organizations to apply for licences. The Hungarian Catholic Church Ltd. has won 2 licences and uses 13 frequencies all over the country, while the Hungarian Catholic Church Foundation also has 2 licences and uses 4 frequencies in the north-eastern part of the country. The Reformed Church, using two applicant organizations, has received 2 licences and uses 3 frequencies, also in the north-eastern part of the country. Mária Rádió uses 12 frequencies, covering the middle and the western part of the country. All other 5 community broadcasters on the regional level still have a set of basic features: one owner, one radio, one licence, one frequency, one location.

27 broadcasters still have the licence of a small community radio, working on a strictly limited coverage area of one geographical location, basically it means only 1 km stereo broadcast and 2 km mono broadcast with a very limited transmitter capacity. The loss of "old" community radios is huge in this category. Community radios, which operated for many years in villages or small towns or at universities, were closed down. This category is not so interesting for church radios because of the limited criteria of operating, the exception is the Evangelistic Church, whose first ever radio station—Credo Radio—operates on the technical basis of a former university radio in Szombathely (See Table 2).

On the local level there are 103 broadcasters (30 community and 73 commercial). Gaining a licence for local broadcasting means a wider coverage area for church radio stations. Using both opportunities (regional broadcasting and local broadcasting) means optimized operation that enables the building up of a media empire of the Church that can be heard throughout the country. Mária Rádió has 8 licences, the Catholic Church has 7 licences, the Reformed Church has 4 licences, Lánchíd Rádió has 2 licences and works on 5 locations, different business owners have 8 licences, and Radio Monoster, a Slovenian non-profit radio, has 1 licence and uses 2 frequencies due to the geographical need next to the Slovenian border. In comparison to the increasing number of church radio stations licensed since 2011, only a small number of non-church operations have been granted licences (See Table 3).

Today, Church radio stations not only cover the main cities of Hungary, but offer a wide choice of different religious stations in some sites. E.g. for the inhabitants of Szombathely with 80.000 residents, a county town next to the Austrian border, a Catholic radio station and an Evangelistic radio station can be heard, alongside two commercial channels, while the

only small community radio of the University of West-Hungary Berzsenyi Rádió had to stop operations because of unfavourable changes of the media regulations. The radio studio is now used by the Evangelistic radio station. It is worth noting that the latest statistics show that 52% of people are Roman Catholics; while only 2.7 % are of the Evangelical faith in this region. (KSH, 2011).

Table 1. Linear community media service providers on regional level.

Linear community media service providers on regional level			
Name of the media service provider	**Name of the radio**	**Site and frequency**	**Claim started y/m/d**
Műsor-Hang Zrt.	Gazdasági Rádió	Budapest 105,9 MHz	2002.11.05
Tilos Kulturális Alapítvány	Tilos Rádió	Budapest 90,3 MHz	2002.11.06.[22]
FM4 Rádió Kft.	Mária Rádió	Budapest 94,2 MHz + Komárom 88,3 MHz + Vác 94,1 MHz + Gyál 98,9 MHz + Monor 106,3 MHz + Pécel 91,7 MHz + Dömös 104,9 MHz + Komló 91,4 MHz + Piliscsaba 104,2 MHz + Esztergom 97,4 MHz + Dabas 97,5 MHz + Zalaegerszeg Tarr company network	2002.11.06.
Aeriel Rádió Műsorszóró Kft.	Klasszik Rádió	Budapest 92,1 MHz	2002.11.09.
Rádió Q Kft.	Rádió Q	Budapest 99,5 MHz	2006.10.27.
Lánchíd Rádió Kft.	Lánchíd Rádió	Budapest 100,3 MHz + Székesfehérvár 106,6 MHz + Balatonfüred 96, 2 MHz + Zalaegerszeg 88,3 MHz + Keszthely 93,4 MHz + Dunaújváros 99,1 MHz + Győr 88,1 MHz + Tatabánya 107,0 MHz + Szombathely 97,1 MHz	2006.10.28.
Európa Rádió Nonprofit Kft.	Európa Rádió 100,5	Nyíregyháza 100,5 MHz	2008.03.29.
Magyar Katolikus Rádió Zrt.	Magyar Katolikus Rádió 107,4 MHz	Szombathely 107,4 MHz + Zalaegerszeg 92,9 MHz	2011.03.26.
Magyar Katolikus Rádió Zrt.	Magyar Katolikus Rádió	Székesfehérvár 96,1 MHz + Budapest 102,1 MHz + Esztergom 92,5 MHz + Vác 97,9 MHz + Veszprém 94,6 MHz + Mór 89,0 MHZ + Sárbogárd 96,6 MHz + Tapolca 101,8 MHz + Kiskőrös 91,7 MHz + Kalocsa 94,5 MHz + Dunaföldvár 104,1 MHZ	2011.04.20.
Inforádió Kft.	Inforádió	Budapest 88,1 MHz	2012.09.01.
Magyar Katolikus Rádió Alapítvány	Szent István Rádió 91,8	Eger 91,8 MHz + Gyöngyös 102,2 MHz	2012.12.20.
Magyar Katolikus Rádió Alapítvány	Szent István Rádió 95,1	Miskolc 95,1 MHz + Encs 95,4 MHz	2012.12.20.
Civil Rádiózásért Alapítvány	Civil Rádió	Budapest 98,0 MHz	2012.12.21.[23]
Európa Rádió Nonprofit Kft.	Európa Rádió	Miskolc 90,4 MHz + Mezőkövesd 102,1 MHz	2013.04.06.
Klubrádió Zrt.	Klubrádió	Budapest 92,9 MHz	2014.02.14.

Notes: Origin of data: Database of Hungarian Media Council—17. 10. 2014. Colours: Mária Rádió—grey, Catholic Church—yellow, Reformed Church—blue.

[22] Tilos Rádió started broadcasting on 1991.08.21., their licence was renewed several times by the authority.
[23] Civil Rádió got licence first on 1995.09.01., their licence was renewed several times by authority.

Table 2. Ownership of small community radio stations.

Ownership of small community radio stations	
NGO: foundation, association	11
School, university	2
company and business	9
individual person	4
Church	1

Notes: Origin of data: Database of Hungarian Media Council—17. 10. 2014. Colour: Evangelistic Church—green.

Table 3. Linear community media service providers on the local level.

Name of the media service provider	Name of the radio	Site and frequency	Claim started y/m/d
Fekete Júlia (individual)	VÁR FM Rádió Kisvárda	Kisvárda 93,4 MHz	2004.12.03.
Médiahíd Kft.	Híd Rádió	Telkibánya 100,6 MHz	2006.03.15.
Hegyalja Média Kft.	Szent István Rádió -Tokaj	Tokaj 101,8 MHz	2006.03.17.
Magyar Jazz Rádió Kft.	Jazzy Rádió	Dél-Budapest 90,9 MHz	2006.10.27.
Európa Rádió Nonprofit Kft.	Európa Rádió 90,4	Kisújszállás 103,2 MHz	2007.05.08.
Magyarországi Mária Rádió Közhasznú Alapítvány	Mária Rádió Bakony	Ajka 93,2 MHz	2010.11.24.
Európa Rádió Nonprofit Kft.	Európa Rádió 94,4	Debrecen 94,4 MHz	2011.03.20.
Európa Rádió Nonprofit Kft.	Európa Rádió 87,9	Szeged 87,9 MHz	2011.03.20.
FM4 Rádió Kft.	Mária Rádió Völgyhíd	Veszprém 95,1 MHz	2011.03.26.
Magyarországi Mária Rádió Közhasznú Alapítvány	Mária Rádió Palota	Várpalota 90,0 MHz	2011.04.05.
Plusz Rádió Kft.	Győr Plusz Rádió	Győr 100.1 MHz	2011.04.20.
Sárrét Média Bt.	Sárrét FM	Püspökladány 91,8 MHz	2011.06.28.
Mária Rádió Frekvencia Kft.	Mária Rádió Celldömölk	Celldömölk 92,5 MHz	2011.07.12.
Mária Rádió Frekvencia Kft.	Mária Rádió Mór	Mór 92,9 MHz	2011.07.12.
Mária Rádió Frekvencia Kft.	Mária Rádió Pápa	Pápa 90,8 MHz	2011.07.12.
Mária Rádió Frekvencia Kft.	Mária Rádió Sárvár	Sárvár 95,2 MHz	2011.07.12.
Magyar Katolikus Rádió Alapítvány	Szent István Rádió 94,0	Hatvan 94,0 MHz	2012.12.20.
Magyar Katolikus Rádió Alapítvány	Szent István Rádió 90,6	Sátoraljaújhely 90,6 MHz	2012.12.20.
Szlovén Rádió Közhasznú Nonprofit Kft.	Radio Monoster	Szentgotthárd 100,6 MHz + Felsőszölnök 97,7 MHz	2013.01.01.
Fehérvár Médiacentrum Kft.	Vörösmarty Rádió	Székesfehérvár 99,2 MHz	2013.01.30.
Lánchíd Rádió Kft.	Lánchíd Rádió Pécs	Pécs 94,6 MHz + Kaposvár 97,5 MHz + Szigetvár 98,9 MHz + Siklós 88,6 MHz	2013.03.20.
Friss Rádió Kft.	FM90 Campus Rádió	Debrecen 90,0 MHz	2013.04.05.
Magyar Katolikus Rádió Zrt.	Magyar Katolikus Rádió 92,3	Debrecen 92,3 MHz	2013.04.19.
Magyar Katolikus Rádió Alapítvány	Szent István Rádió 96,4	Törökszentmiklós 96,4 MHz	2013.04.19.
Magyar Katolikus Rádió Zrt.	Magyar Katolikus Rádió 102,6	Kaposvár 102,6 MHz	2013.08.08.
Halas Rádió Nonprofit Kft.	Halas Rádió	Kiskunhalas 92,9 MHz	2013.09.05.
Európa Rádió Nonprofit Kft.	Európa Rádió FM 100,0	Sátoraljaújhely 100,0 MHz	2013.10.09.
Mária Rádió Frekvencia Kft.	Mária Rádió Cegléd	Cegléd 88,3 MHz	2013.11.08.
Magyar Katolikus Rádió Zrt.	Magyar Katolikus Rádió 101,2	Pécs 101,2 MHz	2013.11.14.
Lánchíd Rádió Kft.	Lánchíd Rádió 100,2	Szeged 100,2 MHz	2014.02.06.

Notes: Origin of data: Database of Hungarian Media Council—17. 10. 2014. Colours: Mária Rádió—grey, Catholic Church—yellow, Reformed Church—blue.

6. Poland

6.1. The History of Community Broadcasting

Polish independent media has a long and interesting history. In Poland, *samizdat* publications started in 1976 and gradually undermined the official information system (Dobek-Ostrowska, 2013). Pluralistic media were considered as one of the founding elements of a "self-managed republic" claimed by the trade union *Solidarność*, the first independent trade union of the People's Republic of Poland (Brodzki & Surdykowski, 1981). Before 1989 there were plenty of illegal, independent press titles. What is more, in 1982 a pirate radio station "Radio Solidarity" started broadcasting (Majchrzak, 2010).

However, in the first Broadcasting Act in Poland which was passed in 1992, there was no recognition of the third tier of broadcasting. Only public and commercial broadcasters got a chance to apply for licences. In practice, some not fully commercially oriented entities, such as universities and churches, also applied for commercial licences. The situation changed in 2001, when a new category in the media law—"social broadcaster" (nadawca społeczny)—was introduced. This category was thought similar to some extent to what is called "community broadcaster" in some other countries.

> **Law on Radio and Television Broadcasting 1992**
> (Parliament of the Republic of Poland, 1992)
> "Social broadcaster" shall mean a broadcaster who:
> 1) propagates learning and educational activities, promotes charitable deeds, respects the Christian system of values, being guided by the universal principles of ethics, and strives to preserve national identity in the programme service,
> 2) does not transmit programmes or other broadcasts referred to in Article 18 paragraph 5 within the programme service,
> 3) does not transmit commercial communications,
> 4) does not charge any fees for transmission, retransmission or reception of the programme service.
> The following entities may apply to the National Broadcasting Council to be granted the status of a "social broadcaster":
> 1) an association, within the framework of implementing its statutory objectives,
> 2) a foundation, within the framework of implementing its statutory objectives,
> 3) a church or a religious legal person of a given church, or a religious organisation whose status is regulated by an Act of Parliament.

It was also specified that social broadcasters are exempt from a licence fee. In comparison to community media definitions there was a strong emphasis on the fact that religious institutions and a Christian system of values are very welcome within this legal framework. The person who was actively involved in lobbying for this regulation was Tadeusz Rydzyk, the director of the nationwide Catholic radio station Radio Maryja, which became the biggest beneficiary of this media regulation. The licence fee—not very high in the case of small local stations—becomes a big sum when talking about a nationwide station (Sygut, 2005).

The legally recognised third tier of broadcasting in Poland was for many years actively and exclusively used by religious radios. The exclusion of 'social broadcasters' from the advertising market, combined with no other governmental support for such entities, resulted in a lack of interest in applying for such a status among, for example, NGOs. They were not formally excluded but in practice only religious broadcasters were able to collect money for broadcasting without available advertising revenues. In 2013 there were only eight radio 'social broadcasters'. All of them were connected to the Church—seven broadcast locally and one was a powerful nationwide radio station Radio Maryja. Additionally, in 2014 there were 2 special cable TV licences given to a housing estate TV Sadyba and Catholic TV Serbinów (See Table 4.). Apart from Radio Maryja, the operating 'social broadcasters' are small and locally oriented. One of them—Radio Orthodoxia broadcasts from Białystok, not for Catholics but for Orthodox Christians and is part of the Białystok-Gdańsk Orthodox Diocese.

The fact that for years social broadcasting was limited to religious broadcasting very badly influenced the understanding of the idea of the community tier of broadcasting in Poland. As research showed, not only the Polish society but also representatives of local broadcasters and those run by NGOs often equate the third sector of broadcasting or community broadcasting with religious broadcasting, and are not aware of the role and principles of community media operation in Europe. This is one of the reasons why community media development in directions other than religious is so complicated in Poland (Doliwa, 2013; Jędrzejewski & Doliwa, 2013).

The problem of overrepresentation of religious broadcasters among 'social broadcasters' was noticed by the National Broadcasting Council, which in 2012 announced public consultations on broadcasting related issues, including a 'social broadcaster' status (Jędrzejewski & Doliwa, 2013). However, the regulator does not have a legislative initiative and up to now there is little political will to change the existing system. Yet the fact that the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage prepared a project of amendments in the Broadcasting Act with some expected changes in the model of the third sector of broadcasting is what currently *gives some hope* for changes in the situation of the third sector in Poland (Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, 2015). The project

Table 4. Social broadcasters in Poland 2014.

	Number of licence	Name of the media service provider	Name of the station
1	003/K/2008-R	Prowincja Warszawska Zgromadzenia Najświętszego Odkupiciela (Redemptoryści)	Radio Maryja
2	015/K/2008-R	Klasztor OO. Paulinów Jasna Góra—Częstochowa	Radio Jasna Góra
3	068/K/2011-R	Prawosławna Diecezja Białostocko-Gdańska	Radio Orthodoxia
4	075/K/2011-R	Archidiecezja Przemyska Obrządku Łacińskiego	Radio Fara—Rozgłośnia Archidiecezji Przemyskiej
5	077/K/2011-R	Archidiecezja Wrocławska	Katolickie Radio Rodzina
6	078/K/2011-R	Diecezja Kaliska	Radio Rodzina Diecezji Kaliskiej
7	104/K/2011-R	Parafia Rzymsko-Katolicka p.w. Św. Jana Chrzciciela w Zbroszy Dużej	Radio Katolickie Zbrosza Duża
8	199/K/2013-R	Rzymsko-Katolicka Parafia p.w. Nawiedzenia NMP	AIN KARIM Radio Skomielna Czarna
9	TK-0028/05	Stowarzyszenie Sadyba z siedzibą w Warszawie	Telewizja Sadyba
10	543/2013-TK	Parafia Rzymsko-Katolicka p.w. Matki Bożej Nieustającej Pomocy w Tarnobrzegu	Katolicka Telewizja Serbinów

Source: National Broadcasting Council.

was undergoing public consultation until the 4th March 2015. However, the past few years have seen several attempts to amend the Broadcasting Act in the field of the system of financing of public media in Poland, as well as in the third sector broadcasting model, none of which was successful.

