Central European Journal of Communication

Scientific Journal of the Polish Communication Association

Volume 14 Number 1 (28) Spring 2021

CENTRAL EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION (ISSN 1899-5101)
WWW.CEJC.PTKS.PL

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Editors' Introduction

By the time that this Spring Issue of the *Central European Journal of Communication* (CEJC) is cleared to be printed, we have spent more than a year of our lives under the dictate of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic – and there is no doubt that it has had an unprecedented impact on our actions, in both professional and private contexts. While many of us continue to struggle with the conditions of life under lockdown, it is undisputed that media and communication in their various forms are playing a paramount role in our attempts to cope with Covid-19. Thanks to the possibilities of digital media, we can stay in touch with friends and family even during a time when the principles of 'social distancing' are inevitable; we use a broad bandwidth of (traditional and innovative) communication tools that facilitate our worklife, even if we cannot leave our home offices; and, of course, media continue to be an important source of public information for every citizen, particularly with regard to the state of the pandemic. It is probably no exaggeration to state that, in the face of the virus, life without media is hard to imagine.

On the other hand, as Mark Deuze also points out in his tone-setting opener for this Spring Issue, the role of media and communication studies as an academic discipline amidst the turmoil of the pandemic is by no means so clear and unambiguous. Of course, it did not take long after the initial news of the spread of the virus in 2020 until the first scholarly analyses of the implications of the pandemic for media and journalism were published. And in the meantime, a broad range of fascinating research on the most different aspects of this topic has flourished in Central Europe and all around the world. However, while many academic disciplines gained public visibility in the course of the past year (with many experts, particularly from the fields of virology and medicine, being regular checkpoints in the daily news), communication researchers remained strangely silent in the public discourse. In retrospect, it seems that media and communication studies are still searching for their place in the current confusion – as if to find and come to terms with their own identity and role in society.

The analysis by Mark Deuze, which is published as a part of the new "Methods and Concepts" section of the CEJC, suggests that this discrepancy may have deeper (and to some extent: structural) reasons that are not directly related to the coronavirus pandemic. Indeed, media and communication researchers have long struggled with the more general problem of coming to terms with the increasingly dispersed, hybridized, networked, or automated character of communication, as displayed in the digitized media world of today. In order to tackle this problem, Deuze calls for a more human-based and holistic type

of communication research, which follows the key aims of positionality, methodological integration, and publicness. This call, in various ways, encapsulates the spirit of many of the contributions that are collected in this issue of CEJC.

Following Deuze's opening piece, the issue unites six original research papers by authors working in such diverse countries as Sweden, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Russia, Hungary, and Spain. They cover a wide range of topics from the sub-fields of political communication, journalism studies, audience research, political art, and popular culture, among other aspects, and although most of the studies presented in the papers were launched long before the start of the pandemic, together they seem to echo Deuze's call for a critical self-contemplation of the discipline – at least from a methodological perspective.

Marju Himma-Kadakas and Mirjam Mõttus explore change processes in Estonian newsrooms, particularly with regard to their willingness to cooperate with freelance journalists. Based on two waves of semi-structured interviews, the authors detect a notable trend towards outsourcing journalistic tasks as well as a changing image of freelancers who increasingly have to take on entrepreneurial roles, too.

The ensuing papers by Zina Stovickova as well as Katrin Dkhair and Polina Klochko highlight different aspects of electoral campaign coverage and the varying images of Eastern politicians such as Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelensky. While Stovickova uses Critical Discourse Analysis to examine the representation of Putin in Czech online media, Dkhair and Klochko combine network analysis, the construction of n-grams, and LDA-based topic modeling to compare Zelensky's portrayal in Russian and Ukrainian news. Both papers reveal interesting contrasts – not only conceptually.

The articles by Ágnes Virág and by Agnes Strickland-Pajtok turn the spotlight on Hungary – again with contrasting methodological approaches. The former showcases the potential of visual framing in an empirical study that analyses how the Hungarian Parliament is depicted in political artworks. The latter pre–sents results from a series of interviews with female Hungarian TV viewers and evaluates the extent that watching the HBO drama series The Handmaid's Tale encourages them to develop their sense of cultural citizenship.

The final research paper by Paloma Piqueiras and María José Canel exemplifies the promises of comparative research designs in media and communication studies. The authors introduce economic indicators and survey data from 17 European countries to explore the relationship between wealth, citizen engagement, and trust in public institutions. These insights are used to discuss practical implications for public sector communication. The specific challenges of such large-scale comparative projects also resonate in the subsequent interview with Claudia Mellado, in which she provides insights into her pioneering research about journalistic role performance.

Notwithstanding the broad spectrum of geographical representation and methodological approaches covered by the articles in this Spring Issue of CEJC, it remains open for debate as to how far the contributions can live up to Mark Deuze's demand for more public scholarship – and leave an impact on political and public discourses. Certainly, inclusion in a peer-reviewed academic journal like CEJC can only be a starting point in this process. In this sense, we (as the editors of this issue) are hoping for a lively follow-up discussion – for example in one of the journal's social media channels. We are grateful to all contributors who made it possible to complete this issue despite the challenging circumstances of the current pandemic.

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DOI: 10.51480/1899-5101.14.1(28).1

Challenges and Opportunities for the Future of Media and Mass Communication Theory and Research: Positionality, Integrative Research, and Public Scholarship

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ABSTRACT: In this essay I intend to tell a story of media studies and mass communication research as a field, based on the work of the late Denis McQuail – and that of editing the new edition of his seminal handbook *McQuail's Media and Mass Communication Theory* (McQuail & Deuze, 2020). Using McQuail's historical storytelling method, I specifically look at the challenge for the field in the context of a global pandemic alongside an infodemic, at a time when the whole world faces the consequences of recurrent lockdowns, social distancing measures, and institutional pressures to stay at home. Media studies and (mass) communication research, while having a distinct narrative, as a field has only just begun to articulate its relevance to society – we have only just started to tell our story. Using developments in understanding the self as a research tool, the implementation of integrative research designs, and calls for engaged and public scholarship, the paper outlines challenges and opportunities for what we can do with our field.

KEYWORDS: media studies, mass communication theory, continuity, discontinuity, infodemic.

INTRODUCTION

The profound role of media and (mass) communication in society and everyday life, once the more or less exclusive domain of academics, has become abundantly clear to everyone in 2020. This heightened awareness is mainly due to a *dual convergence* happening around the world: the merging of traditional and new media systems into a hybrid media system (Chadwick, 2017), and the confluence of all spheres of life in the 'supra-locale' of the home (Fuchs, 2020). In part, this leaves people wanting more – it is no surprise that visits to public parks and beaches are spiking, that bicycles and garden toys are sold out. Another

consequence is an accelerated move by institutions and governments to develop and propose all kinds of new policies regarding digital media – including more stringent policies regarding the role (and taxation) of Internet platform companies, the development of new media literacy protocols and curricula, the rapid adoption of information and communication technologies to facilitate distance learning and working from home, and pushing through innovations in the area of telemedicine and digital health applications (Deuze, 2020).

One wonders what the voice of the field of media studies and (mass) communication research in all of this is. At a time when the whole world is wondering (and worried) about media, it seems our field is remarkably absent from public debates. This is not a new situation – throughout our field's history have scholars lamented its absence or silence in the public arena (Waisbord, 2019). Lewis (2020) wonders what communication research is for as it does not seem to participate in the prominent discussions of the day, while Rasmus Kleis Nielsen goes as far to bluntly state that no one cares what we know (2018a). According to Kleis Nielsen (2018 a and b), our field generally lacks real engagement outside the narrow boundaries of academic institutions and audiences, tends not to have a seat at the table where 'elite stakeholder communities' such as journalists, politicians, celebrities, consultants and big business executives set the public agenda, and is often too busy (communicating) with itself than truly caring about others.

Perhaps we can add to this daunting list of woes the significant trouble we have in telling the story of our field – who we are, what we do, why we did it, and what we found. Ours is what Silvio Waisbord calls a 'post-discipline': a permanently impermanent field of study, loosely built on the foundations of many other disciplines while never really coalescing around a more or less consensual paradigm, set of theories, let alone research methods. This despite an impressive number of disciplinary handbooks, textbooks, and canonical readers. The somewhat scattered nature of media and communication research has led to much hand-wringing over the decades, with the field's flagship journal *Journal of Communication* for example at regular intervals (in 1983, 1993 and 2018) publishing special issues, documenting in detail the on-going fragmentation and specialization of work in the field. We do not seem to have a grand narrative – nothing that connects the many threads that make up media and mass communication teaching and research. We can be a hard sell to the public.

MEDIA AND MASS COMMUNICATION THEORY: A LOOK BACK

As I am writing this, in late 2020, it makes sense to take a step back to look for the field's overarching story, as it celebrates its first century of scholarship. Where did we come from, how did it start and where has it taken us?

The argument developed here is taken from earlier work, specifically the 7th edition of McQuail's handbook, warranting a co-authoring credit for the late Denis McQuail. Sections of this paper have been previously published as Deuze (2020 and 2021). Taken together with the current paper, these three publications serve as a trilogy of sorts, aggregating the lessons I have learned from working on McQuail's handbook and applying these to current debates about our field, its role in the pandemic/infodemic, and how it can position itself toward the future in the context of rapid digital transformations in society. Overlap between these works therefore is deliberate, and serves to tie the various arguments together.

The concept of mass communication was first coined during the 1920s or 1930s to apply to the new possibilities for public communication arising from the mass media of the time: press, radio and film. These media enlarged the potential audience beyond a literate minority. The industrial style and scale of the organization of production and dissemination at the time were also essentially new. Large populations could be reached more or less simultaneously with much the same content, often content that carried the stamp of approval of those with political, economic and social power (which were often the same groups of people in many parts of the world).

The context for these developments was one of rapid change in the world of newly industrialized and centralized nation states. It was a time of growth and concentration of population in large cities, of the mechanization and bureaucratization of all aspects of life, and imperialist expansion by the great powers of the time. It was also a period of profound political change, of large social movements, unrest within states, and catastrophic warfare between states. Populations were mobilized towards national achievement or survival and the new mass media played their part in these events as well as providing the masses with the means of relaxation and entertainment. Against this background it is easy to understand why the concept of mass communication was forged and why it rose to a dominant status, pre-occupying the minds of political leaders and business executives alike.

The early meaning of 'mass communication', and one that still lingers, derived much more from the notion of people as a 'mass' and from the perceived characteristics of the mass media than from any idea of communication. The 'mass' was perceived primarily in terms of its size, anonymity, general ignorance, lack of stability and rationality, and as a result was vulnerable to persuasion or suggestion. It was seen to be in need of control and guidance by the superior classes and leaders, and the mass media provided the means for achieving this – by sending messages that people would receive and understand as intended. As 'communication science' developed, a more formal definition of the concept of mass communication emerged that was based on objective characteristics of media

that could be specified and put to the test. An abstract model of communication was developed with the following typical features:

- A centralized production of content by a few large channels, with a centre-peripheral network of dissemination that was typically hierarchical and one-directional.
- An organization of production and distribution operated according to the logic of the market or as a state-run institution of public communication.
- Message content in standardized forms open to all but also subject to normative and political supervision or control.
- A mass public of receivers made up of many dispersed, anonymous and disconnected individuals.

The attribution of great power to persuade and inform, arising from the prestige or popularity of sources, the monopolistic control of channels, the near instantaneity of reception, the skill of practitioners and the supposedly high impact and appeal of the means employed.

From one perspective, the general hypothesis of mass communication has played a fruitful role by the very fact of being comprehensively disputed and disproved. The research it generated led to a much firmer understanding of key principles underlying mediated communication and our sensemaking thereof. The lessons learned in the process both challenge and confirm the media and mass communication thesis. Overall, early notions of powerful mass media and a more or less one-directional process of mass communication have been waylaid in favour of more nuanced, multidirectional and complex understandings of people and their media, and the role this plays in society.

In today's digital, online and interconnected media environment notions of 'mass' media and 'mass' communication exist side by side with (inter-) personal communication and mass self-communication, and these "three forms of communication coexist, interact, and complement each other rather than substituting for one another" (Castells, 2009: 55). These and other circumstances reflect not the end of mass media or of mass communication, but rather a significant and ongoing shift in the ways that purposes of public communication can be achieved. The early 'industrial' vision of both the ends and means has given way to a different version of mass communication: more personal and private, more targeted and interactive, more diffuse and perhaps even more powerful than before in some instances.

The evolution of a condition or state of mass communication (as redefined), which can now scarcely be distinguished from other social processes (such as individualization, globalization, and urbanization), is primarily due to its high degree of functionality for key driving forces in society and its intimate connection with human aspirations. Many of the actors who benefit from the

capacity to communicate to all in a measured and calculated way are visible and their motivations are transparent. They include big advertisers and global media firms (both bigger and more concentrated than ever before), the world financial system, rulers and national governments, states with imperial ambitions and concern for their image, international non-governmental organizations, and the list goes on. It is inconceivable that these and others could dispense with the results of even 'smarter' and more effective communication to any chosen public constituency. The emerging, revived and reinforced form of media and mass communication is highly consistent with underlying trends towards convergence and the 'mediation of everything' (Livingstone, 2009). At the same time, the long-term consequences of the new media environment can be expressed in terms that both undermine and reinforce central elements of mass communication theory as developed throughout the 20th century:

- The power of the communicator to persuade or inform selectively is much reduced by the inability to reach large, captive audiences and by the ready availability of alternative sources of ideas and knowledge.
- Individuals are no longer restricted by their immediate social group and environment and by the physical availability of a few media channels, controlled by authorities and other agencies. They can enter and belong to new groups and communities across time and space.
- There is no longer any unitary 'message system' to which people are routinely and consistently exposed, leading to stereotypes and the adoption of consensual values.
- Individuals can 'answer back' to figures of authority or remove themselves from contact. They can also participate actively in informational and opinion exchanges in the context of important social and political issues.
- In an 'always-on' online context there is a new kind of visibility of all actors in the mass communication process, offering opportunities while simultaneously raising concerns about democratization, participation, privacy and (in-)equalities.

These and similar propositions have become the basis for a staggering amount of research and new theory as we give shape to the 21st century. A careful balance needs to be maintained between hopeful accounts of the consequences of the newer media environment for alleviating human suffering (consider, for example, the role of smartphones and social media in the experiences of refugees and the rise of new social movements such as #metoo and #blacklivesmatter), remedying social inequalities (addressing recurring issues related to digital divides in society), and cultivating critical work regarding increasingly automated aspects of our media and mass communication environment (for example, regarding the built-in biases of algorithms and artificial intelligence systems).

CONTINUITY AND DISCONTINUITY

Reviewing the historical trajectory of media and mass communication as a discipline this way, it seems that the basic tenets of the field hold, despite the fact that developments in technologies, industries, production processes as well as audience behaviours are both hybrid, complex and networked as much as they can be considered to be converging – seemingly upending timeworn concepts and categorizations in research and theory. What seems to be the meta-narrative of media and mass communication is embodied in the big shift from more or less stable structures to highly fluid and flexible structures across both our field and object of study. Examples of the seemingly stable media and mass communication structures that continue to inform much of the research and theorizing in our field, are:

- Media production taking place in newsrooms, on backlots and in offices of the corporate film and television system, within large holding firms and multinational corporations, on the workfloor of game studios and advertising agencies.
- Media content that is based on more or less consensual, industrially routinized and generally formulaic formats and genre conventions.
- Media audiences that are (or can be) massively aggregated and programmed around schedules and more or less predictable media events.

These three key elements of the mass communication process are increasingly fluid or 'liquid' today, in that their constituent elements change faster than it takes new structures to sediment (paraphrasing Bauman, 2000):

- A trend towards complex networked industry structures and value chains, with production increasingly organized through 'atypical' working arrangements that can stretch around the globe;
- The on-going development of a wide variety of multimedia, crossmedia and transmedia storytelling forms stretching across multiple media and platforms, increasingly including audiences in a more or less interactive role;
- Concurrent media exposure, co-creation and participation as newly standardized types of contemporary 'audiencing' (Fiske, 1992).

We can now see quite clearly that the era of mass communication is best viewed as a transitional phase of industrial mass public communication – while throughout the developments in the media there has been a continuity of mass communication as a society-wide process. This continuity today is established in new forms that are made up of a much finer and tightly woven network of lines and connections (online and offline) that has an organic character rather than

being constructed and controlled by a few for their own ends. Although the structures that underpin the media and mass communication process are liquid, it is still possible to observe these various instances of production, content and reception, and to make generalizable statements about them. There is continuity in all this discontinuity.

Much of this constancy, however dispersed, hybridized, networked or automated, is observed in our field based on a relatively uniform set of fundamental assumptions, as outlined by Annie Lang (2013):

- First, media and mass communication are pervasive and ubiquitous.
- Secondly, media and mass communication act upon (and are acted upon by) people and their social environments.
- Thirdly, media and mass communication change both the environment and the person.
- Fourthly, the primary goals and questions of media and mass communication researchers are to demonstrate the various elements, roles, influences and effects of media and mass communication, and, if possible, explain how they come about.

These assumptions hold for both the humanities-inspired practice of media studies, and the social science-oriented domain of communication research, despite their sometimes different theoretical and methodological alignments. A sidenote here must be that we tend to make too much of the purported differences between the two paradigms (even seeing them as intrinsically 'competing'; see Lincoln & Guba, 1994), especially in a contemporary context of increasingly interdisciplinary, mixed methods and integrative research.

TOWARD A GRAND NARRATIVE

The story of our field, as we can tell it to others, in all of this is twofold – and perhaps somewhat counterintuitive. On the one hand, it is clear from this overview that media are of profound importance. The two main scholarly traditions in our field align in their perspective that media and mass communication are (or can be) powerful agents of change in society, where communication research seeks to find evidence (and explanations) for such effects, and media studies tends to take this powerful role for granted, opting to explore avenues for critique of the way media operate in society (Lang, 2013). On the other hand, the end result of all this agreement and alignment must be that we have to conclude that, overall, media are not all that powerful. A century of scholarship leaves little doubt that media do have many effects and they probably do account for some general trends. However, media effects are inconsistent and often cancel each

other out, and complex societies can be characterized by different lines of development and subsequent roles for media at the same time. As is the conclusion of much of the research in our field: media have some effects on some people in some circumstances some of the time.

This seemingly paradoxical narrative – media are everything, and they are nothing – is haunting our field. As the world is stuck behind a screen at home, public and political debates rage on cyberbullying and online harassment, the role of powerful algorithms and artificial intelligence, rising privacy and security concerns, problematic media use and media addiction, fake news and disinformation campaigns, conspiracy theories and declining trust in institutions. Our answer to all of this is consistently and necessarily ambiguous: yes, these are all important issues that clearly warrant our concern; no, none of these issues is likely to change much in how most people live their lives, make their decisions, nor in how society and its institutions generally function. If we 'decentre' the media for a moment, as Nick Couldry (2012) among others advocates, there are much broader, historical and contextualizing concerns behind these (and many other) pressing issues involving media and society: about 'good' parenting in a demanding and complex world, about human-machine relationships, about feeling whole and being recognized as such, about having a sense of belonging, and about taking responsibility in a globalizing context where the likelihood that you have something in common with someone who lives next-door seems less than finding cause of common concern with strangers online. In other words: media amplify and accelerate what already is there in the first place.

WHAT TO DO WITH MEDIA AND MASS COMMUNICATION THEORY AND RESEARCH

The combination of our field's fundamental assumptions and its altogether ambiguous narrative can make for a hard sell outside the walls of academia – beyond the particulars of how media scholars work, publish, and get recognition in the institutional process of doing the work. An additional complicating factor is the signalled 'liquefaction' of the elements of the mass communication process, making stories about anything specific or particular to media production, content and reception necessarily complicated. Rather than fretting about what media and mass communication theory and research as a field *is*, I would suggest that a pertinent question becomes what can be *done* with it. Here I would like to put forward a few modest proposals regarding theory and research (including methods), and our professional identity as scholars in the world – proposals, based on interventions that have in common an aspiration to get academic teaching and research 'to work' for and with people, communities, and society.

POSITIONALITY

To begin with, I would like to address the general trend (and recommendation) in the literature of our field in recent years pointing towards increasing integration and cross-fertilization of models, methods and paradigms in media and mass communication theory and research. It must be clear that this kind of integrative work is easier said than done. Academic units tend to be organized along either social scientific or humanistic disciplinary boundaries, scholarly journals are equally singular in their preferred approaches, and combining perspectives can be time-consuming and costly (for example, when it comes to multiple method research designs).

Beyond logistical and perhaps cultural complexities in making truly integrative research possible, it seems significant to take a step back to consider one's own position regarding doing such research in the first place. Who we are, how we feel about what we do, what keeps us up at night, what we really care about (when it comes to the role of media and mass communication in society and everyday life), and what we want to achieve needs to be made explicit, as it co-determines what we know and, more importantly, what we see when we look at our objects of study. As a first step, this means understanding how the kind of questions you ask tend to locate you in certain traditions, disciplinary siloes, and methodological conventions before you even get started with doing a literature review.

In an attempt to show how the most common approaches and themes in media and mass communication research align, Figure 1 proposes a rough guide. As an organizing principle I divided the field into research that focuses more or less explicitly on mass media and communication processes (such as the few-to-many production and diffusion of public information, including journalism, advertising, and propaganda), or work that looks specifically at personal media (which tends toward interpersonal processes of communication). It can be noted that the new media environment, shifting our time and attention towards portable and customizable always-on media, contributes to a collapsing of communication categories, while not necessarily negating them. A second organizing principle – represented on the model's horizontal axis – takes James Carey's (1975) distinction between a ritual and a transmission view of communication as its point of departure.

A transmission view considers communication as a process of transmitting a fixed quantity of information – the message as determined by the sender or source. This represents the linear sequence of sender > message > receiver which is largely built into standard definitions of the nature of predominant forms of mass communication. Although there are many ways in which this representation of the mass communication process can be challenged, it lives on because it usefully distinguishes the selecting role of specific mass communicators, it involves an appreciation that this selection is undertaken according

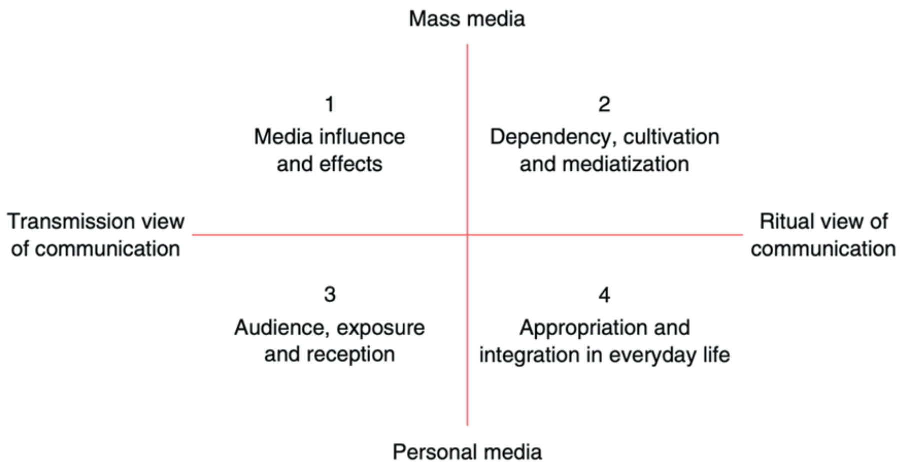
to an assessment of what the audience will find interesting; and the third is that communication is not considered purposive beyond publication and seeking attention for its message. These assumptions about the process enable precise research questions and targeted theorizing about media effects and audience reception. The transmission model remains a useful representation of the rationale and general operation of some media in some of their functions (especially general news media and advertising) – if only because professional communicators and institutions tend to think primarily in such terms about the process of (mass) communication. It is, of course, incomplete and possibly misleading as a representation of most media activities and of the diversity of communication processes that are at work. One reason for its weakness is the limitation of communication to the matter of 'transmission'. Carey pointed to an alternative view of communication as 'ritual', according to which:

> communication is linked to terms such as "sharing," "participation," "association," "fellowship," and "the possession of a common faith." This definition exploits the ancient identity and common roots of the terms "commonness," "communion," "community," and "communication." A ritual view of communication is directed not toward the extension of messages in space but toward the maintenance of society in time; not the act of imparting information but the representation of shared beliefs (1975: 18).

Seen as such, communication becomes an exchange – a participatory act where meanings depend on shared understandings and emotions, and where medium, message as much as sending and receiving of messages are hard to separate empirically.

Research in media and mass communication can be mapped along four key areas of investigation, each with its own prevailing perspectives about the nature of our relationship with (our) media. In quadrant 1, studies that focus on how mass media messages influence and shape public opinion and sentiment can be grouped, generally consisting of media effects, agenda-setting and framing research. Studies in quadrant 2, while similarly interested in the workings of mass media, focus more on the historical and long-term mutual shaping of media, communication, culture and society. Approaches in this area were originally informed by media dependency theory (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur, 1976), and more recently got rearticulated in terms of (deep) mediatization research – in a conceptual attempt to move away from media effects while maintaining a mass media-centred focus (Hepp, Hjarvard and Lundby, 2015).

Figure 1. An integrated model of media and mass communication research



Source: McQuail & Deuze (2020: 100)

Quandrant 3 turns our attention towards the various ways in which people use media, specifically when it comes to our personal and customizable media environment. Research in this area zooms in on people's motivations and uses of media (often informed by some version of uses and gratifications theory), encapsulating most audience and reception studies. Quadrant 4 extends this work by articulating the various media people use with the ways in which we organize and arrange our lives and lifestyles. Although such an approach to media as an ensemble of devices and activities collectively constituting how people understand, give meaning to and coordinate their everyday life has been advocated in the literature for many decades (Bausinger, 1984), only quite recently such work is becoming more common, giving rise to sophisticated theoretical and empirical work. What is missing from this model, is an elaboration of how research on media production fits in. Although production studies have been around since at least the 1950s (with early studies of film studios and newsrooms), since the early 2000s research and theory on media industries, production practices, work and management have blossomed into a fully fledged aspect of the discipline. Transmission-based work in production studies would be focused on the media making pipeline and across the entire product cycle of a media industry – including phases such as ideation, pitching and greenlighting, pre-production, production and post-production, packaging and promotion, distribution, and consumption. Scholars in this area of research are often inspired by a political economy approach to the media, which 'follows the money' in terms of its assumptions where media influence comes from at every phase of the production process. Ritual-based research on media production and work tends

to be more interested in processes and meaning-giving practices of everyone involved in using and making media.

What I hope to accomplish with this model, is to assist researchers to see where their assumptions, chosen approaches and personal preferences position their work within the larger field of media and mass communication research. Although overlap exists and not every theory, project or research question neatly fits, it is important to consider that simply asking a certain question (about media and mass communication) in a way positions one at a specific point in this conversation that our field has with itself.

Positioning oneself in research is not just a matter of disciplinary alignment or fit with a particular epistemological tradition. The production of knowledge is not simply a matter of theory or method, it also involves a reflexive awareness of one's subjectivity as a researcher. In part, this 'positional reflexivity' (Macbeth, 2001) reminds us to be mindful of how our ideas, research questions and conventions, methodological choices and publishing choices are not simply our own, but all exist in a specific context: of one's disciplinary community and history, of power relations with peers, students, mentors and mentees, of one's position within the university and (or) beyond the Ivory Tower of academia. Yet, positional reflexivity demands more from us, as it "takes up the analysts' (uncertain) position and positioning in the world he or she studies and is often expressed with a vigilance for unseen, privileged, or, worse, exploitative relationships between analyst and the world" (ibid., 38). This means becoming aware of (and making explicit) how all the aspects that make up our social identity – including, but not limited to class, citizenship, ability, age and generation, race, sexual orientation, and cis/transgender – affect the way that we see and interpret the world around us, and how the world sees and interprets us. This perhaps sounds easier than it really is – not only are many aspects of our identity everchanging and dependent on context; it is often difficult to know which aspects of who we are become meaningful or influential in what particular stage of the research process. Furthermore, our identities are caught up in social structures – such as the family, one's research community and place of work, nationality and locality, so on and so forth. Danielle Jacobsen and Nida Mustafa (2019) for example offer a 'blank positionality map', through which exercise researchers are encouraged to translate the rather abstract and conceptual notion of positionality into tangible terms of practice. The combination of reflecting on one's scholarly as well as personal predisposition – and being able to tell that story – is an encouraging step toward taking more responsibility for what we do when we study, research or teach media and mass communication theory.

METHOD AS SELF-DEVELOPMENT

Considering positionality in doing research leads me to a second point, one that was recently made so eloquently by Cristina Archetti in an essay on method development in media research: "method development could ultimately be understood as the *practice* of 'self-development' and, in the deepest sense, 'living life'" (2020: 2; italics in original). As she asks how we explain the complex, confusing, and crisis-ridden mediated reality as communication researchers, her answer comes back to choosing methods not on the basis of whether these are the 'right' or 'wrong' methods for a particular project, just as there are no 'right' or 'wrong' research questions to ask:

> There are only methods that are more or less appropriate to the research questions we are pursuing, more or less consistent with the theories we use and with our own epistemological reflection. I also believe—you see, I am myself, just like any 'good method' should be, aligned with my theoretical framework—that the theories I use in my research also apply to making sense of myself, not just of my objects of study (ibid.).

Following Archetti's provocation, I would like to suggest that, ultimately, the questions we ask in our research are questions we ask of ourselves – and if this does not seem to be the case, we need to dig deeper as to why we want to know what we want to know, what frustrates us about not knowing, what is the mystery that waits to be demystified by us (Stevenson and Witschge, 2020)? Part of the answer to these questions locates our work within the larger field that we are part of, which should help us in articulating who we are, what it is we are doing, and what view (of the world and ourselves) informs this practice. As mentioned earlier, this in turn also would enable us to take responsibility for our work – not just within the university, but perhaps more importantly: to the people we study, the communities we are part of, the world we live in.

In this context, Sarah Tracy (2010) proposes that the quality of our research in part is determined by a combination of (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence. Working through these steps in the research process, one cannot escape the conclusion that much of the concepts require self-reflection, emotional openness and honesty on the part of the researcher. As Tracy remarks, being sincere in research requires "self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher" (ibid., 840). Interestingly, Tracy was inspired to develop this conceptualization as a way to persuade nonacademic audiences and power holders that the research findings of scholarly inquiry deserve respect and are worth paying attention to.

METHODOLOGICAL ANARCHISM

A subsequent move regarding theory and research is to further unpack the aforementioned claim made throughout the literature in media studies and communication research for more integrated theoretical frameworks, multiple methods and triangulation, in order to do justice to the complexities of our dynamic media environment and the mass communication process. Let me return to Waisbord's celebration of our field as a 'post-discipline' at the outset of this paper, and follow his argument specifically regarding the contemporary digital context:

> We should recognize and embrace the proliferation of approaches to the study of digital communication amid the constant reinvention of fields of study related to 'communication studies'. This attitude demands challenging the modernist project of science identified with a single conceptual system and a finely defined and dominant paradigm, and defending ontological openness, not only in the name of intellectual originality but also as a distinctive quality of the continuous blurring of academic boundaries (2019: 90).

What Waisbord advocates is something emerging in various literatures, especially those that document what people do with (and in) social media, and what the consequences of our near-constant immersion in online networks and platforms could be (see for example Rogers & Niederer, 2020; Griffioen et al., 2020). In these studies, three considerations come together: first, that in order for us to say anything meaningfully about what the consequences of (digital, social, always online) media are, we need to look at what people are actually *doing* with media. This is such a straightforward notion – yet one that is not always followed in research designs. Concerns about ecological validity (in the social sciences) and lived experience (in the humanities) abound as people are generally only asked about their media use, or their media use is documented in artificial settings. What is key here, is to gather data on what people do with digital media, for example based on the affordances of the digital (through data scraping, collecting log files, downloading personal account information, and so on).

A second consideration is, that media use and reflections on what media mean have to be seen in historical and material context: the same media experience last week (or yesterday) may mean something quite different today, in part influenced by what device, platform or technology someone is using, when and where they are using it, and in what particular context all of this takes place. Third, there is a growing realization across all areas in the field that objective data about people and their media as primarily expressed by our 'digital shadow' that we leave behind when using any kind of connected technology

needs to be supplemented by people's 'emotional shadow' in order to understand what is happening. Or, as Tricia Wang (2013) has concisely stated: *big data* needs *thick data*:

> Thick Data is data brought to light using qualitative, ethnographic research methods that uncover people's emotions, stories, and models of their world. It's the sticky stuff that's difficult to quantify. It comes to us in the form of a small sample size and in return we get an incredible depth of meanings and stories. Thick Data is the opposite of Big Data, which is quantitative data at a large scale that involves new technologies around capturing, storing, and analyzing (Wang, 2016).

This does not just concern research designs about media use, audiencing, or reception studies. Importantly, the inclusion of both objective data and insights from ethnographic approaches can also be found in media production research as well as content analyses (see in particular the special issue 'Speaking Across Communication Subfields' of the *Journal of Communication* of June 2020, edited by Keren Tenenboim-Weinblatt and Chul-joo Lee).

Another inspiring example is *artography* (Springgay & Irwin, 2005) or arts-based research, which implements the arts – such as creative writing, poetry, theatre, song and dance – in one or more stages of the research process, and specifically asks of the artist/researcher/teacher (A/R/T) to actively participate in the process of "doing and meaning making" with the community in which their research takes place (Leavy, 2009). Of course, there are countless examples across our field of scholars and students engaging in their communities, finding and creating concepts, methods, data and analyses with participants, and expressing their work in a variety of ways (for a specific application in journalism studies, see Hölsgens, De Wildt & Witschge, 2020). Here, I just want to acknowledge the significance of this work in its potential to bring the story of our field to the public, while at the same time nestling our research more reflexively in the immerse, always-on and comprehensively mediated nature of people's everyday lives.

I want to add two nuances here. First, all of this is not just an argument for research designs employing mixed methods – where two or more distinct methods are combined in a single study. This should rather be taken as a recognition of hybrid methodologies, where the elements of different methods cannot be separated out. An example of this would be *ethno-mining*, where database mining and field research are merged, and where findings are both found and created in partnership – for example by asking study participants to reflect on the results of quantitative analyses by showing them data visualizations (Anderson et al., 2009). A second subtlety follows from this hermeneutic blending of methods,

as this would require a genuine openness toward a proliferation of views, approaches, disciplinary perspectives, as well as methods in order to conduct this kind of research. Hitching ourselves behind a particular methodological wagon (or even two) is bound to lead to analytical pigeonholes. A tolerance for diversity in the ways in which we ask questions, gather data and make sense of our material necessitates coming to terms with our own vulnerabilities, anxieties, and overall feeling-state as researchers. Following Paul Feyerabend's original celebration of *methodological anarchism*, one way to make our work resonate with the communities beyond the university, is to recognize the multiple ways in which data makes sense to us, and to stay suspicious of the procedures and rules that guide us to particular conclusions in scientific research:

> The history of science, after all, does not just consist of facts and conclusions drawn from facts. It also contains ideas, interpretations of facts, problems created by conflicting interpretations, mistakes, and so on. On closer analysis we even find that science knows no "bare facts" at all but that the 'facts' that enter our knowledge are already viewed in a certain way and are, therefore, essentially ideational. This being the case, the history of science will be as complex, chaotic, full of mistakes, and entertaining as are the minds of those who invented them (Feyerabend, 1975: 19).