6.2. A Special Position of the Religious Broadcasting in Poland

The special role of the Catholic Church in Polish society has its roots in the history of Poland. The bond between Church and society appears to have strengthened in difficult moments of Polish history, like the 3 partitions of the country in 1772, 1793, and 1795 when the Church was a depositary of the national culture and tradition. It was again apparent after the Second World War when Poland became a part of the Soviet bloc and the Church supported Polish society in its striving for independence (Stetkiewicz, 2013). It is noteworthy that after the Nazi extermination of Polish Jews, post-war changes of the national borders and relocation of certain ethnic minorities (both into and out of Poland), the Polish population became 96.6% Roman Catholic (Casanova, 2005, p. 164). After 1989 the new government—taking into account the special role of the Polish Church in the communist period and wanting to compensate for the Catholic Church persecutions before 1989—was willing to make large concessions in relation to the Roman Catholic Church in Poland. The expression of this special attitude was the Act of the 17th of May 1989 about the state attitude towards the Roman Catholic Church in PRL (Parliament of the Peoples Republic of Poland, 1989). By virtue of this law, the Church, before any other entity, secured the right to broadcast. In 1991 the Ministry of Communications gave the Church the first round of frequencies (KRRiT, 1998, p. 130). The special role of the Church in the broadcasting system was then confirmed in the Broadcasting Act (Parliament of the Republic of Poland, 1992). To date there exists a controversial paragraph in this document, stating that *programmes or other broadcasts shall respect the religious beliefs of the public and especially the Christian system of values*.

The current situation of religious broadcasting in Poland appears thus—the majority of stations joined a network called PLUS organised by a big commercial media group TIME (20 stations); Radio Vox—also connected with the group TIME broadcasts as cross-regional station; 17 broadcasting entities remain independent; an additional 9 have a “social broadcasting status” (including one powerful nationwide radio station, Radio Maryja). There is also a terrestrial digital nationwide television Trwam. All in all, parishes, convents and dioceses have about 50 licences, which makes up almost a quarter of the total number of broadcasting stations in Poland (KRRiT, 2014). Most of the religious stations are financed from the advertising revenue (apart from social broadcasters) supplemented by donations (KRRiT, 2014).

The most influential station is the nationwide Radio Maryja, which was founded in Toruń in 1991 by Tadeusz Rydzyk. As shown in Figure 1, this station also has the biggest budget at its disposal. The station is financed by its loyal listeners who also form a religious movement The Radio Maryja Family, whose members are especially elderly, poorer people. Despite a community based financial model, the station is definitely not community governed—the director of the station has always had a decisive voice and the station is usually closed to people who represent a point of view significantly different than that of the director. There have also been some examples of hate speech recorded in the programmes

of Radio Maryja (Maszkowski, 2011). These points make this station, despite having a special licence for 'social broadcasting', significantly different to the community media in other European countries. Independent religious broadcasters not connected to a commercial network, and local 'social broadcasters' seem to be most similar to the community model. According to the data collected during interviews with representatives of these stations, in their own opinion, these stations follow to a greater or lesser extent all the points of the definition of community media taken from the Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue, apart from the independence from religious institutions (Doliwa, 2014).

7. Conclusions

The analyses of documents related to community broadcasting in the EU, discussion with media experts and the overview of the situation of religious broadcasting in different countries showed the complexity of the problem of affiliation of religious broadcasting to the community media sector. There seems to be a general consensus that religious broadcasts could and should be part of the local community broadcasting programmes but the practice of giving community licences to religious entities with religion-oriented programmes is often difficult to accept for media experts and community media activists.

The main concern about religious broadcasting in the community media scheme is related to two elements: accessibility and community ownership, which are the core values for community media. Such stations are frequently not completely open to the full spectrum of voices present in the local community they serve, and they are very rarely community governed. The owner of the licence is very often not a community but a religious institution.

The practices around Europe concerning religious broadcasting in the community media context are so varied that it is very difficult to indicate the main trend. However, in the countries where the spectrum share is unbalanced and the religious sector is becoming the major beneficiary of some of the community broadcasting regulations (like in Poland and Hungary) there is a risk that this sector can monopolize the field, and cause limitations in the diversity of the programming. These countries might be the main beneficiaries of a common European regulation. The analysis of documents, discussion with media experts and the overview of the situation of religious broadcasting in different countries has shown how difficult it is to even imagine (and realise in the future) a common regulation on community media for the whole Europe.

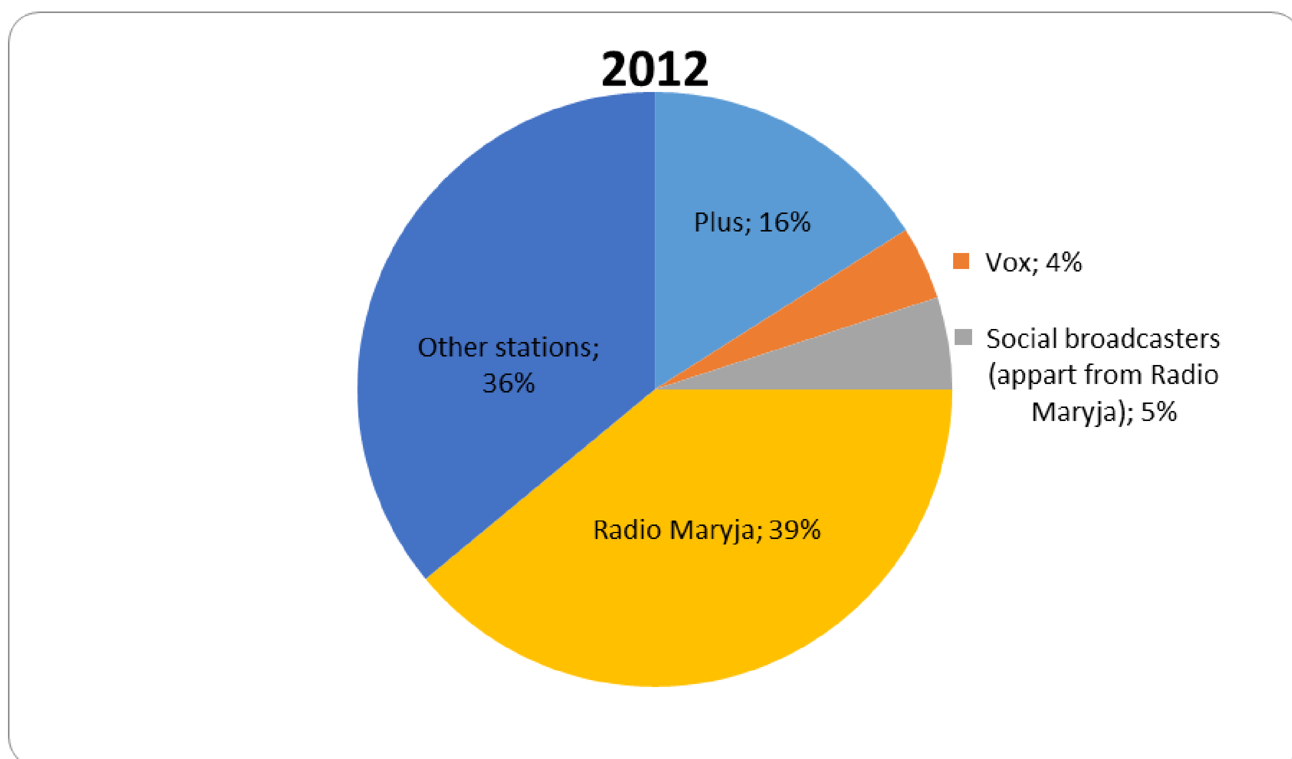


Figure 1. The incomes of religious broadcasters from the advertising market, subsidies and donations together in 2012. Source: National Broadcasting Council.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the media experts and community media practitioners who shared their ideas and experiences about the discussed theme, which significantly contributed to the writing of this article.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

AMARC (1994). The community radio charter for Europe. Retrieved from http://www.amarc.org/index.php?p=Community_Radio_Charter_for_Europe

Belardi, N. (2014). An interview conducted by Urszula Doliwa and Gabriella Velics during the Bundesverband Freier Radios congress in Berlin/Potsdam Zukunftswerkstatt Community Media 2014, 8th November 2014.

Brodzki, S., & Surdykowski J. (1981). Stan komunikacji społecznej u progu lat osiemdziesiątych. [The condition of social communication at the beginning of the eighties]. Retrieved from http://dlibra.karta.org.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=6430

Brouillette, A., & van Beek, J. (Eds.) (2012). *Hungarian media laws in Europe. An assessment of consistency of Hungary's media laws with European practices and norms*. Budapest: Center for Media and Communication Studies, Central European University.

Casanova, J. (2005). *Public religions in the modern world*. Kraków: Nomos.

CMFE. (2012). Community media mapping and rating project. Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1hzhZ6Fs0qO1mOCPF5Ef5ftWkM9zkW3ENvFV2sjdkZDw/pub?single=true&gid=0&output=html

Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. (2009). *Declaration of the Committee of Ministers on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue*. Retrieved from http://www.connexx-av.de/upload/m49a288b318ab0_verweis1.pdf

Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, National Ethnic & Multicultural Broadcasters' Council, Australian Indigenous Communications Association, RPH Australia, Australian Community Television Alliance, & Christian Media Australia (2010). *Voices and vision. Community broadcasting in Australia*. Retrieved from http://www.cbaa.org.au/sites/default/files/Voices%20%26%20Vision%20%20All%20About%20Community%20Broadcasting.pdf

Connolly-Ahern, C., Schejter, A., & Obar, J. A. (2012). The poor man's lamb revisited? Assessing the state of LPFM at its 10th Anniversary. *The Communication Review, 15*(1), 21-44.

Cs. Kádár, P. (2004). *Közösségi rádiózás* [Community radio's broadcasting]. Budapest: MR.

Dobek-Ostrowska, B. (2013). Media landscapes in transition: Focus on Central and Eastern Europe. In *MediaAcT. Final Research Report 2013* (pp. 36-37). Hamm: Griebsch & Rochol Druck.

Doliwa U. (2013). Polish radio stations run by NGOs—Idea, organization, programme. In G. Stachyra (Ed.), *Radio a społeczeństwo* (pp. 63-78). Lublin: Uniwersytet Marii Skłodowskiej-Curie.

Doliwa U. (2014). Religious radio stations in Poland: A community-oriented Catholic ghetto? A case study of Radio Niepokalanów. In M. Oliveira, G. Stachyra, & G. Starkey (Eds.), *Radio: The resilient medium* (pp. 205-217). Sunderland: Centre for Research in Media and Cultural Studies.

Doliwa U., & Rankovic, L. (2014). Time for community media in Central and Eastern Europe. *Central European Journal of Communication*, *1*(12), 18-33.

European Parliament. (2008). *Resolution of 25 of September of 2008 of the European Parliament on Community Media in Europe (2008/2011(INI)*. Retrieved from http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0456+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN

Federal Communications Commission. (2014). Low power FM broadcast radio stations. Retrieved from http://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/low-power-fm-broadcast-radio-stations-lpfm

Galiana, S. (2014). An interview made by Urszula Doliwa and Gabriella Velics during the Bundesverband Freier Radios congress in Berlin/Potsdam Zukunftswerkstatt Community Media 2014, 8th November 2014.

Gosztonyi, G. (Ed.) (2007). *Kisközösségi rádiók Magyarországon* [Community radios in Hungary—research report]. Budapest, Hungary: Civil Rádiózásért Alapítvány.

Gosztonyi, G. (2009). Past, present and future of the Hungarian community radio movement. In K. Howley (Ed.), *Understanding community media* (pp. 297-308). SAGE Publications.

HMC Database. (2012a). Database of small community radio broadcasters from the web-page of the Hungarian Media Council. Retrieved from http://www.mediatanacs.hu/nyilvantartasok/1329206403_kiskoz_mszolg_20120213.xls

HMC Database. (2012b). Database of local and regional radio broadcasters from the web-page of the Hungarian Media Council. Retrieved from http://www.mediatanacs.hu/nyilvantartasok/1329206384_helyi_korzeti_mszolg_20120213.xls

Jędrzejewski, S., & Doliwa U. (2013). Local radio—An endangered species? The Polish case. *Media Transformations*, *10*, 74-99.

KRRiT. (1998). Information about the main problems of radio and television in 1997. Retrieved from http://www.krrit.gov.pl/Data/Files/_public/Portals/0/spraw

ozdania/spr1998/inf1998.pdf
KRRiT. (2014). Information about the main problems of radio and television in 2013. Retrieved from http://www.krrit.gov.pl/Data/Files/_public/Portals/0/sprawozdania/informacja.pdf
KSH. (2011). Hungarian Central Statistical Office, Database of latest census in 2011. Retrieved from http://www.ksh.hu/interaktiv/terkepek/mo/vallas.html
Lewis, P. (1984). Community radio: The Montreal conference and after. *Media, Culture, and Society*, 6, 137-150.
Lewis P. (2008). Promoting a social cohesion—The role of community media. Retrieved from www.amarc.org/conference_europe/document/Promoting_Social_Cohesion_The_Role_of_Communit_Media.pdf
Majchrzak, G. (2010). Niezależna działalność radiowa pod szyldem "Solidarność" 1980−1989 [Independent radio activity under the name „Solidarność" 1980-1989]. *Nasz Dziennik*, *200*, 5.
Maszkowski R. (2011). Radio Maryja xenophobic incidents and hate speech. Retrieved from http://www.radiomaryja.pl.eu.org/incidents.html
Nagy, K. (2012). *A Médiatanács frekvencia pályáztatási gyakorlata 2010−2011* [The Media Council's tender procedures for broadcasting frequencies 2010-2011]. Retrieved from http://mertek.eu/sites/default/files/reports/jelentes_palyaztatasi_gyakorlat.pdf
ORTT Database. (2008). National Radio and Television Commission, Register of small community radio broadcasters. Retrieved from http://www.ortt.hu/nyilvantartasok/1212656196kiskozossegi_20080604.xls
Parliament of the Republic of Hungary. (2010). *Act CLXXXV of 2010 on media services and mass media*. Retrieved from http://english.nmhh.hu/dokumentum/164596/media_act_final_updated_140930.pdf
Parliament of the Republic of Hungary. (1996). *Act I of 1996 on radio and television broadcasting*. Retrieved from http://english.nmhh.hu/dokumentum/150103/1_1996_torv_media_en_lekt_20070514.pdf
Parliament of the Peoples Republic of Poland. (1989). Ustawa z 17 maja 1989 roku o stosunku państwa do Kościoła katolickiego w PRL, (Legal Act) Dz. Ust. 1989, poz. 154. Retrieved 14.09.2014 from: http://mateusz.pl/dokumenty/ustawapk.htm
Parliament of the Republic of Poland. (1992). Law on radio and television broadcasting. Retrieved from http://www.krrit.gov.pl/en/for-broadcasters-and-operators/legal-regulations
Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. (2015). *The project of amendment in the Broadcasting Act from the 4th February 2015*. Retrieved from http://bip.mkidn.gov.pl/media/docs/konsultacje_pub/2015/201502094_02_15_projekt_ustawy.pdf
Stetkiewicz, L. (2013). The role of the Catholic Church and polish religiosity. *The Journal for the Sociological Integration of Religion and Society*, *3*(2), 1-17.
Sygut, T. (2005). Modlitwa na falach [A prayer on the waves]. Retrieved from http://www.przeglad-tygodnik.pl/pl/artykul/modlitwa-na-falach
Velics, G. (2012a). The changing situation of Hungarian community radio. In J. Gordon (Ed.), *Community radio in the twenty-first century* (pp. 265-281). Bern: Peter Lang.
Velics G. (2012b). Adaptation y supervivencia de las emisoras de radio comunitarias en Hungría [Adaption and survival of community radio stations in Hungary]. In M. Martínez Hermida, C. Mayugo i Mayó, & Ana Tamarit Rodríguez (Eds.) (2012), *Comunidad y Comunicación: prácticas comunicativas y medios comunitarios en Europa y América Latina* [Community and communication: communicative practices and community media in Europe and Latin America] (pp. 97-114). Madrid: Editorial Fragua.

About the Authors

Dr. Urszula Doliwa
Urszula Doliwa is an Assistant Professor and former Vice Director of the Institute of Journalism and Social Communication at the University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn, Poland. She is also the Secretary of the Community Media Forum Europe, member of the Editorial Board of the Polish journal *Media-Culture-Social Communication*, and the author of the book *Radio studenckie w Polsce*/*Student Radio in Poland*. Her research interests centre on community media.

Dr. Gabriella Velics
Gabriella Velics is an Associate Professor and leader of the Department of Communication and Media at University of West-Hungary in Szombathely. She teaches sociology, PR and media relations and radio broadcasting. She is also the Vice-President of Community Media Forum Europe and member of the Advisory Board of the Montenegrin journal *Media and Communication: International Scientific Journal of Media, Communication, Journalism and Public Relations*. Her research focuses on the Hungarian community radio system and its function in social communication, journalism and media sociology.

Media and Communication (ISSN: 2183-2439)
2015, Volume 3, Issue 4, Pages 91-105
Doi: 10.17645/mac.v3i4.335

Article

Media Literacy in Montenegro

Jelena Perović

Department of Communication and Social Research, La Sapienza University of Rome, 00198 Rome, Italy;
E-Mail: jperovic@t-com.me

Submitted: 28 May 2015 | In Revised Form: 17 August 2015 | Accepted: 21 October 2015 |
Published: 29 December 2015

Abstract

Few countries in the world have introduced media education into their curriculums. Montenegro became one of them in 2009, when "media literacy" was introduced as an optional subject for 16 and 17 year old students of Gymnasium high schools. This article presents the findings of the first and only research conducted so far on media education in Montenegro. It is a national case study which examines the potential of media education to change the school culture and accelerate education system reform towards embracing the new digital education paradigm in the future. The focus is on the results of research conducted through in-depth interviews with media literacy teachers all over the country. Despite the many challenges, all teachers identify the potential of media education to strengthen some of the key competences of the students and to improve their motivation and academic performance. They also identify potential to change positively school culture by transforming teachers into "cultural mediators" (Morcellini, 2007) and by supporting the formation of a "participative culture" (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013) in schools. This research recommends focusing education reform on spreading the media education pedagogy to the entire curriculum in order to embrace the new digital education paradigm in the future.

Keywords

children; civic participation; creative media production; critical thinking; media education; media literacy; media pedagogy; Montenegro; youth

Issue

This article is part of the special issue "Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media", edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

© 2015 by the author; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

> "The skills, practices and dispositions students are encouraged to develop are filtered through a system designed for an outdated world. The system, built on a "just-in-case" model of learning (Collins & Halverson, 2009), prepares learners for a life of information consumption but not of active circulation, of critical analysis but not of creative activity (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007)." (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013, kindle loc 523-533 of 4643)

The digital revolution introduced changes that are leading to a new digital communication paradigm, which will need a corresponding, new digital education paradigm. Technological changes have led to a dramatic increase in the number of people who are not only acting as the audience, but also as authors of messages through multiple media platforms at the same time. Such a thing was not possible in the pre-digital age. Hence, there is a shift from individual to collective media engagement, collaboration and networking. (Perez Tornero & Varis, 2010). Consequently, both the key concepts of media literacy and its research methodology need to be updated in order to be relevant for the digital media and participatory culture (Jenkins, 2010). Also, school pedagogy and curriculum must follow these changes in order to teach the competencies that students will need in the society of the 21st century. In other words, within the digital society, schools will

have to embrace a new, digital education paradigm.

In particular, in this context, the notion of media literacy needs to be updated to include digital literacy. Similarly, in order not to remain analogue in a digital world, schools need to teach both the old and new literacies. The new literacies are known under different terms in the international scientific debate—critical literacy and digital literacies (Carrington & Robinson, 2009; Jones & Hafner, 2012), critical digital literacy (Dowdall, 2009), new media literacies (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013), media literacy 2.0 (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012), media literacy (Perez Tornero & Varis, 2010), etc.

Digital competence, which one needs to acquire in order to become digitally literate, is defined as "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms" (Aufderheide, 1993; Christ & Potter, 1998).

The concept of digital competence is widely discussed and this article refers to the model of digital competences developed by Cortoni and Lo Presti (2014). It identifies five types of digital competences: access, critical thinking, creative media production, media awareness and civic participation.

In the following paragraphs, each type of these competences is briefly explained. Further, this article connects five types of digital competences to the international scientific debate and hence, proposes a map of digital competences presented in Figure 1.

The access competence refers to the students' ability to "read and write" digital media. Hence, they need to learn not only linear, but also non-linear reading typical for the digital media (Ferri, 2011; Simone, 2012; Veen & Vrakking, 2006) and thus, develop iconographic competences (Veen & Vrakking, 2006). Students also need to be able to respond to the text in the digital language or to learn "participatory reading" (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013). Since today's students live in an attention economy (Goldhaber, 1997), it is crucial for them to acquire the multitasking competences (Jenkins, 2010). They also need to be aware of the different digital languages or of the subcategories of the netspeak (Crystal, 2001) such as the language of emails, the language of the chat groups and so on. Similarly, Gee (2008) talks about the need to know social languages and explains how users of different affinity spaces—those contributing to a blog, those playing an online game or friends of one social network—tend to use "social language" that differentiates them from the members of other groups. Also, students need to know to communicate through emoticon (Jones & Hafner, 2012). Finally, they need to be aware of the cultures of use of different media (Jones & Hafner, 2012), which depend on the interaction between the medium advantages and disadvantages and the expectations, norms and vales that different users connect to it.

The critical thinking competence is related to the ability to reflect critically on the media contents. It includes the ability to perform *zapping*, i.e. identifying essential information in the ocean of messages and images and constructing a meaningful system of knowledge based on it (Veen & Vrakking, 2006). It also includes filtering or the ability to select and prioritize information (Jones & Hafner, 2012). Further, this competence includes both networking, the ability to search, summarize and disseminate information, and the transmedia navigation or the capacity to follow a stream of stories and information through different media platforms (Jenkins, 2010).

The creative media production competence refers to the capacity to write for the digital media or to express oneself and interact effectively through the production of new contents and messages. Hence, the students need to learn to use effectively specific languages of different digital media and online communities such as, for example, blogging, video blogging and digital storytelling (Jones & Hafner, 2012). They also need to become capable of using and modifying different contents already available online. In other words, they need to be able to remix or modify some aspects of an existing message and mash-up or mix two or more messages to make a new one, (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013; Jones & Hafner, 2012; Manovich, 2007) while respecting the copyright and, particularly, the rules related to the Creative Commons Licensing (Lessig, 2004). Further, this competence includes the capacity to appropriate media or to use them in a new social context (Jones & Hafner, 2012). Also, sometimes, students need to be able to adapt or use the medium in a way that was not originally programmed by the inventor to make it more appropriate to the personal objectives (Jones & Hafner, 2012). Players of video games often do this by adding new content to the game or creating a new game based on the elements of the available one and the mod indicates the modified videogame. (Jones & Hafner, 2012). This competence also includes the ability of mixing two or more media in a way to combine their advantages in order to overcome their limits and do new things which none of these media can do alone (Jones & Hafner, 2012). Finally, since we are constantly exposed to a huge number of messages, students need to learn how to draw attention and make their messages interesting by acquiring competences like the ones that Lankshear and Knobel propose. These two authors use the word "memeing" to indicate the ability to disseminate ideas, while they refer to the ability to share information with "attention transacting" and to the ability to link the messages with celebrities to ensure greater dissemination with "transferring". Further, they talk about the ability to make attractive messages and call it "contact displaying", as well as about the ability to present different points of views, which they indicate as "framing and encapsulating" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2007). All of these competences fall under the category of the creative media production, as they teach the student how to

make an interesting message, how to disseminate it effectively to different audiences and how to draw more attention to it by sharing it with the greatest number of people possible.

Figure 1. The map of digital competences.

The media awareness competence refers to the ability to use the media to communicate while respecting cultural differences, privacy and, in general, the norms of the specific sociocultural context within which one interacts. To start with, students need to acquire an awareness of how their reading of messages on digital media is conditioned by the way these media function. For example, they are limited in the reading of hypertext by the choice of links proposed by the author (Jones & Hafner, 2012). Similarly, they need to understand meanings of the PageRank algorithm (used by the Google search engine to rate the relevance of items appearing in a search based on their hypertextual relations with other items online), personalized algorithm (which filters and ranks data based on the user's personal choices and past behaviour online) and social algorithm (which allows groups of people to filter and rank data one for another) (Jones & Hafner, 2012). Moreover, students also need to be able to assess the credibility and reliability of different sources of information online. This competence is described as "judgement" by Jenkins (2010) and as "communication" by Hoechsmann & Poyntz (2012). Further, the school needs to teach about the media bias or the way different media distort our vision of the reality and the way in which we can interact with it. (Jones & Hafner, 2012) This fundamental ability for a critical media awareness is already part of media literacy 1.0 and it now needs to be updated with reference to the digital media. Also, having in mind the new forms of marketing for children—interactive marketing (Montgomery, Grier, Chester, & Dorfman, 2011) or interactive advertising (Mazzarella, 2007)—which disseminate the same message through different media, all the competences which make students capable of critically reflecting on the media and of using them with critical awareness become essential in the digital age. Further, consumption and surveillance are examples of competences that need to be taught in order to make students aware of the privacy and the economic model that is behind the social networks—the sale of the data about the users to the advertising agencies (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012). Hence, students need to learn to manage properly their identities and relations online in order to acquire the competence of the management of the online impression (Jones & Hafner, 2012). Finally, they need to become aware of the concepts of copyright and plagiarism, which assume a new meaning in the remix culture.

> "Plagiarism is using someone else's work without attribution….Although the conduct of plagiarism may overlap with copyright infringement, the two concepts are distinct. You can plagiarize from Shakespeare, but you'll never have a copyright problem, since his works are in the public domain. Plagiarism is an ethical problem handled by teachers and schools; copyright infringement is a legal problem handled by courts." (Hobbs, 2010, p. 8)

For this purpose, students need to practice remix, mash-up, appropriating, adapting, modding, digital story-telling and similar competences in order to fully understand the meaning of plagiarism and the legal and ethical framework of the alternative to the copyright known as the Creative Commons Licensing born after the digital revolution (Lessig, 2004).

Finally, the fifth competence of *civic participation* refers to the effective use of media aimed at taking part in the society, community and different professional, social and cultural networks. First, the definition of culture needs to be updated to include the online culture and the introduction of students to the norms and practices of socialization in different online communities, social networks or affinity spaces (Jones & Hafner, 2012). For example, affinity spaces are online spaces where people interact in order to promote a specific interest or achieve a common objective (Gee, 2013). Hence, the school needs to teach collaborative competences (Veen & Vrakking, 2006) like peer production or the collaborative production of information in which a large number of volunteers, connected through a network, work together to promote certain projects (Jones & Hafner, 2012). Second, students need to acquire the competence of collective intelligence or the ability to put together their knowledge and confront their opinions with others in order to achieve a common objective. Similarly, they need the competence of distributed expertise or the ability to interact in a meaningful way with instruments that expand mental capacities (Jenkins, 2010).

Knowledge is, thus, shared through a large network of persons and instruments and anyone can access it through the new media. Wikipedia is an example of an online space where students can practice all of these competences and be part of the participatory culture (Jenkins, 2010). Therefore, within schools, students should access networked publics in order to acquire, within this new context, the competences which are necessary for public participation in the digital age (Ito et al., 2009). For example, they need to develop competences like lurking or being present in an online space like a chatroom or a message-board without participating in the interactions. Since there are abuses online, students also need to learn to be responsible members of the participatory culture and to recognize and stop flaming i.e. abusing someone online (Jones & Hafner, 2012). Finally, the online space is often much more multicultural than the offline one and so, students need to learn to respect different cultures and points of view by acquiring competences like negotiation (Jenkins, 2010) and communication (Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012).

Now, in order to teach digital competences effectively, the school needs to make its pedagogy "digital". Many pedagogical principles proposed by scientists worldwide for this purpose are not new, as they belong to the ongoing transformation of pedagogy in the last

decades. However, these principles are an essential part of the future digital education paradigm. Although they are cross-cutting, Table 1 links various cultural and educational practices proposed by authors for teaching digital competences with the type of digital competence that they seems most relevant to and this is further explained in the following paragraphs.

Parallel pedagogy stands for teaching old and new literacies together at the same time, as students can analyse the advantages and disadvantages and similarities and differences of different media (Chaka, 2009; Jenkins & Kelley, 2013; Leander, 2009). In this way, students develop both the access and the media awareness competences.

In order to be more effective and motivating for students growing up in the digital world, schools need to acquire more flexibility in learning, contents, group work, etc. (Cortoni, 2009; Gee, 2013; Jenkins & Kelley, 2013; Veen & Vrakking, 2006) This is particularly important for developing the access competence, as when one does not know much about the new media, it is essential to motivate him/her to overcome the digital divide through a flexible learning approach.

In order to develop students' critical thinking, media awareness and creative media production competences in the age of convergence, intertextuality and multimodality, it is necessary to have them study and compare how one text is presented in different media so that they can understand how it is disseminated and what impact it leaves on the contemporary culture. (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013) This is done through critical framing (Kerin, 2009) and critical media production (Morrel et al., 2013).

Further, to develop the creative production competence, classes need to be organized according to the immersion principle, which has students immerged in a learning environment with multimedia resources (Veen & Vrakking, 2006). This is similar to the experiences that students live in the out-of-school digital environment. For this reason, schools need to allow students more freedom to self-manage the learning process (Veen & Vrakking, 2006). In this way, teachers are transformed in tutors or cultural mediators instead of being authorities who transmit the knowledge (Morcellini, 2007).

Table 1. The map of digital competences and the related educational and cultural practices.

Type of competence	Digital competences	Educational and cultural practices
Access	non linear reading; iconographic competences; participatory reading; multi-tasking; zapping; filtering; networking; transmedia navigation	parallel pedagogy (Leander, 2009); flexibility (Cortoni, 2009; Gee, 2013; Jenkins & Kelley, 2013; Veen & Vrakking, 2006)
Critical thinking	judgement; communication; media bias; interactive marketing; interactive advertising;	critical framing (Kerin, 2009); critical media production (Morrel, Duenas, Garcia, & Lopez, 2013)
Creative media production	digital storytelling; remix; mash-up; appropriating; adapting; modding; memeing; attention transacting; transferring; contact displaying; framing and encapsulating	immersion (Veen & Vrakking, 2006); transformed practice (Kerin, 2009); reading with a mouse in hand (McWilliams & Clinton, 2013); fan fiction (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013); overt instruction (Kerin, 2009); self-management (Veen & Vrakking, 2006); cultural mediation (Morcellini, 2007); critical media production (Morrel et al., 2013)
Media awareness	PageRank algorithm, personalized and social algorithm; netspeak; social languages; cultures of use; negotiation; communication; consumption and surveillance; management of the impression online; plagiarism; copyright; creative commons licensing	parallel pedagogy (Leander, 2009); participatory reading (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013); critical framing (Kerin, 2009); critical media production (Morrel et al., 2013)
Civic participation	peer production; collective intelligence; distributed expertise; lurking; flaming	collaborative learning (Davies, 2009); co-created learning (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013); participatory reading (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013); participatory assessment (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013) situated learning (Kerin, 2009)

Hence, what needs to happen more often is overt instruction or a close collaboration between the teacher and the student, which is essential especially for developing the creative production competence (Kerin, 2009). Further, teachers need to apply the transformed practice or to have students recreate texts in class with different media and, thus, become responsible and creative authors (Kerin, 2009). A similar concept is referred to as reading with a mouse in hand by McWilliams and Klinton (2013), who emphasize the need to have children respond to what they read by creating new texts, correcting information available online in relation to it, etc. Similarly, Jenkins and Kelley (2013) suggest to use regularly fan fiction as an English language class activity, because it invites students to respond actively to the literature by becoming authors of new texts. They use the term participatory reading to describe the situation where all readers become also writers in class. This is essential for developing the civic participation competence as well.

Collaborative learning (Davies, 2009) and co-created learning (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013) are crucial for developing collaborative competences (Veen & Vrakking, 2006), which are necessary for civic participation. The assessment of students also needs to support this and become participatory (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013) and allow for a situated learning (Kerin, 2009).

To conclude, students of the 21st century need digital competences and in order to teach them, schools need to change pedagogy by making it more flexible and student-centred, so that the teacher becomes an interactive guide who stimulates collaboration and critical reflection in class. These changes will lead to a new digital education paradigm, which many scientists see already delineating in the media education (Gee, 2013; Hobbs, 2011; Jenkins & Kelley, 2013; Morcellini & Cortoni, 2007; Veen & Vrakking, 2006; etc.)

This article focuses on a national case study related to Montenegro, which examines the potential of media education to change the school culture and accelerate the education system reform towards embracing the new digital education paradigm in future.

Not many countries in the world have introduced media education in the curriculum and Montenegro became one of them in 2009, when “media literacy” was introduced as one of 38 optional subjects in Gymnasium high schools, which encompass natural sciences, languages, social sciences and arts. Media literacy is a one year course aimed at students who are 16 and 17 years old. Two classes of media literacy per week are held during two semesters and so, this is not a subject that can be taken at the final exams of the high school since the total number of classes is below the criteria for this purpose.

The aim of the subject is for the student to acquire the competences which are necessary for critically receiving and producing media messages. Critical thinking and media production are identified as the two key dimensions of media literacy which prepare the student to become an active citizen in a democratic society.

The program includes the study of all media, including the digital ones, and it consists of seven modules: access to media; media message as a construct; media language; reception of media messages; system of values; the aim of the media message; and media, ethics and politics. Therefore, the course supports the students to develop all five types of digital competences discussed above.

Media literacy has been taught in every second Gymnasium high school and to students in one half of Montenegrin municipalities so far. Minority of these schools have taught it every year continuously due to practical issues having often to do with supporting teachers who lack a specific number of classes to fill in the norm by prioritizing the optional subjects which they can teach.