With Feyerabend, I am not advocating against method per se, but rather suggest that we stay wary of using method as a way to dig a ditch between academic and nonacademic audiences. If we do follow our field's call for integrative research, then let it be truly integrative, allowing for the rationality of objective data as much as the serendipity of wonder and surprise (Witschge & Deuze, 2020) to guide our work. I am reminded of Martin Heidegger, who remarked that observing and confronting the world puts one in a state of continuous awe and astonishment. Such a state of being in awe and astonishment, marveling and wonder is a way of holding oneself back while being enraptured by that from which it steps back. Heidegger asks us to "courageously take up the risk of holding ourselves open unto the Open" (cited in Capobianco, 2010, p. 85). In media studies, such an openness and marveling perspective can for example be found in the works of Paddy Scannell (2014) and John Durham Peters (2015).

PUBLIC SCHOLARSHIP

A final, fourth reflection here about what we could do with media and mass communication theory and research – beyond positionality (within the field, and in society), considering method as self-development, and making the case for openness and wonder – is to look at the various ways in which we can bring our scholarship into being. This is not just a matter of suggesting that we should

not only publish in the kind of places that academic institutions privilege when making hiring, tenure and promotion decisions – such as ranked scholarly peer-reviewed journals and monographs published by prestigious university presses. There are countless scholars – graduate students, professors, and independent researchers alike – who actively blog, vlog, podcast, tweet, give interviews to journalists, publish open access white papers and research memos, and so on. To wit, I maintain a personal weblog ('Deuzeblog', since 2004), am reasonably active through my social media accounts (on Facebook since 2005, Twitter since 2008), now and then publish essays on the Medium platform, and during the pandemic of 2020 started a vlog (#deuzevlog on YouTube) as well as a podcast (on Anchor.fm) where I interview media scholars that I am a fan of.

However, taking one's scholarly work beyond the university is more than just a matter of publication (and self-promotion). Here, Waisbord asks us all to embrace a notion of *public scholarship*, which is to consider "public engagement as an integral part of communication studies" (2019: 94). This for example means we should communicate and discuss scientific knowledge in and with various publics, and strive to do research with practical implications and learn from the public. As Adam Gaudry for example comments, just thinking about the people who participated in our research (as respondents or informants) when it is time to publish makes our work function as an 'extraction methodology', where "the context, values, and on-the-ground struggles of the people and communities that provide information and insight to the researcher" get lost (2011: 113). Gaudry recommends non-extractive or 'insurgent' research as an alternative approach, based on three core principles (which I am paraphrasing here):

(1) by explicitly employing nonacademic worldviews;
(2) by orienting knowledge creation toward nonacademic peoples and their communities (next to meeting research and publishing expectations of one's academic institution); and
(3) by seeing our responsibility as researchers as directed almost exclusively toward the community and participants.

Waisbord recognizes that this kind of work has history in our field. In fact, it could be argued that public scholarship represents one of two ways in which we engage with the public as scholars, the other one being an 'expert' model – where the scholar indeed has (or tries to have) a seat at the table where policymakers and other stakeholders make decisions, orienting their work primarily at a highly educated academic audience or government bureaucracy.

Perhaps the expert versus engaged binary is too black and white, given recent trends across the academy to make research more relevant to the community – in part indicated through external assessment protocols of universities, which increasingly emphasize impact and societal relevance as indicators of excellence. In a study by the 'Tenure Team Initiative' of Syracuse University in the

US to recognize the work that faculty are doing in this area, Julie Ellison and Timothy Eatman locate publicly engaged academic work on a continuum, with traditional engagement and scholarship on one side, and "the most civically engaged or reciprocal scholarship and engagement" on the other (2008: ix). Amy Schalet, Linda Tropp, and Lisa Troy offer a third way beyond the either-or of expertise versus engagement, which they call a 'relational' model of public scholarship, urging "relationship building and mutual learning, as well as partnership during dissemination, while maintaining independence of thought, decision-making, and institutional affiliation during the processes of research design, data collection, and analysis" (2020: 1). At the heart of their suggested approach is finding, creating and (or) forging common ground between academics and nonacademic audiences. What is particularly interesting about their approach, as with the intervention of Gaudry, is the notion of public awareness or inclusion at all stages of the academic process – rather than just at the outcome. This mirrors earlier observations about positionality and hybridization: it is fascinating to think of reflexivity, inclusion, co-creation and collaboration across the entire circuit of knowledge production (through research and teaching), rather than just at the stage of knowledge dissemination.

It is important to include teaching here next to research, as a (engaged, insurgent or relational) scholar can think of knowledge production as well as dissemination beyond the journal article or monograph as much as beyond the formal classroom. More often than not, the engaged academic finds that her work needs to be made explicit – taking a stance about what should be done – in order to merit nonacademic appeal, which in turn necessitates critical self-reflection, self-development, and knowing where you stand. Within the classroom some reflexive awareness is called for too, especially given the on-going internationalization of the student population (Knight, 2011), and the continual rise in first-generation student enrollment (Wainwright & Watts, 2019). As classes become more diversified, students' motivations, attitudes and activities also become more varied, with some students conforming to relatively static ideals of academic commitment, while many, if not most others coming to class primarily to obtain a qualification for a job. As John Biggs argues, there is a large a large gap between these types of students in terms of their level of engagement, and "good teaching should *reduce* the gap" (1999: 69; italics in original). His proposal is to follow a process of constructive alignment in our teaching, where teaching and learning activities, curriculum objectives, and assessment tasks are reflexively and explicitly aligned:

> We have first to be clear about what we want students to learn, and then teach and assess accordingly in an aligned system of instruction (Biggs, 1999: 64).

Note again in this proposal a clear choice for considering the entire academic process for open to intervention, rather than just one particular aspect or outcome. This is a pattern in the contemporary literature on public scholarship, academic engagement, and the role of critical self-reflection in the work we do at universities and other institutions of higher education: to look across the whole spectrum of activities and focus on the relations that 'tie the room together' (paraphrasing the character Jeffrey Lebowski in one of my favorite films: *The Big Lebowski* from the Coen brothers in 1998).

CONCLUSIONS

In this essay, I have tried to summarize some of the key challenges and opportunities in the field of media and mass communication theory and research, grounding my argument in the work of the late Denis McQuail – and that of editing the new edition of his seminal handbook *McQuail's Media and Mass Communication Theory* (McQuail & Deuze, 2020). Given the contemporary context of a global pandemic alongside a worldwide infodemic, it makes sense for us to take stock of who we are as a field, and what our narrative is – how we can contribute to public debates about the role of media and (mass) communication in society and in everyday life.

By way of a historical appraisal of the fundamental traditions and approaches in our field, inspired by earlier work by Annie Lang (2013) and of course Denis McQuail, one could argue that all our work tends to be grounded by a relatively uniform set of fundamental assumptions: media and mass communication are pervasive and ubiquitous, must be seen and can best be understood in individual and social context, make a difference in both the environment and the person, and our primary role is to describe and, if possible, explain how the various elements, roles, contents, influences and effects of media and mass communication come about. Reviewing the main traditions of (humanities and social scientific) scholarship in our field, we have to conclude after a century of work that ubiquitous media are clearly of profound importance in society and everyday life, yet their direct influence and effects on human behavior are relatively modest. If anything, media amplify and accelerate what is already there – a key insight that inspires a growing number of scholars in the field to use and theorize media to look just beyond media in order to focus more closely on what people are actually doing with media. This 'decentering' of media in media and mass communication research can be considered to be an instance of what Slavoj Žižek (1992) passionately promotes as a way of 'looking awry' at our object of study: to never take what we study or find for granted, for always looking for different, and possibly disturbing explanations.

After this review, I used this invitation to look awry at our field to look differently at ourselves in an attempt to provide some answers to the question, why the world – the nonacademic public – seemingly does not care about what we know (Kleis Nielsen, 2017), despite the fact that media and mass communication issues (such as online harassment, the role of algorithms and artificial intelligence, privacy and security concerns, problematic media use and media addiction, fake news and disinformation campaigns, et cetera) are top of mind around the world. In sequence, I considered how positionality, understanding the self as a research tool, implementing truly integrative study designs, and the emergence of engaged and public scholarship may provide four ways of rethinking our work in terms of what we can do with media and mass communication teaching and research.

All of this not to claim a necessarily 'new' intervention, and leaning heavily on inspiring and groundbreaking work by many, many others. Here I would like to explicitly acknowledge the work and praxis of Cristina Archetti, Tamara Witschge, and Silvio Waisbord as my main sources of inspiration, as well as the work of the late James Carey and, of course, Denis McQuail. I am furthermore deeply indebted to Deborah Castro and Johana Kotišová, who took the time to reflect and comment on an earlier version of this paper. None of us are in this alone.

A specific caveat to the positions taken in this essay must be that none of the themes of positionality, theoretical and methodological reflexivity, and public scholarship are particular to our field. Indeed, it can be said these are calls to action heard and relevant across all fields and domains in higher education and academic research. Perhaps their additional significance for work in media and (mass) communication lies in the everyday 'practicality' of our discipline (Craig, 2008), as ours is a 'productive science' that helps to makes sense of a world that people always already actively inhabit and make sense of (Jensen, 2019).

Taken together, it seems to me – as I also concluded at the end of our book, that "a rich vocabulary to talk about the implications of the developments of communication that are taking place is emerging – one that questions simplistic models and modes of doing research […] What is also remarkable is that media and mass communication scholarship is finding all kinds of more or less new ways to communicate about itself […] the future of media and mass communication theory and research holds much promise" (Deuze & McQuail, 2020: 585). Adding the insights I gained from doing the research for this particular contribution, I can do little else but echo that conclusion.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

DOI: 10.51480/1899-5101.14.1(28).2

Ready to Hire a Freelance Journalist: The Change in Estonian Newsrooms' Willingness to Outsource Journalistic Content Production

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ABSTRACT: This paper explores the change in Estonian media organizations' readiness to cooperate with freelance journalists. The interviews with editors of newsrooms of magazines, newspapers, and radio and television broadcasters were conducted in 2014 and 2019. The findings were additionally tested in the conditions of the Covid-19 crisis in 2020. The paper outlines how over the five years the editors have not only changed their perception of who freelance journalists are but how they express the readiness to outsource content from journalistic entrepreneurs. We conclude that the Estonian media market shows signs of adopting diverse collaborative forms that diverge from the journalistic field. The freelancers' concept has changed, indicating integration of journalistic and entrepreneurial roles – the entrepreneurial journalist is seen less as the odd-jobber working on commission and more of a business partner.

KEYWORDS: freelance journalism, entrepreneurial journalism, labor market, newsrooms, news production, precarity.

INTRODUCTION

For more than two decades, news organizations around the world are increasingly more open to cooperation with non-standard workers outside organizational employment. The definition of freelance journalists has diverged for many reasons (Briggs, 2012; Deuze, 2009; Deuze & Witschge, 2018, 2020). On the one hand, news organizations have increasingly outsourced content production due to decreasing revenues and changing labor markets (Edstrom & Ladendorf, 2012;

Gollmitzer, 2019; Rosenkranz, 2019). On the other hand, to meet the demand for novel and divergent skills news organizations use non-journalistic actors (e.g., fact-checkers initiatives, data activists, start-up specialists, etc.) in the peripheral areas of journalism (Cheruiyot & Ferrer-Conill, 2018; Kuś & Barczyszyn-Madziarz, 2020). While the newsrooms may be optimizing labor costs and "buying" skills from actors outside the journalistic field, the providers of these services (e.g., freelancers or entrepreneurial journalists) must possess a variety of other skills from marketing and business management (Briggs, 2012). Providing content for journalism and public relations' conflicting roles stems from the controversy between the journalistic *entrepreneur* and the journalistic *idealist* (Mathisen, 2017; 2019). However, news organizations can also be unwelcome (Örnebring, 2016) and may lead to a deficit of trust towards freelancers.

While studies on European examples of freelancers and journalistic start-ups have shown a variety of opportunities that entrepreneurial journalism provides (e.g., Deuze & Witschge, 2020), there are downsides to it. Cohen *et al.* (2019) analyzed the situation after the corporate restructuring in Canadian media and found that many journalists moved from secure full-time positions to precarious employment status, including freelancing in journalism and other fields. Örnebring (2018) described the same phenomenon – the competition over newsrooms as customers and the financial crisis's influence impacted the freelance remuneration rates and made this way of working financially precarious. It is possible to predict or even prevent that sort of outcome by monitoring change in the journalistic field, which is where researchers' contributions are beneficial. A freelancer profile is much more complex than it used to be and differs by a country's journalistic culture. Therefore, it is vital to investigate how freelancers' primary partners – the news organizations – perceive their role and collaboration opportunities.

This study outlines the change in Estonian newsroom editors' perspectives towards freelance journalists. The objective is to see how the possible change in defining non-standard and outsourced journalistic work may influence the news organization's cooperation with freelancers. A supplementary objective was to explore how the Covid-19 crisis affected the freelancers. The present study also initiates a discussion on how employment regimes influence journalistic labor markets and challenge research on precarity in journalism by arguing that changes in the journalistic labor market may not always result in precarity.

RESEARCH ON FREELANCE JOURNALISM

Media researchers have repeatedly pointed out the changing profile of freelance journalists. Cock and Smaele (2016), for example suggest the reasons for any profile change differ in each country and are due to journalists' conscious decisions, promoted by technological, entrepreneurial, and societal change. More commonly, research acknowledges the journalism profession is increasingly becoming more precarious with decreasing resources and redundancies in the newsrooms driving the change (Briggs, 2012; Deuze, 2009; Örnebring, 2016, 2018). The transformation from being fully employed to self-employment shows that freelance journalists are neither employees nor free professions. While freelancers can be used as gap-fillers in the conditions of newsrooms' diminishing resources, they may also function as innovators in audience participation (Holton, 2016: 925). This accords with Deuze and Witschge (2017, 2020) who found that entrepreneurial journalism is both a way to make a living as an independent journalist and an opportunity for journalism as a profession to renew itself.

The divergent palette of journalistic skills and competencies enables freelancers to fulfill roles in many other fields bordering news media. The inter-role conflicts were also experienced by multimedia production freelancers who worked for international non-governmental organizations and whose content was pitched to mainstream news organizations (Wright, 2016). Freelance journalists often hold secondary employment in public relations (PR), which leads to conflicting self-concepts in fulfilling the two roles (Fröhlich et al., 2013; Örnebring, 2016). While fulfilling controversial roles, they are also entrepreneurs, which is an additional role with its financial aims. The conflicting roles are best described by Mathisen (2017), who divides freelancers into *entrepreneurs* and *idealists*. The idealists may accept low income if they have opportunities to work with journalism they deem important; the entrepreneurs are driven by succeeding in their own business and refer to partnering news organizations as customers (Mathisen, 2019). Successful freelance journalists have broad social networks or partners who provide professional support regarding journalism, but they also use help in accounting and budgeting since "running a business" takes an integral part of their time and adds up to having a second job (Cock & Smaele, 2016; Hunter, 2015). Therefore, freelancers must possess skills and competencies beyond the journalistic field. As the previous overview demonstrates, most research on freelance journalism is based on self-employed or entrepreneurial journalists. There is a gap in the studies on the partnering side – the news organizations on which freelance journalists mostly depend.

EMPLOYMENT REGIMES AND PRECARITY

Studies on changes in the labor market have often concluded that externalizing news production transfers organizational risks over to the freelancer (see Norbäck & Styhre, 2019), freelance and entrepreneurial journalists experience intense income insecurity (Gollmitzer, 2019), and changed working conditions lead to overall precarity that prohibits journalism's institutional functioning (Hayes & Silke, 2019). The issue of freelancers' work conditions, financial vulnerability, and various rights restrictions is not new in journalism studies (see Baines & Kennedy, 2010). The changes in occupational norms and practices accompanied by non-standard employment situations and the growing precarity has been in progress for at least two decades. As Örnebring (2018) outlines, the literature on precarity is based on the sociology of work and is rich in theory but is empirically speculative. The changes in the journalistic labor market vary by country and differ in reasons. Therefore, it would be wise to address the changes through a more comprehensive concept of employment regimes.

One component of the employment regime is related to the labor market's economic dimension as types and forms of contracts. Changes in contract-regimes are crucial for the externalization of production. According to Rosenkranz (2019: 617), the three dimensions of contracts as social relations refer to: 1) devices for conducting an exchange, they set the conditions for economic interaction, reduce uncertainty, and structure markets; 2) temporal scripts of the interactions that frame the mutual obligations and restrictions through time; 3) symbols of community with a function in the societal order of lean capitalism and of occupational norms in particular. These dimensions are useful assets in analyzing the change in the journalistic labor market. Another component of the employment regime relates to innovation and skills. Newsrooms often outsource production for skills and competencies to promote innovation. However, if the newsroom cannot absorb and integrate the novel skills and competencies, the outsourced innovation cannot be considered successful (Örnebring & Ferrer-Conill, 2016). This, in a broader context, relates to journalism training and education, tightly connected to how news organizations value outsourced content.