This article presents the findings of the first and only research conducted so far on media education in Montenegro. The focus is on the results of the qualitative part of the research conducted with Montenegrin media literacy teachers. They are typically Montenegrin language and literature teachers (although they can be psychology, sociology, philosophy or other social science teachers as well) and most of them have been trained to teach media literacy.

2. Methodology

In order to understand Montenegrin context of media literacy, the way it is taught and the extent to which it influences the school culture, in-depth interviews were conducted, in 2013, with 11 media literacy teachers in 10 municipalities out of the total of 11 municipalities where it has been taught since it was introduced.

In particular, the interview was aimed at collecting information about:

- How teachers define media literacy and the objectives of the subject they teach; if they distinguish it from other literacies like the ICT, traditional language literacy, etc. and in which ways;
- What kind of pedagogy teachers use in order to understand if it can be improved and how;
- What kind of technological and professional support teachers need;
- What resources (texts, manuals, online resources, etc.) teachers use to prepare the classes; how useful they find the resources which were provided to them and what they lack;
- The teachers’ point of view in relation to the reasons for which students choose to study media literacy;
- If there is any collaboration between schools and with local communities and media;

- If and how media literacy can help the education system reform;
- What are the key challenges that media literacy faces in Montenegro and how to overcome them.

Every interview was conducted as a spontaneous conversation in which the researcher listened to the teachers carefully and used the interview questions to stimulate them to describe better their experiences.

The questions used as a guide are presented in Table 2, which connects them with their objectives—to research about the objectives, curriculum, teaching methods, support provided to teachers and impact of the course.

Table 2. Preparation of the interview with media literacy teachers in Montenegro.

Objective of the interview: to understand the objectives, teaching methodology, curriculum, results of the teaching of media literacy and the support provided to the teachers	
Questions guiding the interview:	**Objective of the question—explore about**
What are the objectives of the media literacy that you teach? How is media literacy different from the ICT classes in your school? And how is it different from the critical analysis of texts during the language and literature classes?	COURSE OBJECTIVES CURRICULUM
What type of activities do you do with students during class? Would you please give some examples? Do you do media production with students? If yes, do you share the results of it with others? With whom, how, when, where…? What kind of reactions did you encounter? What is the predominant activity in media education: production, analysis, simple alphabetization, etc. How do you assess the students? Do you use any guide for teachers in relation to this? In your opinion, are students happy with the way that media literacy has been taught so far? Should something be changed in future?	TEACHING METHODOLOGY
What kind of technical support is available in your school? Are there cameras, computers, specific software or other tools for media literacy classes? Are there any problems in relation to this? Have you received any training before starting to teach this subject? If yes, would you please describe what kind of training it was, when, where and by whom it was organized and if you found it useful and for what in particular? What kind of training would you find useful now? How do you use the texts provided for teachers—do you follow them exactly or use them as a guide for ideas that you later develop with students? What do you think of school texts on media literacy?	SUPPORT PROVIDED TO TEACHERS
Are there students who choose to study media literacy as an optional subject in your school every year? If not, why? Why do students choose media literacy as an optional subject? What is your impression?	COURSE OBJECTIVES
What is the academic achievement of the students who choose to study media literacy like? Did you register any changes before and after the course? In your opinion, can media literacy improve students' results at the PISA test? If yes, how? In your opinion, does media literacy change the school culture? If yes, how? Have you ever received any feedback from parents about the classes? If yes, what was it? What do your colleagues think of media literacy? Are they interested to see the results of the students' work and to know more about it? Does the school management support media literacy and if yes, how? In your opinion, would it be useful to teach media literacy to younger students as well and to the students of other high schools—professional ones and not just Gymnasium ones? How could this be organized in a sustainable way?	RESULTS OF TEACHING MEDIA LITERACY

Questions guiding the interview:	Objective of the question—explore about
Is there any kind of network of cooperation of Gymnasium high school media literacy teachers and students? If yes, what is its function, how does it work, is it useful…? What is your opinion of it? If it does not exist, do you think it would be useful and easy to organize something like that? Have you had any cooperation with a TV or radio station, a newspaper or an institute related to media literacy so far? If yes, would you please describe these experiences? Have you participated in any kind of project related to media literacy so far? If yes, with whom, when, where, with what objectives and results? In your opinion, what kind of projects would be useful for developing media literacy in Montenegro in future? In general, how would you define the major challenges to the development of media literacy in Montenegro? And what needs to be done in future to overcome them? Hence, in your opinion, the priorities/objectives of media literacy in Montenegro in future should be…	SUPPORT PROVIDED TO TEACHERS

3. Results

Results of the qualitative research will be presented according to Figure 2: first, teachers' opinions about the objectives of the optional subject, then their opinions about the curriculum, teaching methodology, support provided to them and the impact of the course.

3.1. Objectives

As stated by the teacher T1, the objective of media literacy is to develop competences of "understanding, analysis and deconstruction of all media messages and of production of media messages in a way that respects media ethics and in order to promote certain ideas which can contribute to the general democratization of the society".

This definition is widely shared by all the teachers interviewed. Hence, media literacy is aimed at developing all five types of competences identified by Cortoni and Lo Presti (2014).

Definitions of the objectives of media literacy provided by Montenegrin teachers are in line with the ones presented by different scientists. First, teachers recognize two essential dimensions of media literacy—critical thinking and civic participation, which are also essential to different definitions provided within the scientific debate (Celot, 2014, pp. 3-4). Further, teachers define the objectives of media literacy at three levels—political, economic and socio-cultural in accordance with many scientists (Hobbs, 2011; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012; Jones & Hafner, 2012; Jenkins & Kelley, 2013; Gee, 2013; Potter, 2013; Perez Tornero & Varis, 2010; etc.). At the political level, the aim is for the students to become critical towards the media messages that they receive or, in other words, to develop the competence of critical thinking. Further, the aim is for students to become capable of using the media to promote specific values and initiatives or to acquire the civic participation competence. At the economic level, students need to become aware of the links between the media and the economic power and this is related to their acquisition of the media awareness competence. Finally, at the socio-cultural level, teachers, like many scientists, see media literacy as a tool for making students aware of different stereotypes, for discussing various social issues like violence, privacy, etc. and for influencing the students' system of values in order to make it more tolerant and democratic. This last objective described by teachers corresponds to the development of the competences of media awareness, creative production and civic participation.

According to teachers, students rarely know what they are choosing to study when they select media literacy as an optional subject, since many think this is a journalism or an ICT course. In their opinion, students make the decision based on the positive impressions of older students, the good impression of the teacher and a fair probability to get a good grade—this last criteria was identified as relevant for students when selecting all optional subjects in a recent study assessing the education system reform (Bešić & Reškovac, 2012).

3.2. Curriculum

All teachers interviewed differentiate media literacy from other types of literacy like the traditional language literacy or ICT literacy.

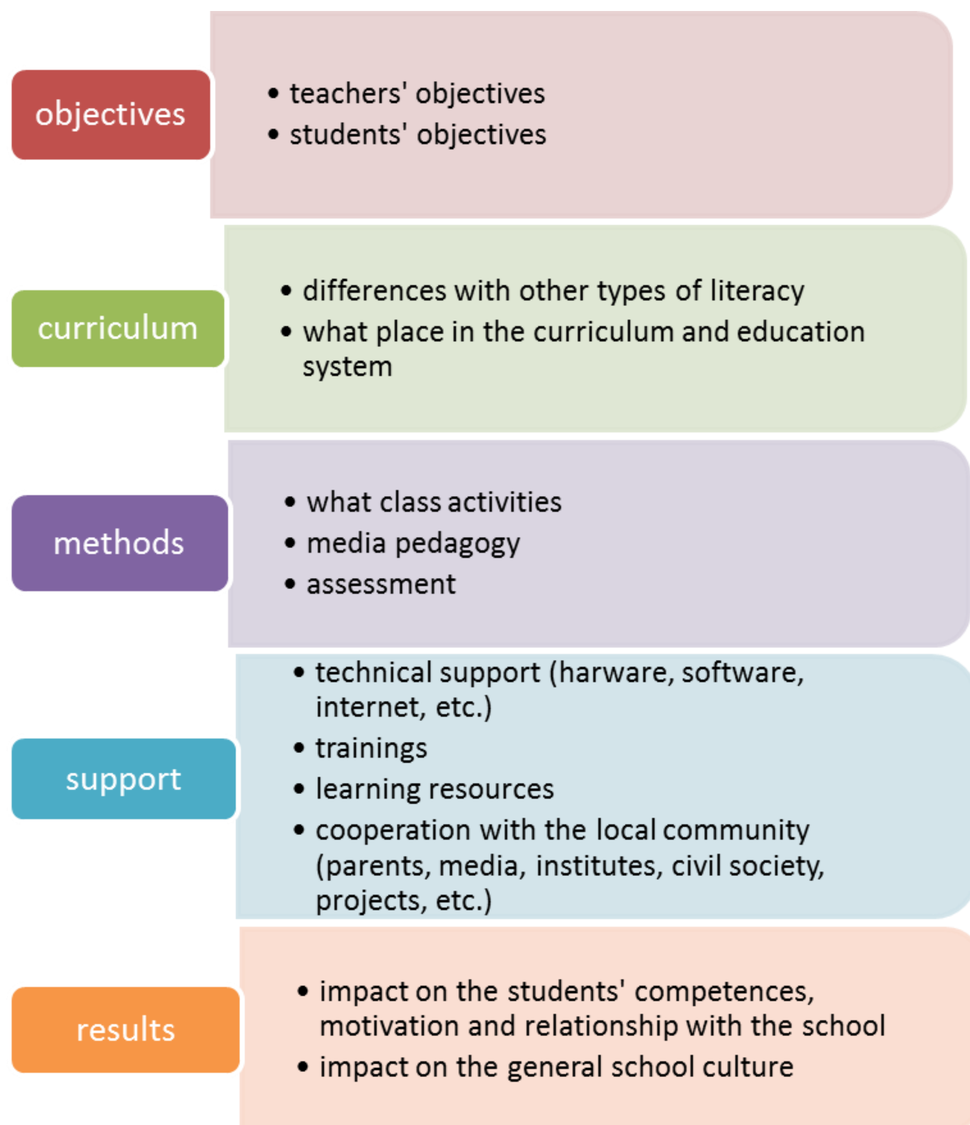


Figure 2. Research areas of the qualitative research on media literacy in Montenegro.

As pointed out by the interviewee T2, although critical analysis of media messages has points in common with the analysis of literary works:

> "it is much more difficult to critically analyze a literary work than a media message….We often do this in parallel when we analyze together a movie made according to a book as a media message and the book as a literary work. I asked my students to pick a novel and to write an ad for it….To do this, they have to know what the novel is about and its characters and so, this also becomes a critical analysis and such activities can be done in parallel with the analysis of a literary work."

Teachers see media messages as more related to the present and everyday life, while literary works are less dynamic and more related to the past. "If the newspapers lose the moment and the information, there is no possibility of repetition and this makes media literacy alive and more related to the reality of everyday life", T3 explained.

Further, teachers point out to the need to teach students to read digital texts within the media literacy classes, since they present different characteristics compared to the traditional ones as pointed out by many scientists as well (Ferri, 2011; Perez Tornero & Varis, 2010; Simone, 2012; etc.).

Key difference between the media and ICT literacy underlined by Montenegrin teachers is the absence of critical analysis in the ICT classes. One of them, T4, explains it in this way:

> "While students learn things related to the computer, whether it is about hardware or software, they do not reflect on it critically….Therefore, there is a difference: in the first case, we have memorization of information, while media literacy asks for a different thing—it asks for a critical analysis of everything that the media transmit into the public sphere."

Teachers rely on students' ICT literacy for media production and this is where they say that peer education is essential. Media literacy teachers do not have much cooperation with the ICT teachers though, apart from the use of the ICT labs.

According to the interviewed teachers, media literacy should be introduced into the curriculum of the entire education system starting from the preschool level. This would support the education of critical and active citizens in the digital age. However, they do not think it is realistic for media literacy to become a mandatory part of the already overcrowded curriculum of primary and high schools. They, rather, see it as an optional subject or an extracurricular activity. Some of them say that it is easier to teach media literacy to older students and are not sure if it can work with young children. Some teachers underline the need to introduce media literacy in professional high schools in particular, because they are generally attended by students with lower academic achievements and media literacy can motivate them and change positively their relationship with the school.

3.3. Teaching Methodology

Teachers describe critical analysis of media messages as the dominant in-class activity, while media production is done as homework, since there is not enough time for students to do it during 90 min of media literacy classes per week. They say that peer education is crucial for media production activities due to the intergenerational and digital divides. According to the teacher T1:

> "It is clear that between them and me, as a teacher with 33 years of experience, there is a gap and that I am an immigrant compared to my students who possess more advanced technological knowledge than me….The fact that they can teach these things means a lot to them, it makes them self-confident, it makes the classes interactive…"

Media messages made by students are regularly presented, discussed and assessed in class. They are often presented to the entire school during special events and celebrations. Teachers say that students find this practice quite motivating.

Teachers assess primarily students' participation during all classes, but they recognize the challenges of assessing individual contributions to the group work. They say to organize the class in a way to allow students' media messages to be regularly assessed by their peers in class. These messages are also evaluated by other people when presented at special events in school or uploaded online. The lack of uniform criteria or guidance for specific grades is perceived as a weakness by some teachers. Also, they recognize the challenges of measuring different levels of competences achieved by students.

Finally, teachers see themselves as "cultural mediators" (Morcellini, 2007) and not as "traditional authorities" during the media literacy classes. "It is essential for the teacher to reject the position of the holder of absolute knowledge and to approach the student and treat him/her as a collaborator", teacher T1 points out.

Therefore, having in mind that the pedagogy described by Montenegrin teachers includes both critical analysis and media production, that the class is described as interactive and collaborative and that the assessment is said to be participatory as well, one can say that the teaching methodology is in line with the recommendations of many scientists (Gee, 2013; Hobbs, 2011; Hoechsmann & Poyntz, 2012; Jenkins & Kelley, 2013; Jones & Hafner, 2012; Perez Tornero & Varis, 2010; Veen & Vrakking, 2006; etc.)

3.4. Support Provided to Teachers

The situation in relation to the technical support varies from one school to another. In general, teachers complain about the limited access to the computer lab and internet in school, the lack of cameras for making short movies with students and of a software for editing them. So, students make movies and photos on their cell phones and download a software for editing movies on their own as well.

The fact that some teachers complain about not easily accessing good quality equipment in school suggests that providing technology to schools is not enough, as the way that it is used defines its utility for the learning process. (Cortoni, 2009; Jenkins, 2010; Livingstone, 2009; Morcellini, 2007, etc.) Therefore, the school culture needs to change in order to ensure that the greatest number of students benefits from the available resources.

The issues described by Montenegrin teachers are similar to the ones faced by their colleagues in other European countries:

> "although the situation varies greatly from country to country, research asserts an insufficient access to digital equipment in schools across Europe. While the ultimate focus of ML is certainly not on technology, poor access to ICT equipment and to broadband penalizes teachers and students' confident media use." (Celot, 2014, p. 9)

Further, some teachers point out that school libraries do not have newspapers or magazines that can be used in class. Teachers have to ask students to bring them or to buy them themselves in order to analyze more recent media messages.

As far as trainings are concerned, almost all teachers interviewed have finished one of the two media lit-

eracy trainings organized in 2009, right before this optional subject was introduced. These trainings were about the programme and teaching resources and teachers say to have found them useful. However, they regret that no more trainings were organized afterwards and that there are no opportunities for teachers to share experiences. Some teachers underline the need for a specific training related to the film editing software, while others are more interested in learning more about effective media pedagogy.

New teachers who started teaching this optional subject after 2009 did so with no training and they say that this presented them with additional challenges.

The situation described by Montenegrin teachers is not much different from the general one in other European countries. In fact, the recent recommendation to the EU countries to organize media education training courses for primary and high school teachers and to offer them to all teachers is valid for Montenegro as well. Moreover, it is recommended that the professional teacher education includes acquiring all media literacy competences and that a media education curriculum is made for teachers' education. (Celot, 2014). Resources like the UNESCO Media and Information Literacy Curriculum for Teachers (Grizzle & Wilson, 2011) can be useful, but they need to be adapted to the local context. Finally, more attention needs to be paid to the assessment of teacher trainings in order to ensure their effectiveness, as they often seem to be too focused on the theory. (Celot, 2014; Vos, Terryn et al., 2013)

As far as learning resources are concerned, all teachers have received the translation of the MediaLit Kit, which contains scenarios for in class activities, as well as two CDs with media messages to be used in class and a copy of articles and chapters written by different local and international authors on the sociology of media and culture, media theory, etc.