Gollmitzer (2019) and Cohen et al., (2019) are relatively critical about the unpaid element of content production that freelance journalists provide since newsrooms pay for finished products and not for work done in back-stage reporting processes. The final product price is negotiated between the news organization and its business partner – the entrepreneurial journalist. Therefore the development of the price of a journalistic product is also part of the entrepreneurial journalist's work. The price of the content is often related to its innovation in the production process. Several additional factors influence freelancers'

working conditions from the labor market aspect, but some reasons stem from the personal choices of journalists as well. As Edstrom and Ladendorf (2012: 719) reveal, the freelance lifestyle offers a higher degree of self-realization, and often this way of working provides the opportunity for assignments with more depth and analysis than employed work. By bringing out this selection of components of employment regimes, we draw attention to the idea that all these components play a role in the context of this study, but certainly are not complete and should be taken into account while studying changes in the occupation forms in the journalistic labor market.

Returning to precarity, drawing from its contemporary studies, it is an inevitable part of the media market's development. Precarity is a manifestation of the finances of news organizations as they descend from the hugely profitable peaks of the 1970s and 1980s. Precarity can be interpreted as transforming from profitable business and occupational models to novel (and not yet invented) business models and hybrid forms of employment. It may be the inevitable future of journalism and outcomes diverge when studied in various media markets and environments.

FREELANCERS IN THE MEDIA

Belgium and the Netherlands are the two most notable examples where freelance journalists bolster the journalistic labor market. In Belgium, every fifth journalist is a freelancer (Raeymaeckers et al., 2013). This statistic refers to a significant part of the institution which cannot be called atypical (De Cock & de Smaele, 2016). In Estonia, the overall number of people engaged in the media industry is 4500 (Kõuts-Klemm et al., 2019); approximately 1000 are directly occupied as professional journalists in news organizations (Krusell & Pihl, 2019). According to the Worlds of Journalism research data, 1.5 percent of all Estonian journalists reported being occupied as freelancers (Josephi et al., 2019). Since the "Worlds of Journalism" data was collected in 2014 and embraced only news organizations, it does not fully cover the diverse body of freelance journalists in the media industry.

Every media market has its peculiarities and deserves to be researched to incorporate freelance journalists in its specific cultural aspect. While in most Western countries, the proportion of freelancers is around 20 to 30 percent, in Germany, similarly to Estonia, the relatively small freelance community is increasingly contracted as small entrepreneurs (Meyen & Springer, 2008). Research shows that highly developed media markets have experienced a higher percentage of journalists working as freelancers. The precarity of labor market changes is experienced differently depending on union membership, contractual

regimes, historical and educational background (Josephi et al., 2019). Though the rapid change towards freelancing is in many countries related to the concept of precarity (Hayes & Silke, 2019; Matthews & Onyemaobi, 2020), studies have also shown that employment regimes play a substantial role in the development of freelancers' community and experiencing precarity (Gollmitzer, 2019; Massey & Elmore, 2018; Salamon, 2020).

Our study is based on the Estonian media market, serving a population of 1.3 million Estonian-speaking people. However, its employment regimes are comparable with many other small Post-Soviet journalism environments in Central and Eastern Europe. Estonia resembles Scandinavian journalism environments with its relatively weak influences from political, economic, and organizational domains (Hanitzsch et al., 2019). This leads us to the objective of this study. We outline the change in editors' attitudes towards freelance journalists over a five year period. Stemming from this aim, we propose the following research questions: (RQ1) How has the perception of freelance journalists changed among editors-in-chief? (RQ2) How has the news organizations' partnership with freelance journalists changed? (RQ3) How did the Covid-19 crisis influence news organizations' partnerships with freelancers? The beginning of 2020 brought the unexpected conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic. This provided journalists, news organizations, and academics novel prospects. We used the opportunity to ask three additional questions from the editors in October 2020. The questions were: (RQ4) Did the Covid-19 pandemic condition any change regarding the newsroom's cooperation with freelancers? (RQ5) What did these changes contain? (RQ6) What sort of content would they outsource to freelancers under pandemic conditions?

To achieve the study goals, we interviewed managers or editors-in-chief of seven newsrooms in 2014 and repeated the interviews with people in the same managerial positions five years later. Regardless of the precise job title, we use the term 'editor' to refer to the editor-in-chief or newsroom manager position because all of our respondents were in the same positional level.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, we conducted semi-structured interviews, twice each with seven editors in 2014 and 2019. Our selection consisted of three magazines (lifestyle magazines *Eesti Naine* and *Pere ja Kodu;* popular science magazine *Horisont*), two newspapers (the daily newspaper *Postimees; the* weekly newspaper *Maaleht*), a radio news program (*Estonian Public Broadcaster, ERR*), and commercial television news (TV3 *Seitsmesed*). Except for the editor of *Postimees,* the set of editors asked about the influence of Covid-19 was the same set as in 2019, making the

second set comparable to the first set of interviews. The relatively small sample of interviews (N=14; n=7, n=7) can be questioned in qualitative terms for not providing an overview of the whole field. We justify our sample with two arguments. Firstly, the country-specific circumstances need to be taken into consideration. Estonia is a small media market: the population is 1.3 million, and the media market is divided between three large media organizations and a couple of smaller independent ones. Secondly, the newsrooms were selected using preclusion. Our background work showed that newsrooms that cover general newsbeat do not outsource content production to freelance journalists due to the work's timely nature.

For this reason, all general newsbeat and online newsrooms were excluded. Then, all newsrooms that had not outsourced journalistic content production for the past five years, and stated that they did not consider doing so, were also excluded. This revealed the seven newsrooms included in our sample. Drawn from these circumstances, our sample is relatively concise but comprehensive, as it represents most of the newsrooms across the various media organizations that outsource content production to freelance journalists. All the interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes. They were audio-recorded and then transcribed. In the first set of questions, editors were asked to describe how they see freelance journalists, and why. The second set of questions focused on the practices and conditions under which they use freelancers' services in their newsrooms.

The transcripts of interviews were analyzed using data coding (Charmaz, 2006; Ritchie & Spencer, 2002). We used the initial set of codes that stemmed from this study's research questions and on the literature in the first two rounds of interviews. The codes for analyzing the transcripts can be divided into three sets. The first set focused on defining a freelance journalist to compare how editors profile freelance journalists and how this has changed over time (RQ1). The second set of codes marked editors' descriptions of ongoing co-operations and expectations on freelancers' content (RQ2). In the repetitive reading of transcripts, we decided to add the code 'obstacle', which define freelancers and describe the partnership started, to stand out as an essential factor related to several aspects of employment regimes. In October of 2020, we conducted the additional interviews with the editors to elaborate as to how the Covid-19 crisis influenced cooperation with freelancers (RQ3). The transcripts were analyzed using the second set of codes.

The transcripts were indexed by comparing the highlighted quotes of interviewees. The quotes were charted by extracting them and rearranging them into appropriate thematic content. Two coders coded all transcripts using MaxQDA. The minimum overlap threshold between coded segments of the first two sets of interviews was 70%. The overlap threshold refers to coders' accuracy highlighting the same segment in MaxQDA when applying a given code. The

additional questions regarding the Covid-19 crisis were coded and analyzed with qualitative analysis software Nvivo by one coder.

The nature of this study does not enable the respondents to be anonymous; therefore, all interviewees were asked for permission to be on-the-record and identifiable. Since, in this article, their position, rather than their name, is relevant, we have referred to them by their title. We collected the data on the interviewees' socio-demographic or professional experience as part of the preliminary selection process. All have worked in journalism for more than 12 years, many of them in the same or similar ranking position; with one female exception, all are men in their 40s or 50s. In the analysis and interpretation phase, it became evident that editors in their professional position represent the organizational mechanisms, and their socio-economic status and professional background may have posed only modest influence on their editorial and managerial decisions.

FINDINGS

To use a freelance journalist's services, the newsroom manager initially has to acquire a managerial perception of freelancers and the type of journalistic content they provide. Also, the managerial decision to do so depends on multiple factors, e.g., developments of technology and changes in the overall labor market.

The first set of interviews of this study took place in 2014, six years after the start of the 2008 economic recession. Though the economy showed signs of overall stabilization and even growth, this did not reach the media market. This was conditioned by the growing influence of digital intermediaries like Google, Facebook, and YouTube that hindered the restoration of the advertising capacity and revenue (Himma-Kadakas, 2018, pp. 20–22). In the first set, our interviewees emphasized that by 2014 newsrooms had adjusted to having the decreased workforce of the recession, and the labor market was flooded with freelancers who had been made redundant from newsrooms. On the one hand, the economic pressure partly preset the conditions for having freelance journalists in the market. On the other hand, the perception of a freelancer was primarily shaped by the notion of an unemployed journalist or a casual worker, and the changes in the labor market had reinforced this understanding.

> The widespread understanding of a freelancer in Estonia is that it is a person who has not found a job. The overall freelance culture in Estonia has not been developed. I have studied and worked in Germany, and things are quite the opposite there. [Editor of *Postimees*, 2014]

> The freelancer-market consists of unemployed journalists or those who send their stories just to get published anywhere. It is a landing pad for redundant journalists. [Editor of *Pere ja Kodu*, 2014]

The interviews conducted in 2014 revealed that the interviewees often described obstacles that hindered the collaboration between the newsroom and the freelancer. Therefore we also decided to use the term 'obstacle' to outline the perception of freelance journalists and how the partnership has changed stemming from them. Five main obstacles stand out from the interviews.

The first was separation from the newsroom members, which did not allow the freelancer to adjust and conform to the practices and stylistic specifics of the content. The editors of newspapers were especially concerned about the 'newspaper losing face' if freelance journalists used unconventional approaches or stylistic practices in stories. The exception was the editor of the women's lifestyle magazine *Eesti Naine* who explained that using freelancers enabled her to diversify the content with the individual variance of the specific author and the divergence from the magazine's main style.

The second obstacle, pointed out mainly by the managers of television and radio newsrooms was the lack of technical resources to provide high-quality content. Both television and radio newsrooms had experiences of outsourcing journalistic content from freelancers. The commercial television newsroom had developed regular cooperation with freelance journalists and had provided them with the technology to accomplish the quality standards. The public service radio newsroom had discarded collaboration with freelancers a couple of years earlier due to their inability to ensure the necessary technical quality; according to the newsroom manager, in 2014, there were not any sufficiently technically multi-skilled and professional freelance journalists in Estonia.

> In our case, the main obstacle is the lack of freelance service providers. We would outsource more if more freelance journalists could provide quality. [Editor of ERR radio news, 2019]

By 2019, the radio newsroom was the only one that still reflected the lack of freelancers' adequate technical skills. Other interviewees expressed satisfaction with the technical abilities to partner freelance journalists and showed readiness to outsource more multi-platform and multimedia content. The advancement of technical skills can also be explained by the increased availability of affordable technical resources (e.g., cameras, recorders, editing, data analysis software, etc.). This enabled the technology-savvy journalists, data activists, and multimedia enthusiasts to diversify their palette of skills and offer services and stories that the newsrooms were ready to outsource.

The third obstacle referred to the deficiency of in-depth knowledge of a specific field, often outside journalism. For example, the editor of the popular science magazine *Horisont* stated in both interviews that the magazine was unable to use freelancers since they could not find a journalist who would know a specific field of science. The same was indicated by newspaper editors who expected expert knowledge to be packaged as technically converged with multimedia-rich storytelling. The interviewees expressed readiness to outsource investigative journalism and data journalism projects that require specific knowledge and highly-skilled teamwork, which would otherwise be costly for the newsroom to produce with their full-time workforce. As (Kõuts-Klemm, 2019) showed, newsrooms lack data literacy skills and journalists' criticism of sociological data is weak, knowledge of statistical methods and principles is scarce, and journalists lack skills for data collection and analysis. This explains newsrooms' demands to outsource this sort of project to data activists or other partners who can combine this skill practice with journalistic content production.

The fourth obstacle revealed by all the editors was the reluctance to accept content from freelancers who may simultaneously be in both journalism and PR. As Örnebring (2016) showed in his comparative study, Estonia is a rare exception where the mixing journalism and PR roles is not accepted in newsrooms. Integrating or mixing these roles made the interviewees cautious and mistrustful towards hiring freelancers. One of the editors described a situation that deepened this mistrust:

> There is a group of PR people who act as freelance journalists, but they do not even say that they are actually working for some company, or for example, representing an artist. She just does not say, to which other newsrooms she has also offered a similar story. [Editor of *Eesti Naine*, 2014]

In 2019, the interviewees did not describe this sort of experiences or fears. This does not necessarily mean that those doubts do not exist. However, one possible explanation during the five year interval there was a rearrangement and settling of the journalistic labor market regarding freelance and entrepreneurial journalism, which the interviews reflect. In 2019 the commitments, responsibilities, and restrictions were usually regulated in the contracts between the media organizations and the freelancers' enterprises. These agreements were also closely related to the solutions behind overcoming the fifth obstacle.

The fifth obstacle concerned the competition between media organizations. The request for exclusiveness, described in the previous obstacle, is the focal point of why newsrooms would like to 'own' or have freelancers work solely for them.

> Some of the freelancers are also private entrepreneurs who give us an invoice for their articles, but at the same time, they are full – or part-time employed in some other newsroom. [Editor of *Maaleht*, 2014]

Simultaneously, this pursuit of exclusiveness also steered the development of freelance 'odd-jobbers' to entrepreneurial journalists. In the 2019 interviews, editors appreciated the value of the entrepreneurial contract with a small production company that can also be called a journalistic venture or a start-up. This assures stability for the news organization and guarantees a stable income for the journalist.

> I prefer to have concrete contractual relations with freelance partners. This enables me to influence which competitive media houses he works for, but of course, I cannot always afford this since the partner also expects a certain level of income. So, the freelance partner is entitled to provide services also for our competitors. [Editor of TV3 newscast, 2019]

Comparing the two sets of interview indicates the clarification of the role freelance journalists and the development of entrepreneurial relations with news organizations. This refers to the direction, which accords with the distinction outlined by Baines and Kennedy (2010), and enables us to conclude that Estonian freelance journalists are more entrepreneurial (perceived as having a sense of independence, empowerment, and self-direction) than self-employed (insecure, powerless, dependent on newsrooms). Hence, being a freelance journalist demands skills outside journalistic core competencies, such as an entrepreneurial knowledge of finance and accounting, a juridical knowledge of business interactions, marketing, client relations, etc.

All the obstacles reflected by the interviewees in 2014 were preconditioned by the notion that freelance journalists did not provide the service that the newsroom demanded. Instead, freelancers offered content of their preference, which did not always meet the needs of the newsroom. Except for radio news, all other editors had reassessed this notion by 2019. The change is evident in newsrooms perceiving freelance journalists as entrepreneurial partners who provide certain journalistic content for the newsroom under prearranged agreements. It is accurate to prefer the term entrepreneurial journalist to the term freelancer. The outsourced content can be regular (e.g., monthly articles and photos for a magazine; daily video stories for the television) or project-based (e.g., stories that require investigative work, data analysis and visualization, multimedia content, fact-checking initiatives, etc.). The content is outsourced because newsrooms may lack the specific competence to produce these stories or for the objective to economize costs on a permanent full-time workforce.

IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In our sample, the newspapers and magazine editors generally stated that the Covid-19 pandemic did not greatly change their cooperation with entrepreneurial journalists. However, the detailed picture is more diverse. The editors of the weekly newspaper *Maaleht,* the women's lifestyle magazine *Pere ja Kodu*, and the popular science magazine *Horisont* said their usual content production has entirely or in specific topical fields been outsourced. Hence, the crisis did not substantially affect their cooperation with external authors regarding subject matter due to content production routines.

The editors of newspapers and the radio news program admitted that the contracts with entrepreneurial journalists were negotiated at the very beginning of the pandemic, and in some cases, fees were temporarily lowered. Nevertheless, the editors prioritized keeping the contracts and the co-operations with the network of external authors. By fall 2020, when the effects were estimable, the co-operations mostly recovered on the pre-crisis level. The Covid-19 pandemic offered a case study for the nature of contractual regimes in the journalistic labor market. Our interviews with editors showed that the contracts' negotiability aspect enabled both partners to temporarily change the economic interactions but did not terminate them. The editors' inclinations towards preserving contractual relations with entrepreneurial journalists gives evidence of functioning occupational roles between the news organizations and the entrepreneurial journalists' community.

The newspapers, radio, and television editors mentioned a change in the need for specific Covid-19 coverages from external authors from local regions in Estonia and other countries abroad. This sort of the change in demand was understandable as travel restrictions prevented news organizations from sending their journalists to report from the spot. The co-operations concerned mainly news coverage and were temporarily activated during the most critical time of the pandemic. The news organizations keep a network of external authors that are used in specific circumstances.

The answers to the question of what content the editors would outsource to freelancers in current conditions gave notable results. Regardless of their platform, the editors expressed the expectation for more topically diverse and technically high-quality content:

> First and foremost, I would like the news to have a hyper-local view on topics. This concerns both authors in Estonia and abroad. The recording equipment has reached the level where it is possible to get a technically high-quality outcome, and the author does not need to make significant investments. This

> enables us to widen the network of external authors. [Editor of ERR radio news, 2020]

As can be concluded from both sets of interviews, the main criterion for seeking or terminating cooperation with entrepreneurial journalists is the content's professional quality. The editor of the magazine *Eesti Naine* expressed the expectation for professionally produced diverse multimedia content, the flexibility in adjusting to timely topics, and the ability to address the magazine's target audience. This refers to the potential for development in product and service design on the entrepreneurial journalists' side.