Most of the interviewed teachers say that a local media literacy textbook needs to be made, as no such thing is available at the moment. Some of them underline the need to have access to more creative learning resources. They also suggest changes the programme—it needs to focus more on media ethics and privacy. Some of them see as artificial the division of the programme in seven modules to be studied one after another. According to the teacher T5:

> "A disadvantage of the programme is that the seventh module happens in May and so, only then we should start talking about the profit….You cannot share a media message and analyze it without coming to the conclusion that the aim is related to the profit or to the fact that someone wants to sell a certain product. You cannot start talking about such things only in May. Something needs to be changed in the programme."

Situation described by Montenegrin teachers on this point again is not much different from the one related to the EU countries. The need to develop innovative and efficient learning resources for media literacy courses in local languages is present in Europe too and it is recommended to achieve this in cooperation with the local teachers and media experts in order to better respond to the needs of the students of each country (Celot, 2014, p. 9). Also, these resources need to be evaluated and improved continuously through research on how media literacy is taught in class and its impact. (Celot, 2014, p. 13)

As far as cooperation is concerned, teachers point out that there is no effective network of all schools in the country and so, opportunities for them to exchange experiences and collaborate are scarce. Regarding this aspect, Montenegro is behind some European countries which have institutes in charge of developing, researching and organizing collaboration and networking in relation to media literacy such as the Finnish Centre for Media Education. However, not all EU countries have achieved this level and so, the general recommendation to them to establish networks, media education online platforms and observatories is also valid for Montenegro. (Celot, 2014, p. 15)

Teachers say that there is little cooperation with parents outside the issues related to the academic achievement of students. Moreover, the level of parents' awareness of media literacy is generally low and so, there is not much interest for collaboration on this particular issue. Teachers describe sporadic episodes when some parents came to the presentations of students' media products. Teachers say that parents often share what the children say at home about media literacy classes, as these are highly positive impressions.

Teachers describe many challenges related to the cooperation with the local media. In some municipalities, they do not exist, while, in others, local media are experiencing significant economic difficulties. Teachers identify the lack of funds for covering the transport costs for students to visit the national media in the capital as a significant challenge too.

However, there are positive experiences, such as the ten year cooperation between the Gymnasium in Tivat and local Radio Tivat. The media literacy teacher in this school involves media literacy and other students in making a radio show for their peers within the journalism section that started before media literacy was introduced as an optional subject. Also, they make a school magazine and they visit two national TV stations in the capital every year. Further, they get free tickets for students to attend the performances in the local Cultural Centre and they discuss these experiences during media literacy classes. The teacher emphasizes that media literacy students find these activities quite useful.

Having in mind the situation described, a recent

recommendation to the EU countries to involve media professionals in media literacy trainings and to promote more active engagement of local media in media literacy, within their corporate social responsibility activities, is relevant for Montenegro as well. (Celot, 2014, p. 11)

Few teachers say to have taken part in media literacy projects. Those who have describe them as related to international seminars on media literacy for Eastern European students, who, during this time, work together on producing different media messages. They say that such experiences are quite motivating, but are sporadic, as teachers lack information about opportunities to apply for funding.

Therefore, on this point as well, the recommendation made to the EU countries to incorporate media literacy in lifelong learning and to stimulate projects of cooperation with the civil society in local communities in order to support citizens with diverse backgrounds to acquire media literacy competences is relevant for Montenegro as well. (Celot, 2014, p. 12)

3.5. Impact

Interviewed teachers see in media literacy a subject that can help students to learn how to learn and to improve their academic achievement, since in these classes they learn to quickly identify key information from the less important ones. They also agree that competences developed through the media literacy course support students to achieve better results at tests like the PISA, which is often discussed in public debates and used as an indicator of the quality of the education system.

They underline that media literacy increases students' motivation and often changes positively their relationship with the school. According to the teacher T6:

> "The ones who are doing well, become even better students as they gain access to new ways to conceptualize their knowledge and see that there are different models for applying this knowledge. The ones who are not doing great in school become more self-confident and relaxed in school, because they feel more welcome."

Teachers recognize the potential of media literacy to change the school culture positively. "There is no subject with which it is not correlated and to which it cannot be applied", teacher T7 explains. However, for this potential to be realized, its pedagogy needs to be applied systematically to the subjects, as pointed out by the teacher T8: "group work, collaborative learning—these things are mentioned in trainings for other subjects as well, but here they must be practiced, as there is no other way to teach media literacy". Hence, both peer education and "participatory assessment" (Jenkins & Kelley, 2013) are identified in interviews as innovative and useful practices of media literacy pedagogy that should be used when teaching other subjects as well.

It is significant that teachers say that they spontaneously started applying the pedagogy they use in media literacy classes when teaching other subjects as well. "Yes, I changed the way of teaching the language and literature after my experience with teaching media literacy….I applied some group work, learning through research done by students…", teacher T9 explains.

Moreover, teachers say that their relationship with the students changed as they changed their role from being an authority in the classroom to being a coordinator or a "cultural mediator" (Morcellini, 2007). Teacher T1 explains:

> "the relationship between the teacher and the student is not authoritative in the sense that my students are afraid of me and listen to me as if I were a saint. No, we work in cooperation….And so, even my literature classes improved…as simply different teaching methods were combined….I believe that media literacy offers a good balance and that it shifts the school towards a new methodology."

In order for the school culture to change, all teachers need to adopt effective practices of media literacy pedagogy in their classes every day. However, at the moment, interviewed teachers underline that there is little interest for media literacy among their colleagues and that this is due to the low motivation of teachers in general. "Teachers are underestimated, have low salaries and are placed at the margins of the society", teacher T10 explains.

Montenegro's situation on this point is similar to the one described for many EU countries (Vos et al., 2013). Therefore, in order to change positively the school culture, media literacy teachers need to become the change-agents of the education system. For this to happen, they need to have more and better quality trainings. In other words, they need to become a critical mass leading the improvement of the education system, while now, as they describe in the interviews, they are often isolated and left on their own to challenge the dominant culture and "the way of doing things" in order to put their ideas into practice.

4. Conclusions

Interviews with Montenegrin media literacy teachers indicate that they have improved their pedagogy as a result of teaching this course and that through the study of this optional subject students have increased motivation, changed positively their relationship with the school and strengthened critical thinking. Therefore, if spread through the entire education system from preschool level on, media education can help its

reform and serve as a precursor to the new digital education paradigm.

The possibility of applying media education pedagogy to social sciences is already recognized in the programme of this optional subject, but it has still not become a reality, as indicated by the recent assessment of the education reform outcomes (Bešić & Reškovac, 2012). Hence, this research recommends adopting media education as a new paradigm for Montenegrin education and to center the reform on spreading the media education pedagogy to the entire curriculum.

The research has also identified the key challenges that media education is facing in Montenegro, some of which are common to the entire education system (Bešić & Reškovac, 2012). In summary, the challenges are related to the lack of pre-service and in-service teacher trainings, technical support, good quality learning resources, efficient indicators for students' assessment, research on the impact of the curriculum, teacher trainings and learning resources, and the lack of opportunities for collaboration with the local community.

Hence, according to Montenegrin teachers, to develop media education in Montenegro, the following steps need to be undertaken in future:

1. improve its status;
2. improve cooperation with media and local communities;
3. provide teacher trainings regularly and establish a network of media literacy teachers;
4. improve technical support and learning resources;
5. spread media education to all levels starting from the preschools.

If the information collected through this qualitative research is compared with the criteria for media literacy assessment in European countries (Perez Tornero & Celot, 2009), which include indicators related to four areas—media education, media literacy policy, media industry and civil society, Montenegro would be assessed as a country with a "basic" level of media literacy. (There is no policy on media literacy; participation of the media industry and civil society is sporadic; only two teacher trainings were organized; learning resources are scarce; the programme was never assessed and it is limited to a one year optional course for 16–17 year old students.)

The lack of a media literacy strategy distinguishes countries with a low media literacy level from the ones with a medium or high level (Frau-Meigs & Torrent, 2009; Perez Tornero & Celot, 2009). Therefore, the recommendation to EU countries to improve the media literacy level of the society by producing a media literacy strategy would be valid for Montenegro (Perez Tornero & Celot, 2009, p. 78).

Also, recent policy recommendations from the EU Kids Online (Livingstone, Mascheroni, Olafsson, & Haddon, 2014) are relevant to Montenegro and are in line with the recommendations from this qualitative research. In particular, a national strategy with an action plan should target children, parents, educators, government, media and ICT industry. It needs to include voices of youth and to raise awareness of media education. A good example in regard is the Finnish Media Literacy Policy Guidelines 2013-2016, which includes cooperation of all sectors of the society—national and local authorities, civil society, private sector, media, teachers, parents and children.

To conclude, Montenegro should embrace a strategic approach towards media education in future and this will benefit its entire education system. By spreading the media education pedagogy to the entire curriculum and embracing the digital education paradigm, Montenegrin schools will teach more effectively the competences that students need in the 21st century, as well as improve the quality of education.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

References

Aufderheide, P. (1993). *Media Literacy. A report of the national leadership conference on media literacy*. Aspen: Aspen Institute.

Bešić, M., & Reškovac, T. (2012). *Evaluacija reforme obrazovanja u Crnoj Gori (2010–2012)*. Podgorica: Mreža fondacija za otvoreno drustvo. Retrieved from http://www.zzs.gov.me/ResourceManager/FileDownload.aspx?rId=119598&rType=2

Carrington, V., & Robinson, M. (Ed.) (2009). *Digital Literacies: Social Learning and Classroom Practices.* London, UK: Sage Publications.

Celot, P. (2014). *Media literacy European policy recommendations*. Brussels: EAVI. Retrieved from http://www.eavi.eu/joomla/images/stories/About_EAVI/eavi%202014%20media%20literacy%20eu%20policy%20recommendations.pdf

Chaka, C. (2009). *The changing faces of literacies: Information and media literacy in the context of higher education.* In M. Leaning (Ed.), *Issues in information and media literacy: Education, practice and pedagogy.* Santa Rosa, CA: Informing Science Press.

Christ, W. G., & Potter, W. J. (1998). Media literacy, media education and the academy. *Journal of Communication*, *48*(1), 5-15.

Cortoni, I. (Ed.) (2009) *Una scuola che comunica. Volume 1.* Trento: Erickson.

Cortoni, I., & Lo Presti V. (2014) *Digital capabilities.* In S. Kotilainen & R. Kupiainen (Eds.), *Reflections on media education futures. Contributions to the conference media education futures in Tampere, Finland*

2014. Göteborg, Sweden: Nordicom.

Crystal, D. (2001). *The language of the Internet.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Davies, J. (2009). *A space for play: Crossing boundaries and learning online*. In V. Currington & M. Robinson (Eds.), *Digital literacies: Social learning and classroom practices*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Dowdall, C. (2009). *Masters and critics: Children as producers of online digital texts*. In V. Carrington & Robinson M. (Eds.), *Digital literacies: Social learning and classroom practices*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Ferri, P. (2011) *Nativi digitali.* Milano: Pearson Italia.

Frau-Meigs, D., & Torrent, J. (Eds.) (2009). *Mapping media education policies in the world: Visions, programmes and challenges.* New York: UN-Alliance of Civilizations and GrupoComunicar.

Gee, J. P. (2008). *Social linguistic and literacies: Ideology in discourse*. London, UK: Routledge.

Gee, J. P. (2013). *The anti-education era: Creating smarter students through digital learning.* New York, USA: Palgrave Macmillian.

Goldhaber, M. H. (1997). The attention economy and the net. *First Monday*, 2 (4-7). Retrieved from http://firstmonday.org/article/view/519/440

Grizzle, A., & Wilson, C. (Ed.) (2011) *Media and information literacy curriculum for teachers*. Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved from http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0019/001929/192971e.pdf

Hobbs, R. (2010). *Copyright clarity: How fair use supports digital learning*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Hobbs, R. (2011). *Digital and media literacy: connecting culture and classroom*. London: Sage.

Hoechsmann, M., & Poyntz, S. R. (2012). *Media literacies: A critical introduction.* West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Ito, M., Horst, H., Bittanti, M., Boyd, D., Herr-Stephenson, B., Lange, P. G., Pascoe, C. J., & Robinson L. (2009). *Living and learning with new media. Summary of Findings from the Digital Youth Project*. London, England: The MIT Press.

Jenkins, H. (2010). *Culture partecipative e competenze digitali. Media Education per il XXI secolo*. Milano: Angelo Guerini e Associati SpA.

Jenkins, H., & Kelley, W. (2013). *Reading in a participatory culture: Remixing Moby-Dick in the English classroom.* New York, USA: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Jones, R. H., & Hafner, C. A. (2012). *Understanding digital literacies: A practical introduction*. New York, USA: Routledge.

Kerin, R. (2009). Digital portraits: Teacher education and multiliteracies pedagogy. In V. Carrington & M. Robinson (Eds.), *Digital literacies: Social learning and classroom practices*. London: Sage Publications.

Lankshear, C., & Knobel, M. (Eds.) (2007). *Digital literacies: Concepts, policies and practices.* New York: Peter Lang.

Leander, K. (2009). Composing with old and new media: Toward a parallel pedagogy. In V. Carrington & M. Robinson (Eds.), *Digital literacies: Social learning and classroom practices*. London: Sage Publications.

Lessig, L. (2004). *Free culture: How big media uses technology and the law to lock down culture and control creativity*. New York: Penguin Press.

Livingstone, S. (2009) *Children and the Internet: Great expectations, challenging realities.* Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Livingstone, S., Mascheroni, G., Olafsson, K., & Haddon, L. (2014). *Children's online risks and opportunities: comparative findings of EU Kids Online and Net Children Go mobile*. Retrieved from http://www.netchildrengomobile.eu/reports

Manovich, L. (2007). *What comes after remix?* Retrieved from http://manovich.net/DOC-S/remix_2007_2.doc

Mazzarella, S. R. (Ed.) (2007). *20 questions about youth & the media.* New York: Peter Lang.

McWilliams, J. E., & Clinton, K. (2013). Reimagining and reinventing the English classroom for the digital age. In H. Jenkins & W. Kelley (2013), *Reading in a participatory culture: Remixing Moby-Dick in the English Classroom.* New York, USA: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Montgomery, K. C., Grier, S., Chester, J., & Dorfman, L. (2011). *Digital marketing e children's health. A framework for research.* In C. VonFeilitzen, U. Carlsson, & C. Bucht (Eds.), *New questions, new insights, new approaches. Contributions to the research forum at the world summit on media for children and youth 2010.* Göteborg, Sweden: International Clearinghouse on Children, Youth and Media, Nordicom, Göteborg University.

Morcellini, M. (2007). *Conclusione*. In M. Morcellini & P. C. Rivoltella (Eds.), *La sapienza di comunicare. Dieci anni di media education in Italia ed Europa*. Gardolo: Erickson.

Morcellini, M., & Cortoni, I. (2007). *Provaci ancora, scuola. Idee e proposte contro la svalutazione della scuola nel Tecnoevo.* Trento: Erickson.

Morrel, E., Duenas, R., Garcia, V., & Lopez, J. (2013). *Critical media pedagogy. Teaching for achievement in city schools.* New York, USA: Teachers College, Columbia University.

Perez Tornero, J. M., & Celot, P. (2009). *Study on assessment criteria for media literacy levels*. Brussels: EAVI, CLEMI, UAB, UCL, UTA, European Commission. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/culture/library/studies/literacy-criteria-report_en.pdf

Perez Tornero, J. M., & Varis, T. (Eds.) (2010). *Media literacy and new humanism*. Moscow, Russia: UNESCO.

Potter, J. (2013). *Media literacy*. London, UK: Sage Publications.

Simone, R. (2012). *Presi nella rete.* Milano: Garzanti.

Veen W., & Vrakking B. (2006) *Homo Zappiens. Crescere*

nell'era digitale. Roma: Edizioni Idea.

Vos, I., Terryn, D., Boshkov, A., Fotiade, N., Grousouzakou, E., Kovachev, L., Kamburova, N., Lõssenko, J., Newrly, P., Papadimitriou, S., Reynolds, S., Sedlbauer, G., Simmetsberger, U., Tokmakidou, X., & Tsakarestou, B. (2013) *Charting media and learning in Europe 2013*. Retrieved from http://www.medeanet.eu/sites/default/files/MEDEAnet_Deliverable_4.3_Annual_Report_2013/index.pdf

About the Author

Dr. Jelena Perović

Jelena Perović has a PhD in Communications Science from the Sapienza University of Rome, Italy. The PhD thesis is entitled "Media Literacy in Montenegro". She has been working for UNICEF Montenegro as the Communication Officer since 2007. Previously, she worked for Save the Children.

Media and Communication (ISSN: 2183-2439)
2015, Volume 3, Issue 4, Pages 106-115
Doi: 10.17645/mac.v3i4.345

Article

Who Is Willing to Pay for Online Journalistic Content?