CONCLUSIONS

This study explored the change of Estonian media organizations' perception of freelance journalists over five years (2014 to 2019) and detected a readiness to cooperate with freelance and entrepreneurial journalists. The findings were additionally tested in the conditions of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. The interviews' results confirm that the editors' perception of who freelance journalists are has changed, and the main difference reflects in the newsrooms' approach to employment regimes, especially contractual ones. While in 2014, managing editors saw freelancers as unemployed journalists who offered their articles for publication on commission, in 2019, the perception had shifted towards the concept of the entrepreneurial journalists (RQ1). The additional interviews during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 showed that the crisis did not change this perception, which consolidated the findings regarding the change (RQ2 and RQ3). The described changes resemble the characterization outlined by Baines and Kennedy (2010), where the journalist is a small-scale entrepreneur who provides co-operation with their news content organizations under-regulated partnership agreements (RQ2). These business-to-business agreements guarantee stability and certainty for both parties and minimize risks for news organizations (e.g., competition on exclusiveness, conflicts between journalistic and PR roles, as described by Örnebring, 2016).

We believe that it is insufficient to talk merely about changes in the journalistic labor market resulting in precarity. Instead, a more comprehensive concept of employment regimes should be addressed. The employment regime of a particular country's journalistic labor market may substantially impact how the change is perceived and what consequences it poses on the profession. Our study did not set the objective of exploring either of both the employment regime, and the precarity in the Estonian journalistic labor market. However, the results of our interviews and the monitoring reports (Josephi et al., 2019;

Krusell & Pihl, 2019) on Estonian journalists do not indicate any processes leading to an increase in precarity, as several studies in other countries have shown (e.g., Hayes & Silke, 2019; Matthews & Onyemaobi, 2020; Norbäck & Styhre, 2019). In Estonia, but also in many other countries of a similar journalistic culture, this may be conditioned by several factors such as the contractual regimes of the overall labor market, the state systems that support entrepreneurship, the tax system, the role of journalists' unions, the profession's openness to reporters outside journalistic training, and integration of entrepreneurial knowledge to higher education curricula. The employment regimes components deserve more detailed study and are worth considering in the studies focusing on journalists' precarity.

The newsrooms outsource journalistic content mainly for economic reasons and acquire specific knowledge, skills, and competencies, which would otherwise be too costly to keep as in-house knowledge. In this sense, our study supports the conclusions Holton (2016) reached: newsrooms rely on freelancers to override journalistic norms in ways that can enhance news work, and using atypical employment forms may breathe new life into news organization business models. Journalistic content production has emerged from the conventional borders. Data activists and fact-checking organizations are just non-journalistic actors working on the periphery of journalism. Nevertheless, although fact-checkers may not see themselves as journalists or even distance themselves from that role, the core of their actions resemble journalistic fact-checking, and they often collaborate with newsrooms (Cheruiyot & Ferrer-Conill, 2018). Kuś and Barczyszyn-Madziarz (2020) reached a similar result stating that fact-checking initiatives in Poland strongly influence promoting media literacy. The development of the freelancers' position in the media market positively affects the whole journalistic field. As Holton (2016) concludes, newsroom editors take lessons from freelancers and set them as examples for newsroom journalists; this, in the long run, may also turn out to be a source of innovation. The same applies to data analysis and storytelling. As Kõuts-Klemm (2019) showed, journalists have neither the knowledge for data literacy at the fact-checking level, nor do they possess rigorous data analysis and storytelling skills. Newsrooms can outsource complex skills and competencies. Here the journalistic entrepreneurs (e.g., initiatives of investigative or data journalism and fact-checkers) can help fulfill this need. Nevertheless, newsrooms need to comprehend that outsourcing skills under the flag of innovation can be deceptive if the newsroom itself does not adopt the changes. This result was partly addressed by Örnebring and Ferrer-Conill (2016) but deserves further research.

Estonia's media market shows clear signs of adopting diverse collaborative forms that make the journalistic field more divergent. The freelancer's concept has changed, indicating strong integration between journalistic and entrepreneurial

roles. As our results show, newsrooms are open to collaborations with freelancers or entrepreneurial journalists who provide investigative or other resource-intensive content (RQ2). This, under normal circumstances, does not apply to news content but is acceptable in longer and timeless formats (e.g., investigative or feature stories in magazines). However, during the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic, the editors became more open to cooperation for news content. Editors expect freelancers to be proactive and offer multimedia-rich productions that require journalistic multiskilling (RQ2 and RQ3). This article offers reassuring signals to journalists who consider becoming entrepreneurs, as the Estonian news organizations' employment regimes show welcoming signs. For media educators, the article presents a challenge for developing curricula that fulfill the demands of the altered employment regimes.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was partly supported by the Ander Foundation: Anne Marie och Gustaf Anders Stiftelse för mediaforskning.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

DOI: 10.51480/1899-5101.14.1(28).3

'Model Putin Forever': A Critical Discourse Analysis on Vladimir Putin's Portrayal in Czech Online News Media

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ABSTRACT: This paper examines the Czech online news media representation of Vladimir Putin during three presidential elections (American of 2016, Czech and Russian of 2018). The portrayal of the Russian leader is examined using the methods of the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), mainly by the approach formulated by Teun van Dijk. The results showed a negatively biased portrayal of the president, Russian policy and the country itself, which corresponds with the historical-political context of the Czech-Russian relations, and which is in accordance with the Western media discourse. Applying the methods of global coherence revealed that the overarching theme of the coverage is Putin's efforts to re-establish Russia as the global power and to restore the binary world as it was during the Cold war, while the methods of local coherence disclosed many implications, categorizations and the ubiquitous sarcasm and negativity in most of the texts.

KEYWORDS: Putin, Russia, Czech online news media, discourse, analysis.

INTRODUCTION

The perception of any country and its leadership is significantly influenced by the way it is projected through the media. Internationally, the Russian Federation is considered as one of the leading world powers (Taras, 2018), however, the Western media representation of the country is predominantly negative and to a great extent built on stereotypes from the past (Repina, Zheltukhina, Kovaleva & Popova, 2018). The Western media image of Russia has been overwhelmingly negative since the Russia-Georgia war of 2008. Negative media opinions and framing of Russia and their political representatives have significantly influenced the already poor relations between Russia and the West, by reviving the Cold War discourse (Bayulgen & Arbatli, 2013). The position of Russia under

Vladimir Putin as "a strong state that intends to play by its own rules" became a new phenomenon for Western media (Repina, Zheltukhina, Kovaleva & Popova, 2018, p. 562). To construct images of Russia's power, emotive terms have been used by the Western media: imperialism, expansion, and revanchism are commonly used concepts. Security threat, grand strategy, resurgence and destabilizing actor are additional terms used to describe the Kremlin's longing for power (Taras, 2018, p. 2). Vladimir Putin is often accused of stepping aside from democratic principles, and the criticism of Russia's domestic situation is accompanied by growing concerns about its policies in the post-Soviet area, which are seen as neo-imperial (Feklyunina, 2008). Throughout history and under different leaderships, Russia has always been considered as the "other", the aggressive opponent to the West. Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991), no new rhetoric has been adopted or formed by the mass media. Instead, in its appraisal of "Putin's Russia" the journalists have returned to the narrative typical for the period of the Cold War (Repina, Zheltukhina, Kovaleva & Popova, 2018).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Even almost three decades after the end of the Cold War, and after several extensive political changes, the world still considers Russia as a successor of the Soviet Union, the country is socially and media constructed as "post-soviet" (Etkind, 2014). Russia is implicitly linked to the "occupation position", while the countries that face the attack of the expanding country are victims. This phenomenon called the *myth of the victim* (Lule, 2001) appears most clearly and unequivocally in the Czech historical context, while the highest point of these representations is without a doubt the events of 1968. The evidence that the Soviet domination still survives as a form of social trauma in the collective consciousness of the Czech nation are the frequent sarcastic connotations related to Russians and Russia, which – among other things – emerged during the analysis. The frequency of sarcasm and irony in the texts can be explained as a coping mechanism (Blaser, 1976; Gornostaeva & Semenovskaya, 2018) for a bad experience, such as the trauma of domination over the Czech nation following the invasion by Warsaw Pact forces in 1968.

Historical context is especially important for this study, as the Czech Republic (formerly Czechoslovakia) was under the Soviet dominance for about 40 years. The country was under a non-democratic political system, led by a single communist party, which suppressed any political or social pluralism of values. The construction of the Communist regime began with extensive changes in all spheres of Czech and Slovak social life in 1948, when Czechoslovakia became a solid link in the Soviet bloc and served the interests of Soviet politics with

no room for own decisions. The result was the isolation of Czechoslovakia from the western states of Europe and the USA, and the withdrawal from more than 50 international organizations. Communist leaders recognized only one model of socialism, the Soviet model, which was considered a generally valid template for Marxist-Leninist ideology (Kaplan, 1991). After a brief period of political liberalization in 1968 known as the *Prague Spring*, the normalization phase began, which completely excluded most citizens from public affairs. People did not have access to independent information. The Soviet regime sought to ensure the public's disregard for politics by raising living standards and intimidation – the freedom of speech did not exist, all media were subject to censorship, while the communist propaganda was ubiquitous (Otahal, 2019). Czechoslovakia remained under Soviet control until 1989, when the Velvet Revolution peacefully ended the communist regime; the last Soviet troops left the country in 1991.

The normalization phase (August 1968 – November 1989) generated two cultural and societal spaces that existed in parallel: the official sphere that respected and was loyal to the regime, and the alternative sphere. The latter not only enabled the Czechoslovak population access to foreign broadcast stations broadcasting in Czech and Slovak, but chiefly gave rise to the so-called *samizdat* media (alternative media) which were produced within the borders of Czechoslovakia (Bednarik, Jirak & Köpplova, 2011). Respecting the human and citizen laws in Czechoslovakia became the fundamental demand of members of the *Charta 77*, an informal civic initiative delimiting the regime in opposition. Despite the very intensive campaign designed by the regime officials that was aimed to discredit them and to prove their insignificance, they did not cease. Instead, their adherents and citizens supporting them, started to publish multiple samizdat periodicals (*Lidove noviny, Prace, Lidova demokracie*), and other unofficial printed material. Amid the second half of the 1980s, the efforts to actively operate within the alternative media intensified. The attempts were to portray diversity and opinions of the opposition, and to culturally and artistically enrich the alternative sphere (Bednarik et al., 2011).

After 1989, Czechoslovakia and other countries considered as Central European were consistently presented as the countries colonized by the Soviet Union, and the political project of Central Europe was described as the "moral appeal of the West" (Neumann, 1999). According to Neumann (1999), the Central Europe was formed based on Anderson's "imagined community" that came out of the frustration with Soviet hegemony in Eastern Europe. The spirit of Central Europe maintains itself by constant differentiation from the barbarous East (Russia). The core of this political identity relies on consistent attribution of negative characteristics to Russia (ibid). As displayed in Table 1, such differentiation is expressed by morally superior opposites.

Table 1 Neumann's connotations and oppositions related to Russia throughout history

Russia as "the other"		
Binary opposition us x them	**Russian connotations**	**Russia and Central Europe**
Modern x traditionalist	expansionism	Russia as the occupant
democratic x non-democratic/ authoritarian/ despotic/totalitarian	"Barbarians on the doorstep of Europe"	CE as the protector of Western traditions
Western x Eastern	Russia as a pupil of Europe (and a potential renegade)	Progress towards freedom, bright future
civilized x barbarous (I., II. and III. world)	social and economic underdevelopment	Marxism x liberalism
cultural x non-cultural (polite x impolite)	militarism, armament (the Russian soldier stereotype)	CE identity as a form of protest against USSR and Americanism in Europe – westernization x easternization
Europe x Asia (EU x China)	totalitarianism	"the Eternal Russia" (totalitarianism)
Market economy x planned economy	representations relating to the future	tolerance x intolerance
independent x subordinate	linkage of political power with persons, not institutions	
defense x offense	instability	
	transition (with emphasis on temporal rather than spatial perception of Russia)	

Source: Neumann (1999).

Despite the decline of Russia after 1991, the ideal of the Russian Federation as a superior civilization and a transcendent empire with a universal mission has remained. Even two decades after the Soviet Union's collapse, Russia's leadership and their international ambitions continue to evoke concern (Taras, 2013). Many experts have examined the way the Russian image has been constructed both nationally and internationally since Vladimir Putin's leadership began (Prizel, 1998; Hopf, 2002; Clunan, 2009; Feklyunina, 2008). According to Clunan (2009) Russia's resurgence under Putin can be explained by the coalescing of traditional security concerns, historical aspirations, and human agency around the developmentalism and national identity that Putin promotes. The so-called Russophobia[1] has become significantly more pressing since the second term of Putin's presidency.

1 The topic of Russophobia has been mentioned in the Russian and occasionally Western mass media; addressed in academic works and raised by different writers and poets for over 170 years (Feklyunina, 2013). Russophobia as "an irrational hatred towards Russia" (Kiselev, 2008) implies a radical degree of hostility by the Other. The term has been bountifully used by Russian leaders in order to create a desirable national image (Malinova, 2013).

This paper concentrates on the media representation of Vladimir Putin (and Russia under his leadership) in the Czech Republic's mainstream media. According to Neumann, Vladimir Putin is the precise example of the "linkage of political power with a person" connotation. Putin's media representations describe him as an authoritarian, non-democratic leader (theguardian.com, July 20, 2017; washingtonpost.com, March 14, 2018; cnn.com, December 29, 2019). In several cases, he is even associated with Imperial Russian history (theguardian.com, March 25, 2017). Most recently, Russia and Vladimir Putin have faced accusations of being involved in several hackers' attacks, starting with the US Democratic party email leakage in 2016 (nytimes.com, June 14; 2016; washingtonpost.com, July 27, 2016). Since then, the country and the president himself have been accused of meddling in elections through cyberspace in other Western countries. I have therefore decided to focus on the Czech media portrayal of Vladimir Putin during three presidential elections in Europe and the US: the American presidential elections of 2016, the Czech presidential election of 2018, and the Russian presidential election of 2018. The goal is, by application of various techniques and approaches of critical discourse analysis, to identify the major discursive patterns used by the Czech mainstream media to portray Russia and its leader Vladimir Putin, and to ascertain whether the Czech media discourse corresponds with the Western one.

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS APPROACH

One of essential attributes of democracy is freedom of speech, which in today's society can refer to the freedom of the media. In modern democracies, the media have enormous political power, which is used to facilitate events and create information (Davis & Owen, 1998; Owen, 2017). As sources of information the media can play an important role in shaping perceptions of politics, events and the world. The study of news is one of major tasks of discourse-analytical media research, as most of our social and political knowledge about the world comes from the news we daily come across. A discourse can be understood as a set of categories and concepts embodying specific assumptions, judgments, contentions, dispositions, and capabilities. It enables the mind to process sensory inputs into coherent accounts, which can then be shared in intersubjectively meaningful fashion (Dryzek & Niemeyer, 2008, p. 481). Fairclough (1995a) defines discourse as a "use of language as a particular form of social practice" (p. 56). Van Dijk (1997a) differentiates between common sense definitions and theoretically complex definitions of discourse. The theoretical definition involves three aspects of communicative events: language use, communication of opinions and cognition, and cognition and interactions (p. 7-28).

Each discourse is part of a discursive order in a certain area of society with a cultural hegemony of its own. The order of discourse of a particular social domain is the totality of discursive practices and the relationships between them (Langer, 1998, p. 21). The concept used in this particular analysis is van Dijk's definition of discourse "as a text in context" (van Dijk, 2001). Discourse is not produced without context and cannot be understood without taking the context into consideration (van Dijk, 2008c). In this paper, I also need to include intertextuality and sociocultural knowledge into the concept of context, as most of the texts involve historical intertextuality and a degree of assumed knowledge. I need to distinguish between ideology and knowledge; ideologies are belief systems shared by members of social groups (liberals, conservatives), while knowledge, on the other hand, is shared by a whole community (the Czech nation). Knowledge is a belief that has been certified by the cultural and in this case especially historical criteria of a community (van Dijk, 2006). The role of knowledge is prominent as it strategically projects what recipients already know or what is still unknown to them, and therefore regulates the presuppositional structure of the discourse (ibid). Cognitive properties such as knowledge or ideologies are bountifully demonstrated in collective discourses – in this case the media.

Scholars have defined discourse and discourse analysis using a variety of approaches: the linguistic orientation (such as Fowler, 1991; Kress, 1985 and Chilton, 1985), others concentrate on the ideological and political dimensions of media messages (Glasgow University Media Group, 1976, 1980; Davis & Walton, 1983). For the purpose of this study, I use the Critical Discourse Analysis definitions and approaches of Teun van Dijk (1980, 1991, 2006, 2008) to demonstrate how these approaches can be applied to the discourse of the Czech mainstream media. In this text, discourse is used as a countable noun indicating "a way of speaking which gives meaning to experiences from a particular perspective" (Fairclough, 1993, p. 138).

Van Dijk (1991) introduces the concept of global coherence, which characterizes a discourse as a whole or a larger fragment of a discourse, and which refers to the overarching theme of the text. Moreover, each discourse contains an overall semantic structure called macrostructure, which is a semantic representation of discourse. The semantic structure of a discourse is hierarchically organized. The most general macro-structure, sometimes called topic (or theme) of a discourse entailed by other macro-structures, dominates the discourse. These macro-structures determine the global or overall coherence of a discourse and are themselves determined by the linear coherence of sequences. His method focuses on the search for those general themes that structure the discourse behind the text: "global coherence is described by what we all intuitively know as themes. Themes conceptually summarize the text and specify its most important

information." According to van Dijk, this is what "forms the thematic structure of the text" (van Dijk, 1991).