Marju Himma-Kadakas * and Ragne Kõuts

Institute of Social Sciences, University of Tartu, 51003 Tartu, Estonia; E-Mails: marju.himma@ut.ee (M.H.-K.), ragne.kouts@ut.ee (R.K.)

* Corresponding author

Submitted: 30 May 2015 | In Revised Form: 20 August 2015 | Accepted: 28 September 2015 | Published: 29 December 2015

Abstract
While the overall readership of newspapers is growing as a result of the multiplatform reach, many online media consumers are not offered the surplus value they expect of journalistic content. Since a great deal of journalistic content published on the internet has been free of charge for years, attempting to monetarise this content is now proving complicated. This article considers the motivating factors behind attitudes towards paying for online journalistic content in different population groups. We follow two directions: attitudes towards paying for online news, and obstacles that compromise willingness to pay in different groups. The survey results and trends noticed by media organisations indicate that the public's readiness to pay for journalistic online content is growing, albeit slowly. Based on the outcomes of various interviews we can conclude that the expectation of exclusive quality and web distinctive content are the two main reasons behind willingness to pay for online journalistic content, however, it is difficult to outline particular preference groups based on cultural, demographic, or socio-economic characteristics. This seems to be the result of audience fragmentation—the reasons behind willingness to pay for online journalistic content are hidden in the interests and preferences of small audience groups.

Keywords
audience studies; media audience; online journalism; paywalls; pricing models; willingness to pay

Issue
This article is part of the special issue "Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media", edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

© 2015 by the authors; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

1. Introduction

The multiplatform reach has increased the overall readership of print media content, however, "combining online and print readership is theoretically problematic because it assumes that each online user delivers the same value as a print reader, which is not the case" (Chyi, Yang, Lewis, & Zheng, 2010, p. 63). Media enterprises are changing, embracing the innovation of technology and product (Schlesinger & Doyle, 2014, p. 2), redefining and consolidating business models (Mateo, Bergés, & Garnatxe, 2010; Teece, 2009), and re-evaluating the audiences' needs and expectations (Herbert & Thurman, 2007). We can see that the number of individuals who pay for digital news has grown in many countries (Newman & Levy, 2014, p. 56) and that the preferred payment method is predominantly that of ongoing subscriptions rather than one-off payments (Newman & Levy, 2014, pp. 56-57). Nevertheless, many online news media users do not get the surplus value they expect as paying customers (Goyanes, 2014).

The New York Times was the first to offer its newspaper content for free in 2001, in a way paving the way for the creation of a 'free culture' in relation to news consumption (Castells, 2006). Social networks have extended the 'free culture' and this has enabled the distribution of free information to a greater degree (Cingel, Lauricella, Wartella, & Conway, 2014; Jansson & Lindell, 2015). Therefore, having cultivated the habit of free consumption for over a decade, it is difficult to

now demand payment for this content. In addition, the "free culture" in the European media environment is, for the most part, complemented by public service media, which is accessible through multiple platforms. Thus, for the individual user a new dilemma emerges: why pay when a vast amount of information is still accessible free-of-charge?

Mobile media reveal some counter-tendencies to the "free culture". According to Newman and Levy (2014) the increasing usage of mobile platforms can be seen as a supporting factor in readers' increased willingness to pay for online news. However, not only technology has influenced consumer behaviour; there are also personal contributing factors. Given that in advanced societies ITC is freely accessible to everyday users (Eurostat, 2015), economic factors are not emphasised, making it even more relevant to show what individual considerations lie behind the decision to pay for digital journalistic content. To date, the factors influencing willingness to pay have been sought in readers' socio-demographic background and media consumption habits (Curtois et al., 2015; Goyanes, 2014, 2015; Herbert & Thurman, 2007). Indeed, we can summarise the results of these studies very simply—the factors related to the decision to pay are still unclear and multifold.

The arousal of media interest could be dependent on social factors, which can be described in terms of social situation i.e. the situation in which information is applied for and used (Katz, Blumer, & Gurevitch, 1973, Wilson, 2006). Firstly, social factors create tensions and a sense of conflict that an individual can ease by consuming mass media products. Secondly, social factors create a heightened degree of awareness in relation to problems that demand attention and further information, which can be searched for in the media. Thirdly, the news media acts as a substitute for and supplement to dull everyday life patterns dictated by the social situation. Furthermore, the social situation highlights certain values and creates the expectation that one should be familiar with media considered to be vital for members of the social group in order to build a feeling of togetherness (Katz et al., 1973).

In this article, we will argue that it is not possible to outline the individual, social, and contextual factors that influence willingness to pay for online journalistic content, while in the context of audience fragmentation, situational and content factors play the biggest role. The multifold factors mentioned above will be analysed on an individual level with relations to the macro level by utilising the uses and gratifications approach, and by relating media consumption habits to characteristics of the media systems (Peruško, Vozab, & Čuvalo, 2013, 2015). Thus, in the next chapters we will provide context for an analysis based on the three related areas: media systems as the background that explains media content made available in specific countries, different pricing models applied to online journalistic content, and the audience members' preferences in relation to online journalistic consumption. On this basis, empirical material collected in Estonia will be presented.

1.1. Media System as a Background for Media Usage

For the last ten years, media systems research has been based on the exhaustive model offered by Hallin and Mancini (2004, 2012), which relates social political context to the media system in particular countries. Specifics in Europe include, amongst others, "the significant position still occupied by public service broadcasting, the high status still often attributed to print and print journalism in the spectrum of mass media, and the continued attachment to protectionist measures, exceptional for global markets" (McQuail, 2007, pp. 20-21). On the other hand, the 'Europeanization' of media markets takes place—"the EU and other Europe-wide bodies try to achieve a more open market for media goods and services" (McQuail, 2007, p. 21). Thus, the pressure not to give "free lunches" to audiences also follows.

In line with the structuration theory, there have been some attempts at defining audience behaviour patterns according to the media systems model (Peruško et al., 2013; Yuan & Ksiazek, 2011; Webster, 2009). Peruško et al. (2015) documented the impact of macro-level institutional structures on micro-audience practices, stating that various digital media systems have a significant effect on all aspects of media use. Peruško et al. tested Hallin and Mancini's model (2004) with a cluster analysis of media system variables and found that many CEE post-socialist European democracies "do cluster together with the countries grouped in the Mediterranean polarized pluralist model" (Peruško et al., 2013, p. 148). Estonia is similar to the "Northern" group where media usage is characterized by a higher usage of printed newspapers, internet and social networks and by a greater radio audience (Peruško et al., 2013). On the other hand, a liberal approach to market regulation characterises the context of media use in Estonia (Örnebring, 2011, p. 30), and Peruško et al. (2013, p. 138) deduce that the practices of media audiences will have an impact on media systems themselves.

On the other hand, news consumption on the internet depends on ICT accessibility for different populations. There seem to be no economical obstacles for ICT usage in Europe, however living standards in CEE countries are lower in relation to older European Union countries. Only in Bulgaria does the level of internet access in households fall to below 60 per cent, with all other CEE countries presenting much higher levels (in Estonia the level of internet access is 83 per cent). It is also relevant to note that lower living standards are often compensated by much cheaper communication services, which are clearly less expensive than the EU-average (Eurostat, 2015).

1.2. Pricing Journalistic Content

Five of the twelve business models described by Art Silverblatt (2009) also apply to the Estonian media landscape. According to the first model, the “free model”, information available through the internet is free-of-charge and accessible to everyone, thus media producers do not receive any profit from online news. This, presently in Estonia, is only partly valid, as charged content exists in parallel to free content, while similar “free models” are in use in other CEE countries (e.g. Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia etc.). Gradually, different media enterprises are starting to use the “fremium” pricing model, according to which some of the content is free, while some of the content is only accessible through a paywall.

Freely available products do not force the user to consider whether or not to pay. In turn, free products send the message of a lower value product, and this may decrease the user’s interest in the product. The mental cost, combined with the financial cost of a product diminishes the probability that a customer might accept a micro-payment model, especially when rival options are free-of-charge (Sindik & Graybeal, 2011). This certainly does not mean that public service media should not offer content free-of-charge, rather, it means that the monetarised content needs to be different and should be aimed at target audiences who are willing to pay.

Over the last couple of years, Estonian news media organisations have started to introduce different content pricing models. The dominant model is “fremium”, according to which the journalistic content is differentiated and some of it—mainly immediate and timely news content—is offered free-of-charge; while other content, mostly newspaper content or content that is specially produced for the online channel, is only accessible via paywall. There are differences in the exploitation of pricing models by the two biggest news websites (www.postimees.ee and www.delfi.ee), news websites that focus mainly on finance and business (www.aripaev.ee) and the company that manages a system of local and regional newspapers (*Ühinenud Ajalehed*/*Joint Newspapers*).

The biggest and most dominant online news edition, Delfi.ee, still functions on an advertising-funded, so called “free” business model, according to which the number of user page views are exchanged for a reciprocal amount of the advertisers’ money, and the same model is also used by Postimees.ee, the second biggest online news provider in Estonia. In recent years, both of these content providers have started to introduce the “fremium” model, according to which some of the content (mainly content from daily newspapers owned by the same company—*Eesti Päevaleht* for delfi.ee and *Postimees* for postimees.ee) is behind a paywall. The same fremium model has also been introduced by the financial daily *Äripäev* and was adopted by the *Joint Newspapers* company for an initial period.

From this trend we can see how the systematic pricing of journalistic content is becoming commonplace in Estonian news media enterprises. The managing directors of *Postimees* and *Joint Newspapers* see the audience’s paying contribution as an inevitable course of action for media enterprises as they are unable to finance the quality content that the audience expects solely through revenues earned from advertising (interview with the managing directors), and see the pricing of content as an instrument that will adjust the audience’s consumption habits (interview with the managing director of *Postimees,* Mart Luik). All of the managing directors expressed a belief that in the near future the pricing of digital content will increase turnover and that the number of users willing to pay will continue to grow. In reality, the growth in audience so far has met these expectations, now the main challenge lies in how to engage new audience segments and at what price.

There is a difference in engaging the everyday news audience segments of delfi.ee and postimees.ee, and the financial news audience of aripaev.ee. The managing director of *Äripäev* explains that 90 per cent of the potential audience for his media channel has already been reached (interview with managing director of *Äripäev,* Igor Rõtov), but now the question to be answered is what would encourage the audience to pay more for different products. In his opinion, a possible solution for niche audiences could be the premium model, according to which all content, both in printed newspapers and online, would be priced (interviews with managing director of *Äripäev,* Igor Rõtov, and *Joint Newspapers,* Margus Mets).

Joint Newspapers has switched from the fremium model to what is almost a premium model, which means that over 90 per cent of the content is behind a paywall. Their audience can be categorised as niche-users with a special interest in hyper local topics. Similarly, on its business website, the *Joint Newspapers* company does not focus on engaging new audience segments as the limited audience is already engaged. In this case, the main goal is to maintain the audience that is already paying, and it is for this reason that local newspapers differentiate between newspaper and online content, offering content produced exclusively for online channels.

Aiming at niche audiences with special interests seems to be a direction that all media enterprises are following as it enables them to charge for a variety of products that hold relevance for different audience segmentations.

According to interviews with the respective managing directors, it can be said that expanding the product selection (e.g. special content for digital newspapers, conferences, participation in special interest clubs),

and integrating different news organisations (e.g. online editions, local and nation-wide newspapers, publishing houses), is one developmental direction that media enterprises are following in order to renew their business models. In the long term, this may have an impact on the media system and in turn, could support the relationship between the media system and a shift in audiences' consumption habits, as is suggested by Peruško et al. (2013, 2015).

> You have free content and you accustom people with this solution. Then you start to offer some content that is valuable. Gradually, they will see the value of content and are willing to pay the proper price for it. (Mart Luik, managing director of *Postimees)*

Nation-wide news portals like *Postimees.ee* and *Delfi.ee* differentiate between different content categories by putting a higher price on products that are known to engage a considerably higher number of users.

1.3. Reluctance and Willingness to Pay for Journalistic Content

There has been contradictory argumentation on the topic of willingness to pay for online journalistic content (Dutta, 2012; Herbert & Thurman, 2007; Hermansson, 2013). Largely, reluctance to pay does not necessarily depend on personal income. The empirical study by H. I. Chyi et al. (2010), which focused on the citizens of Hong Kong, made it clear that people with a higher income were more likely to be unwilling to pay for digital news. A study of the audience that pays for digital media content revealed that 35% are aged 55+, 52% have higher education qualifications, 89% say they are very interested in news, 43% use a tablet for news, and lastly, as an example, in the UK the main reason for signing up and remaining a digital media reader is the broad range of news coverage offered (Newman & Levy, 2014, pp. 56-57).

Goyanes (2014, p. 751) argues that users who are engaged in moderate use of Twitter were more likely to pay for online news than users who had never used Twitter, but there are no significant differences between non-Twitter users and heavy Twitter users in relation to their willingness to pay for online content. He also argues that some Twitter users employ this social network as an alternative to paid online news. Herbert & Thurman (2007, p. 211) note that charging for content has largely been considered impossible given the high precedent of failed attempts. But they present the example of iTunes for buying digital media content as a parallel for distinctive online newspaper content that could encourage large numbers of users to spend money. This said, the growing availability of free news via social network sites will continue to change the audience's behaviour in the future. It will definitely change people's understanding of what the news represents and, in the situation where news is everywhere on the internet, the behaviour patterns they adopt in order to avoid news (Velsker & Kõuts, forthcoming).

Being aware of the factors that influence users' willingness to pay is important for media organisations when developing new business models, as well as when predicting potential changes in the role of journalism in democratic society. According to Martin Engebretsen (2006, p. 68), the reader has different expectations that need to be satisfied on either a conscious or subconscious level: they are looking for variety and entertainment, they want to be assured that the world today is still roughly the same it was yesterday and they are trying to find a connection between solutions for problems they often experience with others. Routine and habits are of undeniable importance in understanding media consumption (Courtois, Schrøder, & Kobbernagel, 2015). An individual's decision as to whether or not it is worth paying for journalistic content depends not only on personal interests, habits and previous experiences, but also on exact situations and the influence of his/her peers. In order to become a part of an individual's news diet, a news medium must 1) be worth the time spent, 2) be acceptable to peer networks, 3) maintain a public connection, 4) have participatory potential, 5) be affordable in terms of price, 6) have technological appeal, and 7) offer a situational fit (Courtois et al., 2015, p. 125). In the context where media organisations try to monetarise journalistic content on a multi-platform level, it is essential to know what the audience is willing to pay for. In this context, payment goes beyond the act of a monetary contribution—as Davenport and Beck (2001) remark, the struggle to engage audiences' attention is becoming more and more difficult, and they predict that the growing perception of the attention economy will emerge (Davenport & Beck, 2001, pp. 210-211).

Both the attention economy approach and the audience's expectation of added value (Jankowski & van Selm, 2000) present a challenge for the production of digital journalistic content. Paying for news would mean that the user appreciates what is being offered more and would read and record it more diligently, while for an advertiser, this would make the product more valuable (Anderson, 2009, referenced by Sindik & Graybeal, 2011).

According to Salovaara and Juzefovics (2012), more often than not, online media channels mediate news gathered from other sources without adding any surplus value, and news sites on the internet are generally overloaded with press releases, material produced by news agencies and references to other online news portals and newspapers. Slovenia and Serbia, two CEE countries similar to Estonia, reveal similar drawbacks in relation to online news media content. The analysis of

online multimedia formats indicates a lack of the knowledge required to format multimedia information properly and exploit internet possibilities to the fullest (Vobič, 2011; Vobič & Milojević, 2014). The example of Slovenia does not differ from the Greek example (Spyridou & Veglis, 2008) or the German company, *welt.de* (Brandstetter & Schmalhofer, 2014), whose paywall protected information segment offers no content of added value in terms of the medium's technical possibilities.

Loit and Siibak (2013, p. 25) consider that the emergence of digital media has increased the volume of news produced, and that this increase has not improved, but rather contributed to the deterioration of news quality. As expressed following the advent of online news media (Boczkowski, 2004; Dahlgren, 1996; Deuze, 2004; Pavlik, 2000), the hope that online media would provide valid competition to printed media and bring about historical technological changes in journalism, has not materialised. Online journalistic content lacks the universally approved criteria that define journalistic quality and the technological level expected by audiences.

According to data provided by the Reuters Institute for Digital News Reports, the most intriguing topics for readers include national and international news, and news relative to their hometowns, while the proportion of interest in entertainment news differs largely between varying age groups (Newman & Levy, 2014 p. 13). It is up to the reader to decide what content is relevant to his/her personal sphere: online content could be more versatile than printed content, but it often overlaps with other editions and is lacking in terms of quality as well as in terms of information selection criteria. From a reader's point of view, there is an important question to be answered—is web content worth paying for?

On the basis of these points, the research questions of this study are:

RQ 1: Is there a socio-demographic profile that defines those who are willing to pay for online journalistic content?
RQ 2: What factors compromise willingness to pay for online journalistic content in different audience groups?

1.4. Method of Study

This article maps out factors that promote or compromise willingness to pay for online journalistic content, as presented by online media users. We use data collected in 2011 (N=1510) and 2014 (N=1503) by the Estonian quantitative survey Mina.Maailm.Meedia (MeeMa)[1] to show what motivates willingness to pay and the factors that compromise willingness to pay amongst different socio-demographic groups in Estonia. In order to gain insight into individual reasons behind different users' willingness to pay, we conducted 13 qualitative semi-structured interviews with active online media consumers. All interviews in this study were conducted between March 2014 and March 2015.

Combining quantitative methods (to answer research question 1) and qualitative methods (to answer research question 2) helped us to gain insight into the reasons behind users' willingness to pay as quantitative data analysis alone would not have answered our research question, but without quantitative data, the interviews would have been devoid of a broader context.

2. Results

In the past, different research projects have provided controversial results regarding digital media consumers' willingness to pay for online journalistic content, with these results successfully demonstrating how quantitative research alone cannot provide a clear socio-demographic profile of the people who are willing to pay for online news media content, and our quantitative data analysis emphasising the point. Comparing answers to the question "are you willing to pay for online content", it is evident that between 2011 and 2014 the number of people who have adopted a firm position in relation to their willingness to pay for online journalistic content has increased (see Table 1). In 2011, 37 per cent of the people questioned had no clear standpoint as to whether or not they would be willing to pay for news content; however, by 2014 this figure had dropped to 24%.

Table 1. Answers to the question "Are you willing to pay for online content?" in 2011 and 2014 among Estonian population (Sources: MeeMa database 2011, 2014).

	2011 (N=1583)	2014 (N=1503)
Yes	17%	7%
Don't know	37%	24%
No	46%	69%

Based on the surveys in 2011 and 2014 it can be said that willingness to pay for online content is not correlated to the economic situation of respondents. For instance, only 15 per cent of the respondents say that they cannot afford to buy a computer or access to internet (MeeMa database, 2014). Therefore it can be concluded, that reasons other than purely economical factors motivate users' willingness to pay for online journalistic content.

This said, the aspect of quality is relevant as according to the 2011 data, 17 per cent of respondents stated that they would be willing to pay more for Estonian newspapers if these media channels could present quality information (MeeMa database, 2011). This also

[1] This work was supported by institutional research funding IUT 20-38 from the Estonian Ministry of Education and Research.

follows the main reasoning of news providers, who claim that charging readers could improve the quality of the news offered. Even so, 50 per cent of MeeMa 2011 respondents were of the opinion that online news should be completely free, even if the quality could be improved through payment.

Our regular representative survey data indicates that users' willingness to pay for news media is not related to their income, interests or media consumption habits (Vihalemm, Lauristin, & Kõuts, 2012), to how much they trust different media channels (Kõuts, Vihalemm, & Lauristin, 2013) or to their critical perception of journalism or need for information (MeeMa, 2011, 2014). Willingness to pay does not appear to be related to anything that would be observable through a quantitative survey.

On the other hand, while quality is an important criterion, seeking to improve the quality of news content is not necessarily the only factor capable of guaranteeing the financial interests of media entrepreneurs. Moreover, the constraint of mapping factors that influence users' willingness to pay lies in the fact that quality is a fuzzy concept and the meaning of quality varies from individual to individual. What is considered as 'quality' for a media enterprise may not denote 'quality' for different audience segments or individual consumers.

2.1. Willingness to Pay

After acknowledging that even the most comprehensive survey questionnaires cannot answer the question as to who would be prepared to pay for online content, we conducted semi-structured interviews with selected audience members. The interviewees of our study were separated into two groups: one with a general level of interest in news and a second with a specific interest in finance. Both groups expressed their willingness to pay for online content, though only about third had actually paid for it.

Interviewees stated that they would be willing to pay for online content, as it is a service, just like a newspaper or any other media product that a media organisation charges for, with their main argumentation regarding quality being that the good things in life are never free. This general sentiment emphasises the belief that it is reasonable to pay in order to access news content which meets higher quality standards than free news content, however, it follows that a superior level of journalism is expected from priced news. Checked facts, separate-entities in relation to opinions and facts, and balanced information were among the examples cited, while the definition of the quality of priced news involved both content and formal preferences.

> At least it seems that quality control and editing are somewhat more efficient for priced news. Maybe there is less sheer nonsense. (M4)

For the respondents, quality is one of the central factors that influences their willingness to pay. Quality is the value a reader expects from a newspaper, but he/she now also expects it from digital news. From this perspective, one can partly conclude that the pricing of digital media increases the quality of its content for the reader, as the priced product is perceived to contain content of a higher quality than that offered by its free-of-charge counterparts. This, in a way, matches the presumption of media entrepreneurs that the audience expresses its expectations and preferences through their willingness to pay.

2.1.1. "Something Extra"

The use of medium specific possibilities is important to users. The interviewees all cited examples of immediacy, multi-mediality, and hyper-textuality as "extras" employed by online news media. In relation to free-of-charge and priced online news, the respondents highlighted the aspects of speed and immediacy, however some compromise on speed was accepted when it comes to priced content, as it was recognised that the compilation of comprehensive content takes longer and reinforces the criterion of quality.

However, these "extras" are not the sole elements that motivate willingness to pay. Immediacy, which is considered an important value for news reporting, not only in the case of emergencies, but also in the timeous delivery of urgent everyday news, is not necessarily the main factor that motivated the interviewees to pay for content. Indeed, some respondents differentiated the freshness of information, including breaking news regarding war events, accidents, disasters *etc.*, from more significant, in-depth studies and accurate content.

> When there is news that Siim Kallas wants to become the Prime Minister, I would rather not see news every half an hour about it, I would like to read a proper analysis on whether he wants or does not want to become the Prime Minister. (M4)

The reader's loyalty and consumption habits appear to stem from this reasoning. Readers are more willing to pay for content produced by a media edition that also provides them with immediate information during critical situations, which—and this was a crucial condition—is free. Thus, it can be concluded that readers' habits and their loyalty to a channel that encompasses both free-of-charge and priced information, greatly affects their willingness to pay for digital content.

The use of web-specific features are considered to offer surplus value and exclusiveness, while the content is expected to have been produced especially for the online edition of that specific news portal. Web features and exclusive content are of paramount im-

portance to the reader in terms of the information quality of online content. For example, the interviewees remarked on the importance of length and the richness of the story, revealing that people are more willing to read long and informative texts online as these stories reflect the work-effort of the media organisation. This in itself is slightly contrary to the so far relatively widespread notion that online readers are looking for quick information and therefore shorter texts are better suited for online editions.

2.1.2. A Personal Connection

A personal connection with a particular topic or field of interest is one of the most relevant factors that motivates people to pay for the content. According to the interviews, one of the essential values of both free and priced digital content is the readers' personal connection to the topic. This sort of personal connection can be divided into two spheres. The first involves information associated with the readers' home region or that of close relatives (geographical and personal proximity to the topic). For example, a cancer-survivor is interested in stories about cancer and its treatment, hyper local topics from their hometown and topics of specific special interest.

The second involves work-related information, which is largely specific to the field of the particular person's occupation. This was something many interviewees mentioned in relation to their news content preferences. The consumers are attracted by their own personal interest in work-related news and a humane approach to the subject; however, it is vital that news is presented in an intriguing manner in order to lure the reader's attention, especially when he/she is considering whether or not to pay for content.

Still, the reader finds it important, that his or her interest areas would be covered and that he or she would not receive too much information he or she has no interest in:

> I would be willing to pay if someone made an app that would allow me to set which topics interest me and the noise would be removed! (N8)

Instead of wasting time on finding a free, and possibly useless alternative, consumers may decide that the convenience of immediately accessing the desired content is the biggest advantage of paying for content. (Wang, Zhang, Richard Ye, & Nguyen, 2005) This was something one of the interviewees pointed out, saying that often one's motivation to pay arises from the wish to receive pre–selected information and save time by eliminating the need to sift through news that is of no particular interest. The pre–determined selection of news by the news provider could save time, but that would mean the online edition should shift its focus towards releasing only important information instead of what is considered trivial news.

2.1.3. Niche Audience: Investors

Five of the interviewees were investors by profession and their media consumption habits were analysed with their special interest in financial topics in mind. During these interviews, three common points were raised:

1) the interviewees expressed their willingness to pay (WTP) for online content that offers an exhaustive approach to financial topics and contains reliable information, which in turn could be profitable for their professional practice;
2) the price of the acquired unit may be significantly higher than regular journalistic content for products that supplement the media product;
3) pricing content was considered as an essential condition to providing quality information on investing, and paying for the content or the product is perceived as a 'key' that permits one to access privileged information.

All five investors had paid subscriptions for financial newspapers, investing portals and private financial advice forums, for which the monthly or yearly subscription or membership fees were remarkably higher than those of other platforms offering journalistic content in Estonia. Their special interest in and the possibility of profiting from the information provided were the main factors influencing the WTP of this niche audience.

Interviewees expressed their readiness to pay for supplemented products linked to journalistic content. For example, there is a "media product" that *Äripäev* uses to provide ideas related to the field of investment and reflect best practice concepts. This product consists of an imaginary investor called Toomas, whose investment practice is analysed through real outcomes. All of the interviewees knew about Investor Toomas and regarded him as an expert consultant specialised in investment activities. This sort of quality advice is also seen as one of the additional products that could satisfy the special interests of a specific audience segment. Therefore, defining the quality of journalistic content and additional media products depends on specific interests, but this quality is seen as being worthy of the elevated price.

2.2. Obstacles that Compromise Willingness to Pay for Online Journalistic Content

Obstacles that compromise willingness to pay for online content are closely connected to factors that influence willingness to pay. This means that obstacles are often outlined by the defining factors that contrib-

ute to other users' willingness to pay, marking these factors as ambivalent indicators.

2.2.1. The Lack of "Something Extra"

The main obstacle that one encounters in relation to users' willingness to pay is related to the surplus value of online content:

> I do not see the additional value that the priced digital news would have compared to the content of public broadcasting that is free and trustworthy. What is it that I pay for, what do I get more from there? (M5)

Presenting something "extra" that adds surplus value to the online content is important, and particularly in connection with the price of the content. Similarly, media entrepreneurs note that users also consider a low price to be an indicator of inferior quality. In fact, one of the interviewees expressed the notion that if the price is too low, the newsroom cannot provide quality. Cross-media content with added benefits is something that increases the value of the available information and makes it specific for the web as a medium.

> For the money I pay I'd like to see that someone has produced something special. The fact that good reportage videos or photos are published seems to be too ordinary; I wouldn't like to pay too much extra for this, but if someone did something really '"extra", that would be worth paying for. (M5)

2.2.2. The Habit of "Free"

There is also the additional factor of saving money, which is usually mentioned in relation to the practice or habit of not paying for news media content and supports Castells' idea of a "free culture" (2006). Many of the interviewees mentioned that they enjoy public service media content that is free of advertisements and free-of-charge. This brings us to the conclusion that the 'free culture' is not only promoted by a rise in the consumption of information published on social media networks, but that it is supported by PSM, even on a media systems level.

In addition, the medium itself also seems to influence media consumption habits. People who are accustomed to reading the newspaper prefer media content that is similar or similarly formatted to that of a newspaper, even when presented on the web, meaning that the information needs to be free of distracting advertisements. However, in turn this condition works against the media enterprise's interest in selling audience reach to advertisers.

One of the main arguments given in support of not paying for online journalistic content is the fact that so much information can easily be accessed free-of-charge via online search engines, and therefore, the referred or aggregated content from other news outlets lowers the value of information.

3. Conclusions

Currently, willingness to pay for online journalistic content is of essential relevance as the number of individuals who pay for digital news has grown steadily in many countries (Newman & Levy, 2014, p. 56), however, there is a need for further study directed at reevaluating the audiences' needs and expectations (Herbert & Thurman, 2007). In this study we tried to outline individual, social, and contextual factors that influence willingness to pay for online journalistic content.

RQ 1: Is there a socio-demographic profile that defines those who are willing to pay for online journalistic content?

The results of this study reveal that willingness to pay for online journalistic content is growing, if not in a uniform fashion across the board. It is possible to outline different factors that influence willingness to pay, however, these factors are not necessarily related to socio-demographic markers or media consumption habits. The factors that influence willingness to pay are recognisable in small audience segments with specific interests.

RQ 2: What factors compromise willingness to pay for online journalistic content in different audience groups?

In addition to the substantial quality of the information made available, exclusivity, surplus value, and medium specific features—such as animations, video, interactive graphics etc.–, are expected from priced online journalistic content. Factors that compromise users' willingness to pay for content include technical issues such as the complicity of payment methods, while the main hindrance seems to be a lack of surplus value. This means that if the information is easily, and more importantly, freely accessible on the internet, it lowers the value of the journalistic content.

Identifying the expectations and preferences of different audience segments is of vital importance when it comes to understanding whether an audience will be willing to pay for online journalistic content. The factors that influence users' willingness to pay are often mutually interactive and overlap, and are very specific in different audience segments. It is therefore impossible to profile audience preferences through socio-demographic data and there are many limitations presented by the analysis of willingness to pay based solely on quantitative survey data. There may be some in-

terlinks between media systems and media consumption habits, but these cannot be analysed separately from a qualitative insight into the preferences of different audience segments in relation to each media system.

It must be emphasized that the general level of interest in news is low. This could be explained by a scarcity of journalistic content that fully uses the assets of internet, and by the fact that the motivation to pay for content is usually linked to strong personal motivation and previous experiences of paying for journalistic content. Quite often, interest in journalistic content depends more on personal factors than on elements that journalists can influence (quality, speed, relevance etc.), and given that the subject of interest varies greatly among different audience segments, content providers face a difficult task in satisfying everyone's information needs through the same medium.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank Merilin Sarapuu and Juhan Lang, both students of the University of Tartu, who contributed their time and effort in conducting the interviews for this research.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

Boczkowski, P. J. (2004). The processes of adopting multimedia and interactivity in three online newsrooms. *Journal of Communication*, *54*(2), 197-213.

Brandstetter, B., & Schmalhofer, J. (2014). Paid content. *Journalism Practice*, *8*(5), 499-507.

Castells, M. (2006). *Mobile communication and society: A global perspective*. Cambridge: MIT Press.

Chyi, H. I., Yang M. J., Lewis S. C., & Zheng, N. (2010). Use of and satisfaction with newspaper sites in the local market: Exploring differences between hybrid and online-only users. *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly*, *87*(1), 62-83.

Cingel, D. P., Lauricella, A. R., Wartella, E., & Conway, A. (2014). Predicting social networking site use and online communication practices among adolescents: The role of access and device ownership. *Media and Communication*, *2*(2), 1-30.

Courtois, C., Schrøder, K. C., & Kobbernagel, C. (2015). Exploring landscapes of news consumption cross-nationally. In F. Zeller, C. Ponte, & B. O'Neill (Eds.), *Revitalising audience research: Innovations in European audience research* (pp. 123-142). New York, London: Routledge.

Dahlgren, P. (1996). Media logic in cyberspace: Repositioning journalism and its publics. *Janvost/The Public*, *3*(3), 59-72.

Davenport, T. H., & Beck, J. C. (2001). *The attention economy: understanding the new currency of business*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Deuze, M. (2004). What is multimedia journalism? *Journalism Studies*, *5*(2), 139-152.

Dutta, S. (2012). Analyzing consumer intention to pay for online content: A systematic approach. *Journal of Theoretical and Applied Information Technology*, *31*(1), 89-102.

Engebretsen, M. (2006). *Writing for the web: An introduction to online journalism.* Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo University Press.

Eurostat. (2015). Information society. Retrieved from http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/information-society

Goyanes, M. (2014). An empirical study of factors that influence the willingness to pay for online news. *Journalism Practice*, *8*(6), 742-757.

Goyanes, M. (2015). Apoyo estructural en la intención emprendedora de estudiantes de periodismo y comunicación audiovisual en España. *El professional de la información*, *24*(1), 55-61.

Hallin, D., & Mancini, P. (2004). *Comparing media systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Hallin D., & Mancini P. (Eds.) (2012). *Comparing media systems beyond the Western world*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Herbert J., & Thurman N. (2007). Paid content strategies for news websites. An empirical study of British newspapers' online business models. *Journalism Practice*, *1*(2), 2007

Hermansson, G. (2013). *One dollar news: User needs and willingness to pay for digital news content* (PhD dissertation). Graduate School of Business and Law, RMIT University, Australia.

Jankowski, N. W., & van Selm, M. (2000). Traditional news media online: An examination of added values. *Communications*, *25*(1), 85-101.

Jansson, A., & Lindell, J. (2015). News media consumption in the transmedia age. *Journalism Studies*, *16*(1), 79-96.