A part of global coherence, van Dijk (1980) also distinguishes local coherence which is defined for relations between sentences of a textual sequence, while depending on global coherence. Another important semantic notion in a news text is implication, as much of the information of a text is often left implicit. According to van Dijk, "many ideological implications follow not only because too little is being said, but also because too many, irrelevant things are being said" (1991, p. 114). Using irrelevant information could be used to form misleading interpretations throughout the text. By examination of the irrelevant information, the implicit discursive constructions might be explained. The methods of global coherence and implication analysis might lead us to discover the consistent patterns of discursive features that imply the ideological position of the analyzed text.

Based on the wide range of diverse methods and techniques of critical discourse analysis that were used by different researchers, depending on the nature of the topic of their studies, there is no sole standard way how to conduct critical discourse analysis. Nonetheless, several authors (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002; Conboy, 2007; Richardson, 2007) pointed out general guidelines on how to proceed when analyzing (media) discourse: "the way to start is to read and reread the transcriptions in order to identify themes (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002, p. 124). Hence, a repetitive and attentive reading would reveal us major themes and patterns of language, and similarities, differences and structures of language of the news would emerge, enabling us to classify the different discourses.

METHODOLOGY

Following the above-mentioned methods of critical discourse analysis, this paper begins with a careful reading of 141 news stories. These texts are closely examined for their macro-structures and semantic notions such as implications and irrelevant information in order to obtain major patterns of discourse, and to ascertain the general themes of Vladimir Putin's representation during several presidential elections in selected Czech online news media. I seek to find answers to the following questions: what is the overall portrayal of Vladimir Putin in the Czech mainstream media[2] and how is its discourse being constructed?

2 Mainstream media, the elite media or the so-called agenda-setting media. They are large enterprises with resources which set the framework by which all other media operate (Chomsky, 1997). Mainstream media are usually owned by huge corporations, operating according to Chomsky's five filters (Herman, Chomsky, 1988). In this paper, four of the selected media are typical

As a sample for the analysis, all the relevant stories from five Czech online news sites – iDnes.cz, Lidovky.cz, Novinky.cz, which are the three most common[3] Czech online sources of news, CT24.cz, which is the online news portal owned by the Czech public TV broadcaster, and Blesk.cz the most common tabloid online source – were retrieved through the Anopress archives.[4] The time frame being July 2016 – January 2017 for the American election, and November 2017 – March 2018 for the Czech and the Russian elections, as the two election periods partly coincide. The analysis sought to answer the consecutive essential questions, and to confirm or disprove the complementary hypotheses:

- Research question: In the Czech mainstream media discourse, what are major discursive patterns in the portrayal of Putin and Russia?
- Hypothesis 1: Putin and Russia are negatively portrayed in the Czech mainstream media.
- Hypothesis 2: The negative representation results from the historical-political Czech-Russian relations.

Throughout the analysis, special attention was paid to the following particular aspects that would lead me to determine the consistent patterns of the dominant discourse:

- What is the most general macro-structure of each text i.e., the overarching theme?
- What information is described explicitly and implicitly?
- What is left unsaid?
- How are Putin and his actions described?
- What is Putin's relation to the theme of each text unit?

When evaluating the results of the analysis, in order to map out the major discursive patterns, I also focused on the way each text was composed, what values were accentuated, the usage of language, and whether the representation of Putin was consistent or transformed with each studied period.

of the prototype of mainstream media: novinky.cz and lidovky.cz owned by the conglomerate MAFRA, novinky.cz owned by Borgis, and blesk.cz is a tabloid owned by CNC.

3 According to the NetMonitor yearly traffic research. Results and charts avalaible at mediaguru.cz.

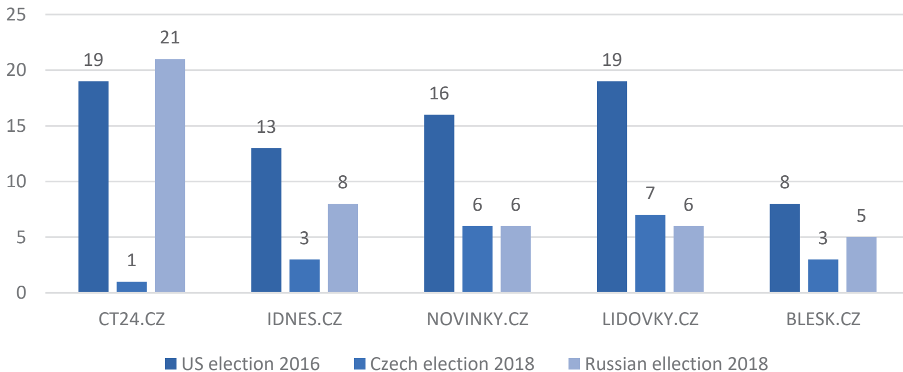
4 The keywords used were these following: "Putin", "American", "Czech", "Russian", "presidential", "election".

FINDINGS

There were 141 news articles in the Anopress archives that met the requirements of this research. A careful analysis of these texts demonstrated the repetition of certain themes, which included the Russian interference in the American presidential election through cyberspace, the annexation of Crimea, Russia's foreign policy, or Putin's lack of an opposition rival when campaigning for the presidency. The overarching theme of the dominant discourse proved to be Putin's effort to re-establish Russia as a world power and to restore the binary world as it was in the past, and the media's rather negative standpoint and instructions to readers of what to think and how to feel about it. Each election period will be discussed in turn, pointing out the detected major themes that appeared within the analyzed set of articles.

Figure 1 summarizes the quantitative presence of Russian discourse during the period. It displays the number of relevant articles from each selected media of the analyzed sample. Moreover, the graph shows that Putin/Russian discourse appeared in all the monitored mass media to a relatively equal extent.

Figure 1. Representation of Putin and Russia in the presidential elections of the USA (2016), the Czech Republic (2018), Russia (2018) in 5 mainstream Czech online outlets



Source: Author

JULY 2016 – JANUARY 2017

Starting with the analyzed period of the American presidential election, 75 articles were gathered from the time frame of articles from the time frame of July 2016 – January 2017, which mentioned president Putin in relation to the American election. The most prominent theme of this period was the alleged Russian interference into the election via different hackers' attacks with the most discussed one being the leakage of emails from the private mailbox of the Democratic

candidate Hillary Clinton. Putin was continuously accused of trying to help the Republican candidate Donald Trump to win the election, as he would be a more suitable ally to him in the future foreign policy and his alleged plans to reign the world: "Putin's aversion towards Clinton" (lidovky.cz, November 11, 2016), "Trump is a more acceptable option for Putin's plans" (lidovky.cz, November 4, 2016). The most prominent theme kept on appearing in almost every article of the Czech media not only during the American election period, but also in the articles concerning the Czech and the Russian elections. Putin is described as the most discussed non-US politician during any of the US elections, while the actual American politicians running for presidency are described as his puppets: "Is the Kremlin going to win the US elections?" (lidovky.cz, September 12, 2016), "The Godfather of the US elections" (novinky.cz, September 23, 2016). The analysis leads me to conclude that the articles from this period focus primarily on the Putin-Trump relation, while the language used to describe it is uniformly negative, and the certainty and frequency of Putin's future foreign policy mal intention mentions, if Trump wins, are especially noteworthy. The application of CDA can, therefore, easily lead one to conclude that the media's portrayal of Putin during the American election period is rather negative, focusing more on Putin's future politics then on the election itself. Such redefinition of themes is one of the common media discursive practices and will be discussed in more detail later on.

Textual analysis makes it clear that the media dedicated a lot of space to describe Putin's actions as adverse, when several implications, presuppositions and suggestions were used. Thus, lidovky.cz writes on September 12, 2016, under the headline "Is the Kremlin going to win the US elections?" thereby implying the Russian president is behind the hacker's attacks. The article begins with the Clinton/Putin vs. Trump/Putin relations, mentioning that Trump will be an easier companion to Russia rather than Clinton who disapproves of him even more than the then president Barack Obama does. "Moscow has made the American president Barack Obama sign the deal, that they already proposed in spring" has a rather negative implication. It pragmatically implies noncompliance with demands from both sides, that presupposes that Moscow has forced him to do so.

As the article goes on, Putin is being criticized for not trying hard enough to deny Russia's involvement in the alleged hackers attacks which may imply truthfulness of the allegations. The implication is shortly after endorsed by the statement of Edward Snowden that Russia's involvement "wouldn't be a surprise". The primal presumption of a neutral non-biased tone of the text evaporates as the article (lidovky.cz, September 12, 2016) concludes with comments on the excellence of Russian propaganda, which is not aiming to favor either one of the candidates, but to undermine the confidence in the US democracy apparatus. "Moscow doesn't see the direct gains or losses from when the White House staff

changes but will happily keep on sponging off the election". The expression "sponging" has a more negative aspect than for instance "profiting". Similarly, "the Kremlin propaganda masters the use of social networks and plays with the atmosphere of fear", the very choice of the predicate "fear" implies negativity, leading the reader to conclude that the Russian propaganda is used strictly for negative purposes. On the basis of these lexical choices, both at the macrolevel (according to the headline) and the microlevel, it can be inferred that Putin is not represented very positively in this particular news item.

NOVEMBER 2017 – JANUARY 2018

Moving on to the texts covering the Czech presidential election (time period from November 2017 – January 2018, number of relevant articles: 20), I have discovered a repetitive theme that constantly appeared in the news coverage – the Czech president Milos Zeman's warm relationship with Vladimir Putin, and a discursive pattern referring to the historical events of the 1970s and 1980s implying a potential threat. Similar to Trump-Putin relations, Zeman's pro-Putinism was negatively criticized and consistently accentuated throughout the studied period: "president's grand tour de Russia" (lidovky.cz, November 11, 2017), or "president's unbounded support for Putin" (lidovky.cz, January 8, 2018), or "the most pro-Russian leader of Europe" (idnes.cz, November 21, 2017). The Czech dominant discourse implies, that Putin's comprehension of Zeman's support is that there are no limits in terms of what he can afford towards the Czech Republic and its government. Thus, idnes.cz on November 21, 2017 refers to an article published by the Russian online TV platform *Zvezda* covering the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia of 1968 that explicitly states that the Czech and Slovak nations should be grateful for the past. The article was published when the Czech president started his so-called "Russian tour" visit, where he was gifted a copy of the *Renewed Constitution of 1627* – a constitution that officially subordinates the Czech lands to the Austrian Empire. Similar explicit and implicit references to the past are present throughout the whole sample. Furthermore, the dominant discourse emphasizes the Zeman-Putin relationship, while negatively framing it. Looking closely to the article published by novinky.cz on November 22, 2017, under the headline "TV Cargrad: The campaign is ongoing" referring to the radio broadcasting in Russia, that explicitly stated that the "power of the Czech president is limited", "he can say whatever and will not be held responsible, which is very convenient for the Kremlin". In the case of the Czech elections, Vladimir Putin was used to create a negative image of the Czech president Milos Zeman and his presidential campaign. Zeman's pro-Russian approaches and constant support of Putin were explicitly negatively framed throughout the whole studied period, while the discourse was mainly built on historical references and implications of potential future threats.

NOVEMBER 2017 – MARCH 2018

The last analyzed period (November 2017 – March 2018, number of relevant articles: 46) focused on the Russian presidential election of 2018. The most prominent theme of this time frame turned out to be the "invincibility of Vladimir Putin". Here, Vladimir Putin is portrayed as the invincible politician, with no real competition. The discourse of this period accentuates the authoritarian attributes of Putin's leadership, emphasizing his actions such as the limitation of human rights and the freedom of the speech, and his attempts to create his own cult of personality within the federation. Even before Putin officially announced his candidacy, the media already referred to him as the winner of the election: "Putin is looking for a competition!" (idnes.cz, January 8, 2018), "no doubt about Putin winning the election" (novinky.cz, February 3, 2018), "there is no competition, it's been decided" (lidovky.cz, February 13, 2018), or "Who am I voting for? I bet you know that already!" (lidovky.cz, March 19th, 2018). Czech (as well as international) media claim the Russian presidential election is a farce as the results are known in advance. Putin maintains the overwhelming support of the Russian people, while the state has kicked his main opponent out of the race and sanctioned other candidates in the running (Alexei Navalny). The only concern of the president is a low turnout, which could raise questions about the legitimacy of the election. A significant coverage from this period was dedicated to the rival candidate Navalny, who was banned from contesting the election. The media mentioned Navalny's support of legions of young Russians who demand change, while mainly criticizing Putin's regime that is based on corruption: "Kremlin considers him very dangerous before the election…" (idnes.cz, December 25, 2017), or "Kremlin is trying to get rid of the uncomfortable critic and rival of Vladimir Putin" (ibid). These are clear implications of Putin's undemocratic ways of government that presupposes him being behind Navalny's ban from the election.

Similarly, as in the previous analyzed periods, textual analysis shows rather negative representation of Vladimir Putin. The electoral period can split into two parts: before the election (Nov 2017 – March 2018) and after the election (mid-March 2018 onward). The tone of the news items from the period before the election is rather sarcastic, continuously referring to the absurdity of the election and its non-democratic character, while after the election, the media focus on Putin's governing behavior. Thus, novinky.cz writes on March 20, 2018, under the headline "Putin's successor out of sight" thereby implying that this might not be Putin's last term as the Russian leader and suggesting that his governance might be perpetual.

Further, the paragraph titled "Presidential life sentence" clarifies that the popularity of the only possible successor – prime minister and former president Dmitrij Medvedev – is very low: "The popularity of the ex-president is now

so low, that not even Russia can falsify the election this much"[5]. The predicate "falsify" in conjunction with "this much" implies that falsification of the election is rather common, while the adverb "not even" emphasizes that such manipulation is common especially in Russia.

DISCUSSION

The analysis has discovered several political implications that were both made implicit and explicit by different authors. It shows, how different events, and the discourse about such events, are represented within the framework of the dominant discourse. Concerning the American elections that is: Trump is openly supporting Putin, Russia is trying to help Trump win the election for their own future benefit etc., whereas Clinton is known for her rather antagonistic stance towards the Russian president, which makes her the better option. On the macro semantics level, the sample revealed the latter of topics that raises from "simple" Trump-Putin relations towards the hybrid warfare issues. Relevant for the discussion is the power of media to define or redefine the topics of the articles that are supposed to cover the election. That is, along the texts, the focus is no longer on Trump's or Clinton's capabilities as politicians, but on what it will mean for the world if Putin gets what he wants. By generalizing the topic beyond the American elections to hybrid warfare phenomenon, the discourse defines Putin and Russia as a threat (not only) to the West, but to democracy as well. The same tendency is detectable when analyzing the discourse of the Czech elections. The frequent references to Putin take the focus off of the initial main topic of the article (candidate Zeman) and shift it towards Putin's mal intentions, while emphasizing the nation's history: "the Czech presidential elections are also about Russia (…) though the Soviet tanks of 1968 made the Czechs want to break free of Russia" (blesk.cz, January 13, 2018), "the closeness to Moscow still has a taste of collaboration in the Czech Republic" (lidovky.cz, January 11, 2018), or "Zeman's potential election victory might worsen the CZ-EU relations, and on the contrary – make Putin happy" (lidovky.cz, January 11, 2018).

While analyzing the discourse at the local coherence level of analysis, I focused on the level of specificity used to describe certain events. Undesirable information is usually described incompletely, while preferred information is often thoroughly detailed. One of the most apparent forms of over-completeness is the irrelevant categorization of participants in order to delegitimize their actions (van Dijk, 1993). In this case, the discourse irrelevantly categorizes Putin as authoritarian

5 Translated from the original: "Popularita exprezidenta je uz nyni tak mala, ze tolik se ani v Rusku volby zfalsovat nedaji". The English adverb "not even" refers to the Czech particle "ani".

by emphasizing his negative actions of the past e.g. the annexation of Crimea, information warfare, meddling into the American elections, or his undemocratic ways of government: "Moscow is facing sanctions over the annexation of Crimea and their military activities in Donbas" (CT24.cz, October 27, 2016), "Moscow intensifies its information warfare (…) experts are warning against Russian internet trolls and their spreading of disinformation on social media" (CT24.cz, October 27, 2016), "The campaign that was aimed to denigrate Clinton, was ordered by Putin" (idnes.cz, January 6, 2017), "Due to the restrictions of fundamental freedom and registration of candidates, there was no competitive environment during the Russian presidential election" (CT24.cz, March 19, 2018), "the only candidates allowed to participate at the presidential election are those, who have been chosen by Putin himself" (idnes.cz, December 31, 2017). On contrary, the undesirable information would, in this case, mean a positive representation of Putin. Such information was not detected throughout the whole analysis. The subtext of the analyzed sample was clearly negative, the information that initially seemed to appear positive showed to have a sarcastic subtext: "Russian presidential elections are not about Putin's victory, as no one doubts that" (CT24.cz, March 17, 2018), "Though the rally was dedicated to the anniversary of the annexation of Crimea, it seemed more to be a mass celebration of Putin's convincing victory" (blesk.cz, March 18, 2018). Therefore, for the Czech audience, the above described redefinition of major topics and the specificity of description may imply an association of a political-ideological enemy (totalitarianism) and a potential threat of a history repeating itself (occupation).

The application of global and local coherence methods has therefore proven that the most common discursive patterns used in the Czech mainstream media are: the redefinition of discourse – frequent references to different topics (hybrid warfare), usage of stereotypes and references to the past (occupation), categorization (authoritarian), negative implications (future potential threat), and the omnipresent sarcasm and irony.

CONCLUSIONS

Prejudgment, subjectivity and evaluability. These are the major features defining the current media discourse of Russia. Essentially, the texts of the news are composed in compliance with a particular interpretative ideological framework (Fiske, 1993; Elder & Cobb, 1983, etc.). Within the Czech media discourse, Vladimir Putin has been referred to as a former KGB agent, the chief of the Kremlin who suppresses human rights, controls the media, the army and the secret services, and is a potential threat to the democracy.

This paper attempted to analyze the media representation of the Russian president Vladimir Putin during selected periods, in five of the major Czech online news portals. Different media types were chosen: commercial mainstream, public broadcast and tabloid. The reason why I decided to analyze diverse sources was to get the overall picture of the Russian discourse in the Czech media. Surprisingly, I found that the language and the tone of the articles of all analyzed sources were analogous, regardless the fact that the public broadcast media are supposedly ideologically neutral and un-biased. The text analysis proved that many of their articles were written in a similar way as the tabloid ones i.e. using sarcasm, irony and negative implications. Using the approaches of critical discourse analysis of Teun van Dijk, the study has shown that the media image of the Russian leader is rather negative. Vladimir Putin is a clear example of Neumann's "connection of political power with a person" connotation. He is portrayed as an authoritarian, non-democratic leader, who will stay in charge of the country until he finds a suitable successor whom he can direct "from a distance" (idnes.cz, December 12).

The application of critical discourse analysis showed the implementation of Cold War discursive practices into the text, by using stereotypes and references from the past. Another common discursive practice of the Czech media turned out to be the myth of the victim, as many notions of the historic Russia-Czechoslovakia relations appeared in the studied articles. The largely emphasized theme – in fact the overarching theme of the whole coverage turned out to be Putin's future malicious intentions and his goal to re-establish Russia as a global power, and re-create the binary position of the world, as it was during the Cold War. Textual analysis showed frequent use of negative implications and presuppositions. The consistent pattern of such discursive features implies the ideological position of the media in the account of Russia and its leader. The findings of the study therefore proved to correspond with the results of other researches of Western media discourses when analyzing the media image of Russia. Even three decades after the Velvet revolution (and the end of the Cold War), Russia's media portrayal remains negative. The president of the Federation is portrayed as the main foe of the Western world and of the attributes of democracy.

Finally, the research shows what literature refers to the *us x them* phenomenon – Putin and his politics (as "them") is described as unpredictable and intimidating, while the Czech Republic and the West (as "us") are presented as endangered and innocent.

This paper brings up the issue of media bias towards the Western perception of the world, which has been neglected in the Czech mainstream discourse. The Russian discursive strategies of the Czech mainstream media naturalize the persisting dislike and negativity towards the Russian nation by reproducing

subtle and routine everyday forms of text that appear natural (van Dijk, 1993). One of the major functions of dominant discourse is to create such consensus (Herman and Chomsky, 1988). A concrete text production (news stories) is based on mental representations of experiences, that is shaped by existing knowledge. In this case, I believe, it is the joint history of the Czechoslovakia and Russia. One of the main discursive strategies shown to be the emphasis of the current discourse as typical, referring to Putin's actions and events in Russia as non-incidental or exceptional, but consistent.

Though similar to the Western media position towards Russia, the Czech anti-Russian stance comes from a painful historical background, where the nationalist ideology aims to defend the Czech nation against any possible attack from Russia. It is precisely through the media discourses that these kinds of ideologies/stances are expressed and propagated among readers and thus reproduced in everyday life.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This paper is the result of Metropolitan University Prague research project no. "E33-66" (2019) based on a grant from the Institutional Fund for the Long-term Strategic Development of Research Organisations.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

DOI: 10.51480/1899-5101.14.1(28).4

Zelensky's Image in the Russian and Ukrainian News: Presidential Campaign 2019 in Ukraine

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ABSTRACT: The work explores the portrayal of the sixth president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, in Russian and Ukrainian media sources during the pre-electoral campaign in 2019. The study used network analysis, n-grams' generation, and LDA-based topic modeling. The study reveals that Russia's media focused on Zelensky as a media personality, while Ukrainian sources paid attention to the portrayal of a novel popular politician. The target audience of the candidate's campaign was the Russian-speaking population of Ukraine. Media in Ukraine's native language were more inclined to mention elections, the role of the other candidate Petro Poroshenko and the nationalist mood, while defining Zelensky as just an ordinary candidate in an electoral race. The article is based on academic resources concerning the history of the development of political and media contexts in Ukraine, paying particular attention to agenda-setting, framing and priming techniques, and the personality of Volodymyr Zelensky.

KEYWORDS: Volodymyr Zelensky, discourse, media, network analysis, topic modeling.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary Ukraine is one of the former socialist republics that proclaimed independence in 1991, the last year of the Soviet Union's existence. As in many post-Soviet states, clientelism, patronage and corruption (Spirova, 2008) continued in conjunction with state capture, which hindered the newly independent nation's transition towards liberal democracy. While benefitting from the cessation of Communism's overarching doctrine, Ukraine became trapped in the hybridity of own institutions (Matsiyevsky, 2018: 351).

Rigged elections often became an issue in public agenda, provoking public manifestations (Beissinger, 2011: 25). The first demonstrations occurred in 2004 during the transition of power from the second Ukrainian president Leonid Kuchma to his successor Victor Yanukovych and transformed into the Orange Revolution. Due to marked voting irregularities, such as "ballot-stuffing", falsification of the vote count, or denial of observers' access to the polling stations (Pifer, 2007: 29), a popular struggle for fair elections turned into protests on Ukraine's most famous square – Maidan Nezalezhnosti. Therefore, the third electoral round, monitored by international observers, brought to power Victor Yushchenko (Karatnysky, 2005: 36–41). His political views made a significant contribution to the country's orientation towards integration in the European Union (Kuzio, 2005: 35).

However, the Euromaidan Revolution, called in the Ukrainian discourse the "Revolution of Dignity", escalated not as a result of electoral fraud. In November 2013, the Ukrainian president Victor Yanukovych made a unilateral decision to stop, at the last moment, the European integration process, favoring negotiations with the Russian Federation. The abrupt cessation of talks finalizing the EU's Association Agreement, rising levels of corruption, and the violent suppression of public demonstrations (Shveda & Park, 2016: 90) eroded the legitimacy of Yanukovych's regime. Desire to join European civilizational path and radicalization (Baysha, 2019: 123, 133) took precedence over outstanding linguistic and ethnic issues and merged into the new Maidan protests. Nevertheless, the expected urgent presidential elections did not occur because on February 22 2014, President Yanukovych, fearing for his personal safety, fled Ukraine for Russia. The Maidan Revolution became a reason for territorial disintegration.

Within such a context, the first elections that were supposed to happen under constitutionally defined terms after the Euromaidan events were of huge interest internally and externally. The new president had to be fairly elected and to reflect European values. Furthermore, he had to be distanced from traditional Ukrainian politicians. The popular Ukrainian news TV channel described traditional politicians as being corrupt, nepotic enforcers of censorship, and supplemented the typical image of political outsider by mentioning pre-electoral tactics of "dirty technologies, [making] mutual accusations and ordinary promises" (TSN.ua, 2019).

The aim of the paper is to see how the figure of the candidate who became the sixth Ukrainian President was presented by Russian and Ukrainian news. The presidential elections took place in March–April 2019, so the analysis of Zelensky's political figure remains insufficient. However, some of the articles are worth considering. For instance, Korosteleva and Samokhvalov depicted Volodymyr Zelensky, as a rival of the Ukrainian establishment, who paved the way to electoral success through the TV show "Servant of the People" (Korosteleva & Samokhvalov, 2019: 2). Apart from television aspect, Mashtaler singles out

Zelensky's skillful use of media and digital technologies, in particular social networks, which define his victory (Mashtaler, 2019:142-145).

Therefore, Zelensky turned to traditional and virtual media resources in order to create favorable personal image and attract the electorate vote. The strategy proved successful: in the first round Zelensky received 30% of the votes, compared to his closest rival, the incumbent Petro Poroshenko with a share of 16% (Korosteleva & Samokhvalov, 2019: 1).

As the elections are now history, it would be interesting to identify the narratives operating in Ukraine, at the time. However, we did not want to limit the scope of research by solely analyzing Ukraine's media and decided to evaluate the aforementioned presidential candidate's representation in the Russian media as a comparison. It can subsequently serve as a basis for evaluating international relations between the two former "brother countries".

The research question of the study can be formulated in the following way: "How did Ukrainian and Russian journalists represent Zelensky during pre-electoral campaign?". In other words, we wanted to see whether the media framed Volodymyr Zelensky as a competitive novel politician, or as a businessman and comedian who decided to engage in politics.

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY AND UKRAINIAN POLITICS

According to Freedom House, Ukraine is a partly free state (*Ukraine Country Report*, 2020). By contrast, Russia is not a free state (*Russia Country Report*, 2020). A 2020 report indicates that modern Ukraine is actively reforming, even though all-encompassing democratization is impossible due to the inability to control the Crimea and self-proclaimed Republics in the East of the country. Ukraine's constitutionally defined borders are in a suspended state due to the Crimean Referendum of 2014, and the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine, called in the official Ukrainian discourse the "hybrid war" (Kofman & Rojansky, 2015: 2). According to Article 73 of the Ukrainian Constitution, only all-Ukrainian Referendum can decide "changes in Ukrainian territory" (*Constitution of Ukraine*, 2020). Hence the Crimean-led referendum, assisted by Russia, as well as 2014 Donetsk and Luhansk unilateral referenda on independence were led in violation of Ukrainian law. The Freedom House report claims that state disintegration led to a limited circulation of "culture products" in the Russian language within the country and to a restricted accessibility of Russian media outlets (*Ukraine Country Report*, 2020). In the Russian Federation, the traditional media outlets, such as television, radio, and the print press, are largely state controlled, with opposition journalists being intimidated, harassed, or imprisoned (*Russia Country Report*, 2020).

A core aspect of Ukraine's media environment since independence and the adoption of legislation legalizing private media ownership in the 1990s is the privatization of major media outlets (Ryabinska, 2011: 5). Thus, large media outlets are controlled by Ukrainian oligarchs (Szostek, 2014). The ongoing interrelationship between the media and citizens' political attitudes fits the ideas of traditional mass persuasion concepts. According to the Ukrainian civic organization "Detector.media", Ukrainian television remains the most popular source of information acquisition, attracting attention of 74% of the respondents (Detector.media, 2019). Agenda setting and framing seem to be powerful tools for stimulating preferred electoral results primarily due to the heterogeneity of media space and developed political opposition. The difference between the two notions is essentially that agenda setting signals the importance of certain events over the other (Coleman, McCombs, Shaw & Weaver, 2009: 147), whereas framing approach aims at defining the "frames", particular representations of the events (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981: 453). Another tool, which is worth mentioning for a better understanding of Ukrainian media space, is priming, which is a reflection about previously absorbed information through "intuitive shortcuts" (Krosnick & Kinder, 1990: 499). Priming can refer to already existing viewpoints of an issue circulating in society. Thus, the TV show "Servant of the People" not simply paved the way for Zelensky`s presidential campaign, but primed his success (Korosteleva and Samokhvalov, 2019: 2). Consequently, competition within a wide range of simultaneous hegemonic contestations (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001) stimulates candidates to conduct hidden agitation through the public mass media. The final goal of politicians is to collect as many votes as possible by making a voter believe that it was their deliberation, not influenced by manipulation techniques (Seceleanu, 2009: 269-270).

So, what is Zelensky's place in the media struggle during the pre-electoral campaign of 2019? The sixth Ukrainian president does not represent a Ukrainian politician in the traditional sense. He is a complete newcomer to politics. Zelensky is an example of an individual, whose success is wholly meritorious. He is a descendant of a family of intellectuals (Kots, 2019), who became famous for participating in KVN in the performance group "Kvartal 95" (Ray, 2019). KVN is a "Club of the Merry and Resourceful" that is popular comedy TV show in post-Soviet space (Evans, 2019). Nowadays, Zelensky's entertainment group Kvartal 95 Studio is a large entertainment studio, which claims on its website to be the largest in Central and Eastern Europe. Surprisingly, such a distancing from politics became Zelensky's major advantage and allowed him to become a populist leader. By definition, populism is a "mode of identification available to any political actor operating in a discursive field, in which the notion of sovereignty of the people and the conflict between the powerful and powerless are core elements of political imaginary" (Panizza, 2005: 4).

The post-independence political apparatus had by 2018 lost the trust of the people generating a crisis of representation. Ukrainian politics needed new faces, who could suit modern demands. In contrast to Zelensky, his major political rival in 2019 was the incumbent President Petro Poroshenko, who had gained access to power in the aftermath of the Euromaidan of 2013/2014. Poroshenko can be compared to Viktor Yushchenko, as they both acquired supporters during protests. In practice, Poroshenko who represented the 'old guard' of Ukrainian politics, inherited the political strategies of Yushchenko. Prior to the 2004 presidential election, Petro Poroshenko became one of the leaders of Viktor Yushchenko's team. Poroshenko was one of the faces of the protests during the Orange Revolution, right after Yushchenko and Yulia Tymoshenko (Chervonenko, 2014).

Despite playing a populist card in 2014, Poroshenko's public support began to steadily declining, and by the time of 2019 electoral campaign, his position was unstable. Poroshenko's major policy failures were his inability to end Donbass conflict and to get rid of corruption (Iwański, 2018: 1-2). The survey of the Ukrainian sociological group "Rating" in May–June 2019 revealed that "more than 80%" of the respondents were dissatisfied with Poroshenko's presidency (Rating, 2019).

It seems that Volodymyr Zelensky was that needed new face in politics. Zelensky was a famous Ukrainian comedian and actor who restored a direct link between politics and the electorate through the success of the television series "Servant of the People", where he played a history teacher. Zelensky's character became a president and by the end of the third season solved all the state's problems. By naming a political party after the TV series, Zelensky primed own success, referring to the achievements of his character in the show. The most supported party in the election was Zelensky's "Servant of the People" (Ibid.) with Zelensky gaining 72% of the vote. In the previously cited "Rating" survey, "the vast majority" of Ukrainians (88%) said that they expected a radical change for the better (Rating, 2019). By contrast to Poroshenko's approval rates, Zelensky's first months in the presidency were welcomed by half of the respondents, while only 11% opposed his activities (Ibid.). Consequently, Zelensky's previous inactivity in Ukrainian politics, combined with a fruitful media priming resulted in the high electorate support from the outset.

METHODOLOGY

Our sample includes internet news reports by Ukrainian and Russian journalists in the period from January 1, 2019, the outset of the pre-electoral race, till March 30, 2019, the official Day of Silence[1]. We limited our research to the first round of voting, as within this time span media activity concerning the election had unfolded. Texts were retrieved from the "electronic archive and data base of mass media" "Public.ru" (Public.ru, 2020), which includes publications of Ukrainian and Russian journalists in Russian, as well as those made by Ukrainian journalists in Ukrainian. Since texts can be retrieved from "Public.ru" only in limited quantities (no more than 1000 at a time), we collected data in several stages.

In order to understand Zelensky's portrayal in the media, we commenced at discovering a general field of discursivity in Ukraine, or which contrasting narratives operated within the country (Laclau & Mouffe, 2001: 111). After lemmatizing texts using mystem.exe application, we removed unnecessary braces (brackets, parentheses) and numbers, and filtered out stop words. Due to the insufficiency of Snowball stopwords list (Snowball, 2021) for the Ukrainian language, many words were filtered and lemmatized manually. After conducting these procedures, we coded the resulting collection of words and visualized the 14 most used words (unigrams)[2] in the samples of Russia's media, Ukraine's Russian-language media, and Ukraine's native-language media. The next step was the construction of n-grams (see the seminal paper which gave rise to information theory by Shannon, 1948). The network depicted journalists' collocations, used for characterizing Volodymyr Zelensky. Visualizations were adjusted to the sample size in order to preserve images from word's overlap.

All these operations and those that follow were applied to nine text files uploaded from public.ru – six from Russian media in Russian (5352 publications), two files from Ukrainian media in the Russian-language (1359 publications), and one file from Ukrainian media in the native-language (171 publications) using the statistical computing program R (R Core Team, 2020). The next step involved applying LDA-based topic modeling to categorize the files. The main idea of this approach is that each document is represented a "random mixture over latent

1 Ukrainian law does not permit political campaigning to occur on the day before the electorate cast their votes. This is known as the Day of Silence.

2 N-gram modeling involves patterns of single words (unigrams) each with its own meaning that appear next-to – each-other in a sentence. Thus, in the opening seven words of this example "N-gram modeling involves patterns of single words" there are seven unigrams; six bigrams [N-gram modeling, modeling involves, involves patterns etc.; five trigrams [N-gram modeling involves, modeling involves patterns etc.] and so on up to decigrams of 10 words.

topics" (Yau, Porter, Newman & Suominen, 2014: 6). Every topic is characterized by the distribution over words. After identifying the words' distribution by topic, it is often possible to assign a name or description to the sequences manually (Yau et al., 2014: 10). Although this method has its limitations, such as the complexity of reproducing results and overall subjectivity, we decided to compare an obtained output with the results in R (R Core Team, 2020).

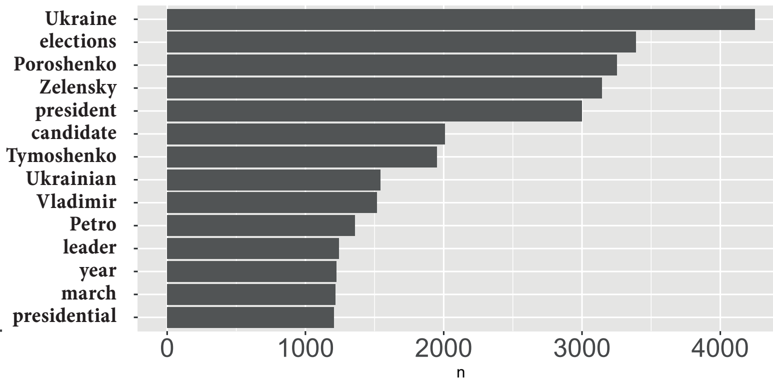
Using a topic modeling tool, 15 topics were identified in the discourses in Russian and Ukrainian media. Later, the topics were supplemented with descriptions for revealing trends in the media sources. The description threshold was 10 words per topic, because this quantity is sufficient for knowing the meaning but not too great for making judgements. During the interpretation process, a problem in topic definition arose, as some of the topics contained specific dates or common words. So, we used only content type topics, relevant for the study.