Katz, E., Blumer, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and gratification research. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, 37(4), 509-523. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/2747854?__redirected

Kõuts, R., Vihalemm, P., & Lauristin, M. (2013). Trust in the context of audience fragmentation. *CM: Communication Management Quarterly*, 26, 77-102.

Loit, U., & Siibak. A. (2013). *Mapping digital media: Estonia. A report by the open society foundations.* Retrieved from http://www.opensocietyfoundations.org/sites/default/files/mapping-digital-media-estonia-20130903.pdf

Mateo, R., Bergés, L., & Garnatxe, A. (2010). Crisis, what crisis? The media: business and journalism in times of crisis. *tripleC: Communication, Capitalism & Cri-*

tique, 8(2), 251-274.

McQuail, D (2007). The current state of media governance in Europe. In G. Terzis (Ed.), *European media governance: National and regional dimensions* (pp. 17-25). Bristol and Chicago: Intellect.

Newman, N., & Levy, D. A. L. (Eds.) (2014). *Reuters Institute digital news report 2014: Tracking the future of news*. Oxford: Reuters Institute. Retrieved from: http://www.digitalnewsreport.org

Örnebring, H. (2011). *Estonia. A country report for the ERC-funded project on Media and Democracy in Central and Eastern Europe*. Retrieved from http://mde.politics.ox.ac.uk/index.php/country-reports

Pavlik, J. V. (2000). The impact of technology on journalism. *Journalism Studies*, *1*(2), 229-237.

Peruško, Z., Vozab, D., & Čuvalo, A. (2013). Audiences as a source of agency in media systems: Post-socialist Europe in comparative perspective. *Medialni Studia*, *2*, 137-154.

Peruško, Z., Vozab, D., & Čuvalo, A. (2015) Digital mediascapes, institutional frameworks, and audience practices across Europe. *International Journal of Communication*, *9*(2015), 342-364.

Salovaara, I., & J. Juzefovics. (2012). Who pays for good journalism? *Journalism Studies, 13*(5/6), 763-774.

Schlesinger, P., & Doyle, G. (2014). From organizational crisis to multi-platform salvation? Creative destruction and the recomposition of news media. *Journalism, 16*(3), 305-323.

Silverblatt, A. (2009). Business models for a battered journalism industry. *St. Lois Journalism Review*, *1*, 26-28.

Sindik, A., & G. Graybeal (2011). Newspaper micropayments and millennial generation acceptance: A brand loyality perspective. *Journal of Media Business Studies, 8*(1), 69-85.

Spyridou, L.-P., & Veglis, A. (2008). Exploring structural interactivity in online newspapers: A look at the Greek web landscape. *First Monday*. Retrieved from: http://firstmonday.org/htbin/cgiwrap/bin/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2164/1960

Teece, D. (2009). *Dynamic capabilities and strategic management: Organising for innovation and growth*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.

Velsker, L., & Kõuts, R. (forthcoming). How audience is reaching for a contact with traditional media via Facebook.

Vihalemm, P., Lauristin, M., & Kõuts, R. (2012). Trends in Estonian media landscape in 2000–2012. *Media Transformations*, *6*, 12-63.

Vobič, I. (2011). Online multimedia news in print media: A lack of vision in Slovenia. *Journalism*, *12*(8), 946-962.

Vobič, I., & Milojević, A. (2014). “What we do is not actually journalism”: Role negotiations in online departments of two newspapers in Slovenia and Serbia. *Journalism, 15*(8), 1023-1040.

Wang, L. C., Zhang, Y., Richard Ye, L., & Nguyen, D.-D. (2005) Subscription to fee-based online services: what makes consumer pay for online content? *Journal of Electronic Commerce Reasearch*, *6*(4).

Webster, J. G. (2009). The role of structure in media choice. In T. Hartman (Ed.), *Media Choice, a theoretical and empirical overview* (pp. 221-233). New York: Routledge. Retrieved from http://webster.soc.northwestern.edu/pubs/Webster%20(2009)%20Media%20Choice.pdf

Wilson, T. D. (2006). On user studies and information needs. *Journal of Documentation*, *62*(6), 658-670.

Yuan, E. J., & Ksiazek, T. B. (2011). The duality of structure on China’s national television market: A network analysis of audience behavior. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, *55*(2), 180-197.

About the Authors

Dr. Ragne Kõuts
Ragne Kõuts is a lecturer of journalism studies and a manager of the journalism MA programme at the institute of Social Studies of the University of Tartu in Estonia. Her dissertation analysed media content and usage patterns from a systems-theoretical perspective in media-connected society. Her research interests include citizen journalism, changing media use patterns amongst audiences and the role of the mass media in integration. She teaches theories of media and communication and courses on media use and media systems in Europe.

Marju Himma-Kadakas
Marju Himma-Kadakas is a doctoral student of media and communication at the University of Tartu. Her research focuses on the changing conventions of journalistic practices in relation to online journalism and changing technologies. She teaches courses on news reporting, feature writing, and digital media at the institute of Social Studies.

Media and Communication (ISSN: 2183-2439)
2015, Volume 3, Issue 4, Pages 116-119
Doi: 10.17645/mac.v3i4.352

Book Review

Journalism that Matters: Views from Central and Eastern Europe. By Michał Głowacki, Epp Lauk and Auksė Balčytienė. Bern: Peter Lang, 2014, 214 pp.; ISBN: 978-3-631-65421-7 hb.

Elena Rodina

Department of Media, Technology, and Society, Northwestern University, Evanston, IL 60208, USA;
E-Mail: elenarodina2013@u.northwestern.edu

Submitted: 1 June 2015 | Accepted: 7 July 2015 | Published: 29 December 2015

Abstract
This book is a much-needed contribution to journalistic studies that allows us to have a closer and more nuanced look at media systems and press cultures in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) from a non-Western perspective. The volume is of high value to anyone who is interested in the diversity that underlies the unifying term of "post-communist media." Most of its authors rely on rich data collected throughout lengthy periods of time on the territory of Central and Eastern Europe, which allows us to see not only the current state of "Eastern" media, but its development throughout time.

Keywords
Central and Eastern Europe; de-Westernizing media studies; journalism; journalistic practices; media

Issue
This book review is part of the special issue "Turbulences of the Central and Eastern European Media", edited by Epp Lauk (University of Jyväskylä, Finland).

© 2015 by the author; licensee Cogitatio (Lisbon, Portugal). This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY).

This book is a much-needed contribution to journalistic studies that allows us to have a closer and more nuanced look at media systems and press cultures in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) from a non-Western perspective.

De-Westernizing media and communication studies has been high on the agenda of international scholars in recent years, and it is still a matter of debate to the academic community what exactly the idea of de-Westernizing should imply. Waisbord and Mellado (2014) define this trend as two-fold: first, it means focusing more attention on non-Western media, expanding the conventional research boundaries on a geographic level, and second, it involves a challenge to conventional Western media theories that have been developed based almost exclusively on case studies of media in developed democracies. The book fulfills this task on both levels; its authors focus on an analysis of non-Western press, as well as offer alternative analytic models that help analyze non-Western media systems on their own terms, taking into account cultural, social, historical, and political peculiarities of the regions of CEE. More than that, this volume adds a third level to de-Westernization by giving a voice to scholars who themselves proceed from diverse, non-Western backgrounds. These voices make a valuable and timely contribution to contemporary discourse on media and communication.

"Journalism that Matters" consists of ten chapters and a brief introduction. The reader will find the chapters to be written in greatly varying styles, from essays designed as historical and even philosophical overviews of evolution of CEE media systems, to research papers based on rich qualitative and quantitative data, often collected in multiple countries over several years. The short, highly compressed chapters of this volume are comparable to tips of icebergs, suggesting that a more detailed and in-depth research lies hidden beneath the surface of the length-restrictions required for this anthology.

While the chapters are not grouped thematically, aside from their common focus on media of CEE countries, they can be segregated into three major groups.

The first group includes articles that are focused on evaluating the effectivity of media systems in post-Communist spaces. Thus, Miklos Sukosd in Chapter 2, "'East of West': Media in Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia, and China: multiple post-communisms and shifting geopolitical realities," describes three different social, political, and economic systems that developed after the collapse of the Communist systems, or "three post-communisms:" CEE, former Soviet States, and China. Sukosd explains how, throughout the years of media studies, Western media has traditionally served as an ideal point of comparison, a sort of benchmark that Central and Eastern Europe should strive for and achieve. He suggests that, by comparing non-Western and Western media, we are prone to sliding into reification of "Western democracy," instead of trying to understand the inner workings of non-Western media systems. His strategy is to focus on a comparison of a variety of post-Communist media systems, pointing out their commonality and mutual influences. In Chapter 3, "The watchdogs that only bark? Media and political accountability in Central and Eastern Europe," Vaclav Stetka examines how media in so-called "post-transformation countries" of the CEE region fulfill their role as "watchdogs of democracy." He analyzes the real political impact of investigative journalism in eight countries by tracking how many politicians were either sentenced or stepped down from their jobs after their corrupt activities were exposed in the press. This research shows that direct effects of the publication of investigative pieces are weak in almost all countries. The author suggests that the lack of tangible effects from the publication of investigative pieces discourages journalists to continue performing in-depth investigative work, and vice versa, concluding that one of the most important factors that would help investigative journalism flourish would be a presence of an effective system of other accountability institutions that would facilitate a subsequent prosecution of corrupt politicians. In Chapter 7, "Watchdog or underdog: how ethical is the Bulgarian media?" Bissera Zankova and Svetlozar Kirilov study media ethics (or rather the deficiency of such) in Bulgaria, analyzing ethics not as a set of given and easily transferable norms, but as rules that emerge through the complex interaction of media, structures of political, economic power, and the citizens. In Chapter 9, "Russian journalism as a social lift: comparing journalistic attitudes in the period 1992-2008," Svetlana Pasti explores the seemingly paradoxical data regarding Russian journalists: while the perception of their freedom has decreased over the past 20 years, the number of professionally satisfied journalists has increased. Pasti finds that the sources of growing journalistic satisfaction are power, wealth, and social mobility, and suggests that the character of these sources leads to the erosion of occupational ethics.

The second group of articles is focused on the journalistic changes that have been occurring in CEE countries due to the transition from "old" to "new" media. In his essay "How the internet changes journalism: some trends in the 'West' and 'East'" (Chapter 4), Peter Bajomi-Lazar proposes an historical perspective on the significance of the changes that the internet introduces to "Eastern" media, suggesting that proliferation of online media has not undisputedly improved its quality, due to the fact that media in the "East" has been facing technological changes while not yet being fully developed, in contrast to the media in the Western states. Bajomi-Lazar's ideas find further development in Chapter 8, "Journalism in crisis: the case of Serbia," where Miroljub Radojkovic, Ana Milojevic, and Aleksandra Ugrinic explore how the new information society challenges journalistic values and practices in Serbia. The authors demonstrate how the rapid spread of digital technologies, in combination with a global financial crisis, presents a strong challenge to fragile, still very much unconsolidated and unstable Serbian journalism. This view adds a new perspective to the popular concept of the democratizing role that the internet and computer technologies play in non-Western states. However, the "new technologies" theme appears to be the least developed in this particular volume, and these chapters demonstrate a lack of an in-depth, nuanced analysis that would show how the proliferation of new digital technologies deepens the journalistic crisis outlined by the authors.

The third and the most intellectually stimulating thematic group is formed by the chapters whose authors are interested in the analysis of non-Western journalistic practices and cultures. Agnieszka Stepinska and Michal Glowacki in "Professional roles, context factors, and responsibility across generations of Polish journalists" (Chapter 5) offer a fascinating study of journalistic self-perceptions in Poland, drawing comparison among the journalists of three age groups: the youngest generation of 20−30 years old, the "transformation generation" of 31−50 years old, and 'pre-transformation generation' of 50+ years old. These three generations have practiced their journalistic profession in dramatically different conditions, and the study demonstrates how they express distinct journalistic values and professional self-perceptions. While the youngest journalists mostly relate to dissemination of news and serving the public interest, the members of the "transformation generation" see their role as "watchdog," and the oldest generation self-defining as "educators" and "news-disseminators." Interestingly, the youngest and the oldest generations of journalists prove to be more similar in understanding their professional roles, while the "middle" generation stands out. These findings demonstrate how varied journalistic cul-

tures are not only around the globe and among the countries of CEE, but within these countries as well, reminding us of the dangers of "glazing over" these differences. Agnieszka Milewski, Paulina Barczyszyn, and Epp Lauk in their paper "Three countries, one profession: the journalism cultures in Poland, Romania, and Moldova" (chapter 6) provide an insight into very different journalism cultures of the three closely situated countries, drawing a conclusion that, while theoretically media workers might assume the principles of a "liberal" model of journalism, what shapes their professional behaviors are contextual factors. The authors' findings disprove the notion that geographic proximity and a common Soviet past equates to a commonality of patterns in journalistic practices, therefore reinforcing the idea of the importance of conducting comparative analyses of "East and East," rather than "East and West" only. Finally, in Chapter 10, "Similar, but so different: the practices of press councils in Estonia and Finland," Epp Lauk seeks to answer the question of why the work of very similar structures of the Press Councils in Finland and Estonia yield dramatically different effects. While noting that Estonia has been consistently marked high on press freedom ratings, Lauk emphasizes how political media freedom does not always equal ethical use of this freedom. He suggests that Estonia, along with other post-communist democracies, does not yet possess the conditions of having an audience with a sufficient level of media literacy, and an ability of the media to discuss journalism quality publicly, which precludes them from having any effective ethical self-regulating mechanisms.

The essays collected in this book demonstrate a variety of approaches and methodological choices on the analysis of non-Western media cultures and systems. This book demonstrates both the fruitfulness of such an approach, as well as its challenges. It appears that, while some authors successfully manage to analyze media systems in non-Western contexts without applying normative Western models of analysis, others still slip into this normativity, viewing the journalistic cultures and structures of CEE in terms of their approximation to the Western standards. The overshadow of Siebert et al.'s Cold-war inspired "Four theories of press" is, unfortunately, often lingering in the background (and in the bibliographies) of some of the papers, not unlike the persistent ghost of Hamlet's late father. The articles that avoid labeling a variety of non-Western journalistic practices as "good" or "bad" depending on how closely they are reminiscent of the Western media models prove to be the most profound and informative.

Another issue that recurs throughout the book is a disparity of terminology. While the authors of Chapter 1 name volatility and flux as being the main features of the media in CEE, it seems that similar instability could be attributed to the various authors' understanding of what sort of regimes these countries have. There is a whole range of definitions, including "young" and "new democracy," "neo-authoritarianism," "authoritarianism," "unconsolidated democracy," "hybrid regime," to name just a few. To be fair, this confusion is a reflection of the broader misunderstanding and disagreement among political scientists regarding the definition of the multiple post-Communist regimes, which do not remind Western democracies, but do not quite qualify as authoritarianisms either, and do not appear to cheerfully move towards democratic consolidation as they were expected to in the early 1990's. While political scientists are in need of such definitions due to the peculiarities of their field, communication and media scholars, perhaps, could circumvent this stage, and instead of providing confusing definitions of the regimes, go straight to in-depth analyses of concrete media cultures and practices.

Overall, this volume is of high value to anyone who is interested in the diversity that underlies the unifying term of "post-communist media." Most of its authors rely on rich data collected throughout lengthy periods of time on the territory of Central and Eastern Europe, which allows us to see not only the current state of "Eastern" media, but its development over time. The last two decades have been crucial for the development of journalistic cultures and societal values in post-Communist states, and a thoughtful analysis of the changes that have occurred during these years is valuable for academics, journalists, and the general public alike. The authors of this volume do not only answer many important questions about non-Western journalism, they expertly formulate new questions, inviting their colleagues, both 'Eastern' and 'Western' to join in the conversation. While some chapters offer more questions than answers (for instance, the second chapter's penultimate paragraph contains no less than seven questions in a row), they are all expertly formulated and deeply thought-provoking. I look forward for this conversation to be continued.

Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Reference

Waisbord, S., & Mellado, C. (2014). De-westernizing communication studies: A reassessment. *Communication Theory*, *24*(4), 361-372.

About the Author

Elena Rodina

Elena Rodina is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Media, Technology, and Society at Northwestern University. Elena worked as a print journalist in Russia for over eight years. She covered a diverse range of social and political topics, including the consequences of Beslan school hostage crisis; political change in post-Castro Cuba; subcultures and gender issues in Chechnya, Kalmykia, and Yamal; interethnic marriage and ethnic conflict in the Far East. She is currently doing research on journalistic practices and media culture in Russia, focusing on the region of the North Caucasus.

Media and Communication (ISSN: 2183-2439)

Media and Communication is an international open access journal dedicated to a wide variety of basic and applied research in communication and its related fields. It aims at providing a research forum on the social and cultural relevance of media and communication processes.

www.cogitatiopress.com/mediaandcommunication

COGITATIO