One important issue concerned the whole research procedure. In order to make our findings more accessible to the scholarly community, we have manually translated the output into English. The rigorousness of the procedure guaranteed, to a degree, that the initial meaning would not be distorted. We did our best to adjust proper names to the translation rules of both the Russian and the Ukrainian languages. Therefore, Vladimir is a direct translation of a Russian name, while Volodymyr is its alternative in Ukrainian. The only exception was Petro Poroshenko, a unique political figure in the context of the 2019 electoral race. We suspected that the change in his name might provoke unnecessary confusion.

FINDINGS

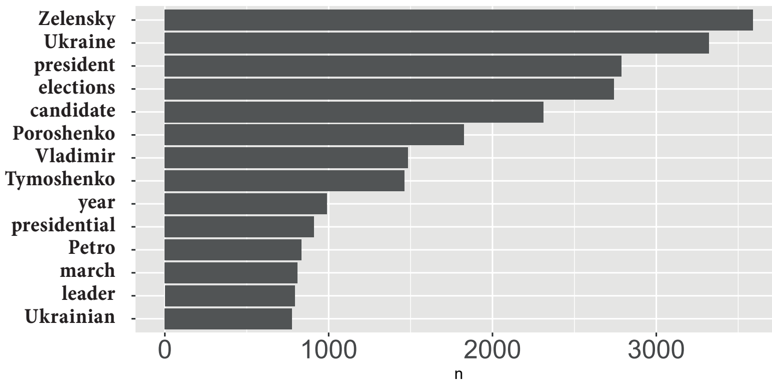
Our first objective was to get an insight on the general information flows, formed by the three beforementioned categories of journalists. Further, we investigated Zelensky's portrayal specifically. Figures 1, 2 and 3 illustrate the most used 14 unigrams in the collated texts.

Figure 1. Unigrams in Russia's media discourse



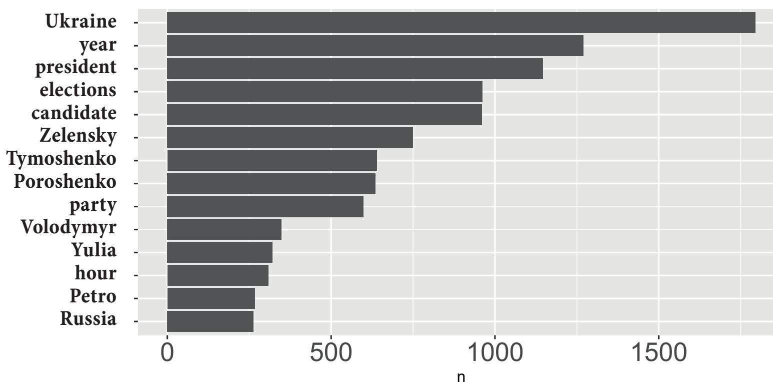
Source: Authors

Figure 2. Unigrams in Ukraine's Russian-language media discourse



Source: Authors

Figure 3. Unigrams in Ukraine's native-language media discourse



Source: Authors

It is noticeable that there are more similarities between Russia's media (Figure 1) and Ukraine's native-language media (Figure 3). The most cited word was "Ukraine", which indicates that both media were inclined to depict an electoral process in a general way. The focus of Russia's media and journalists was the contest between Zelensky and Poroshenko. For Ukraine's native-language reporters, the political struggle between Poroshenko and Tymoshenko was more of a routine (as shown by the same frequency of appearances, see Figure 3), whereas Zelensky was slightly more interesting for the same audience. Even though the size of samples is not equal, Ukraine's Russian-language media (Figure 2) had the largest frequency of mentioning Volodymyr Zelensky, so the surname of the sixth president of Ukraine occupied the first rank. Zelensky was referred to more than 3500 times. For identifying how Zelensky was portrayed in the text samples, we also looked for collocations, where Zelensky was one half of a bigram.

The constructed networks demonstrate that the samples of Russia's media and Ukraine's Russian-language media shared the same vision of the candidate, describing him mostly as a "comedian" and "showman". By contrast, Ukraine's native language sample lacks any characteristics, having a more detailed and coherent network around the node "Petro Poroshenko". Nevertheless, the latter is only treated as an "incumbent president", which is a generalized and unspecific characteristic. The interesting aspect is the journalists' interest in the electoral support of Poroshenko and Zelensky. For Russia's media, the repeated check of Poroshenko's popular support was more significant, whereas in the Ukraine's Russian-language media the same collocations were constructed around the surname of Zelensky. Therefore, Russia's journalists were curious to which extent neighboring Ukraine favored sustaining of *status quo*, while Ukraine's Russian-language journalists wanted to estimate the prospects of Zelensky.

Investigating topics in three discourses through topic modeling, we obtained similar results. In the discourse of Russia's media (Table 1), journalists were interested in depicting the confrontation between Poroshenko and Zelensky. The latter was framed in accordance with his background. Zelensky was presented as a comedian and media person. It is worth considering the focus on changing the status quo in Ukraine. Journalists questioned further relations with Russia after the presidential change over, which is consistent with results mentioned above.

Table 1. Topics in Discourse of Russia's media

No.	Description	Topic – Keywords
1	Confrontation between Zelensky and Poroshenko (ratings)	Zelensky Poroshenko Ukraine rating president campaign candidate last election policy
2	Election fraud and observations	Russia tour Tymoshenko falsification observer institute maidan Petro source debate
3	Background of Zelensky (comic, showman)	Zelensky showman comic president new party run political TV channel team
4	Competition between candidates (opinion polls)	Ukraine Tymoshenko candidate survey showman Poroshenko result race opinion chance
5	Nomination Procedure	document registrations propose campaign intention business term negotiation run inform
6	Who will be the leader in the upcoming elections?	president Vladimir election Ukraine leader pre-election new acting state victory
7	Tymoshenko and Poroshenko as candidates	Yulia party election March leader Ukraine Poroshenko race batkivshchyna candidate
8	Russian-Ukrainian relations (Crimea, selective ban on the entry of artists in the country)	Boyko citizen Putin Okhlobystin Moscow Porechenkov Kyiv participation Crimea lead

Source: Authors

Regarding the reports of Ukrainian journalists targeting Russian-speaking population (Table 2), Zelensky was the center of attention. Some topics represent the stories about the presidential candidate. They stress his participation in the famous show "Kvartal 95" and the TV series "Servant of the People". Moreover, the vision of the new leader in Ukrainian politics is strongly emphasized. The role of the electoral process itself is also reflected. Therefore, the correlation between the discourses of Russia's and Ukraine's Russian-language media is remarkable.

In a relatively small part of the messages in Ukraine's native-language (Table 3), the description of topics was difficult due to language features. Journalists tried to devise the most provocative headlines and texts using epithets, metaphors, and other rhetorical devices, for which reason only four topics proved to be relevant. The difference of the sample from the other two (Tables 1 and 2) is only the larger representation of Tymoshenko and Poroshenko. There were no separate topics found on Zelensky. We witnessed just reminders of the upcoming elections, in which Zelensky was considered as one of the candidates. Ukrainian national values, valorization of independence, and relations with other countries were also highlighted. The components turned out to be useful for framing the news about electoral process. Significant attention was devoted to contrasting Ukrainian and Russian electoral systems.

Table 2. Topics in the Discourse of Ukraine's Russian-language media

No.	Description	Topic – Keywords
1	Zelensky vs Poroshenko	Petro Vladimir candidate leader first place team position support region
2	March 31 election reminder	president Ukraine candidate election state selective Ukrainian remind March people
3	International coverage of events in Ukraine (Crimea)	choose security organization manager department Macron south European annexation hiring
4	Observation of the electoral process	March Yulia Poroshenko observer state falsification reform article exit tour
5	Nomination of Zelensky as a candidate (reference to the show "Kvartal 95" and TV series "Servant of the People")	registration run submit advance nominate register servant appeal leader kvartal
6	Conducting opinion polls (Poroshenko and Tymoshenko)	Tymoshenko survey Poroshenko result research ask side sociological dialogue civil
7	Statements of Zelensky, his story	Zelensky Vladimir declare party Ukrainian kvartal state life comic famous
8	Features of the election process	tour vote ballot power get opinion data news support district

Source: Authors

Table 3. Topics in the Discourse of Ukraine's native language media

No.	Description	Topic
1	The choice between Poroshenko and Zelensky	president Zelensky candidate Ukraine choice time Poroshenko
2	Tymoshenko and Zelensky	Tymoshenko Volodymyr Ukraine party president ala Russia
3	The role of Russia	new pro-Russian opposition program state scandal voter
4	Interests and values of Ukraine	people state independence daughter reliance interest ambition

Source: Authors

To sum up, our research became an illustration of the 2019 presidential race. The study revealed existing differences in news coverage, as journalists' reports targeted the two language groups of Ukraine's population – Russian and Ukrainian speaking. Such a contrast demonstrated internal societal division and heterogeneity. For this reason, journalists framed and primed Zelensky's figure in dissimilar ways, pursing contrasted goals. For Ukraine's native language media, Zelensky was just a comedian who decided to enter politics, whereas for Ukraine's Russian-language journalists, Zelensky was a curious political alternative, a new face in the political arena.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, providing the research and implementing the n-grams' generation, the network analysis, and topic modeling (LDA), the various representations of Volodymyr Zelensky in information resources were revealed. The mixed method allowed us to compare the results and make more trustworthy inferences. We found out that Russian-speaking Ukrainian journalists were actively involved in promoting Zelensky`s candidature (unigram analysis) and evaluating his electoral prospects (bigram analysis).

Unexpectedly, the representation of Zelensky in Russia's and Ukraine's Russian-language media shared a lot of similarities. Journalists focused on the past life of a new politician. However, Russia's media were more interested in the on-going state of Ukrainian politics, prospects for disruption of the status quo, as well as in the confrontation between the incumbent president, Poroshenko, and the political newcomer, Volodymyr Zelensky. At the same time, Russia's and Ukraine's native-language samples were compatible in terms of the most used words, as their major focus was the general Ukrainian electoral process. Results of Ukraine's Russian-language sample confirmed our expectations about the target audience of Zelensky's campaign. Sources in Ukraine's native-language had their own peculiarities with a noticeable focus on the nationalist mood in the country. There was no emphasis on depicting Zelensky's figure. Ukraine's native-language journalists mostly aimed at forming the image of Poroshenko. Therefore, the heterogeneity of Ukrainian society allowed journalists to differentially depict Volodymyr Zelensky, depending on their political affiliation. Such contesting representations allowed the Ukrainian people to form a particular image of the candidates in the political race.

While conducting our research, we thought of calculating the log odds ratio with the aim of measuring the differences in frequencies of using the word "Zelensky" in the Russian-language samples of Russia and the Ukraine. However, none of the results had any statistical significance. Moreover, the topic modelling method implies a degree of subjectivity, as the topic's interpretation is the responsibility of the researcher. Another significant limitation concerns peculiarities of Ukraine's native-language sample, and necessitated manual corrections.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

DOI: 10.51480/1899-5101.14.1(28).5

Infinite Interpretations? A Corpus-based Study for the Identification and Interpretation of Competing Frames in Parliament-representations in Hungary

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ABSTRACT: Political communication highly depends on generic figurative frames such as *Politics Is War, Object, Sport, Art and Politics Is Landscape*. Regarding political art, it is suggested that artists use complex cognitive solutions (e.g. parallel issue-specific frames) in creative ways which are connected with one of the major generic frames. The study discusses parliament-representations (made between 2006 and 2015) which are not only attractive elements of the cityscape; thus, not literary representations of the building. Using the method of visual framing, the analyses (1) describe the artworks, (2) interpret the occurring symbols and metaphors determined contextually, and (3) reveal the ideological and power relations. Summing up, political artworks can be comprehended according to conventional mental schemas. However, artists usually create a minimum of two competing specifications of the general frames occurring at the same time, and let the viewer choose the one that fits better with their worldview.

KEYWORDS: competing frames, visual metaphor, metonymy, political art, Hungarian Parliament.

INTRODUCTION

During the period between 2006 and 2015, several artists[1] chose the symbol of the Hungarian Parliament in order to express their thoughts and feelings about public life, the public atmosphere, or the past era in Hungary. Artists interviewed for this article argued that they were not doing politics, nor communicating direct

1 For example, Krisztina Nagy (Tereskova), Kriszta Nagy is chairing in front of the Parliament because she is chairing better than her compatriots in the parliament, 2006; Csaba Nemes, Remake, 2006; János Kósa, Media, 2008; József Szolnoki, Hun volt, hun nem volt, 2008; Dezső Szabó, Piss Parliament, 2009; Marko Rodics, Parliament, 2010; Borsos Lőrinc, Immovable Land, 2010;

policy to people, even if they depicted the Parliament building. According to the Interpretative Dictionary of the Hungarian Language (2016), 'parliament' means national assembly, supreme state power and legislative body. 'Országház' (literally 'Country House', or parliament) is the building itself, where the representative body meets. Consequently, the following questions arise: how can an artist use such a concrete political symbol in a way that differs from its concrete meaning as a building, or part of a cityscape, and how might this visual symbol be used in a way different from a simple political statement?

The purpose of this article is to empirically demonstrate that the interpretations of contemporary artworks depicting the parliament are limited by the use of figurative framing (coined by C. Burgers et al. 2016), but not restricted to a single meaning. Nevertheless, figurative framing is refined in quite complex and creative ways by the artists. We will only discuss the phenomena of distinct competing frames and contradictory specifications of frames due to space limitations. The present article addresses two main questions: 1) to what extent is it possible to identify any of the generic frames conventionally used in political discourses in the sense of artworks showing the parliament and 2) what sorts of emerging ideologies can be detected in relation to parliament-representations and how are they realized within the frames offered. These questions are explored by examining the following artworks: Marko Rodics *Parliament* (literally 'Country House') (2010), Dezső Szabó *Piss Parliament* (2009), Borsos Lőrinc *Immovable Land* (literally 'Immovable Country') (2010), Bianka Dobó *Clean court, tidy house* (2014), Kriszta Nagy Tereskova *Kriszta Nagy is chairing in front of the Parliament because she is chairing better than her compatriots in the parliament* (2006), András Céfalvay *Comspognation: Nation state through the eyes of a dinosaur* (2012-14), and Ágnes Eperjesi *Words of Power* (April 13, 2015). All of these are provided as examples of political art.

Research on art from a visual framing theory perspective or within metaphor studies (especially the multimodal ones), is sporadic in the field of cognitive semiotics, cognitive linguistics and communication studies. While earlier studies have focused on the genre of political cartoons (Gombrich, 1963), surreal art (Forceville, 1988; Carroll, 1994) as well as Rembrandt's self-portraits (Rothenberg, 2008); there has been a more recent turn towards political art pieces such as graffities (Poppi & Kravanja, 2019; Stampoulidis & Bolognesi, 2019), with a particular focus on their sociopolitical determinants. In a similar vein to these more recent graffiti-based studies, this study assumes that the interpretation is a creative and dynamic communicative procedure dissimilar from

András Céfalvay, Compsognation, nation state through the eye of a dinosaur, 2012-14; Bianka Dobó, Clean court, tidy house, 2014; Ágnes Eperjesi, Words of Power, April 13, 2015; Nóra Soós, There is No Time, 2015.

Conceptual Metaphor Theory (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). The corpus investigated here belongs to the genre of political art, which is considered to be a type of critical art as it deals with public affairs, reflects on public life critically, questions the truth of community-related processes and raises its possible alternatives, or possible interpretations.

The overview of the paper is as follows. The next section presents the justification of the selected theme. The third section provides insights into the literature of framing (Brugman, Burger & Steen, 2017; De Vreese, 2005; Entman, 1993; Goffman, 1974) and summarizes the results so far within the experimental methodology of visual framing (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011). The theoretical section ends with a presentation of the notion of competing frames (Lakoff, 1996). The fourth part displays possible analyses of artworks with the aim of showing the operation of competing frames during the process of comprehension. It also intends to pinpoint the influence of the competing frames on an imagined viewer's interpretation. Therefore, it provides multiple interpretations of the chosen artworks. In the conclusion the results are discussed.

CULTURAL POLICIES IN HUNGARY

The period between 2006 and 2015 saw radical changes in the Hungarian cultural policy. Luca Kristóf (2017) argues that the government tends to rewrite the cultural canon through the Fundamental Law. By analyzing the repositioning of the Hungarian Academy of Arts (MMA) and the director turnovers of the National Theatre and the New Theatre, she concludes that even if patriotism, nationalism and Christian allusions are repeated features of the governmental cultural policy, and those are usually interconnected topics, it does not mean a coherent ideology. Instead it is more about the redistribution of positions and resources for new cultural and loyal elite. Similarly to József Mélyi (*Artportal*, 2014), Kristóf mentions that this cultural political model means that the government influences the production, the distribution and also the reception of cultural products, services and experiences (2017, p. 130).

The international organization dedicated to artistic freedom, Freemuse[2], reported (2019) that Hungary was among the list of countries where violence was committed against artistic projects or institutions in 2018. The author of Freemuse's report classifies the methods of soft repression adopted by the Hungarian government into several groups: 1) personnel changes in cultural

2 Freemuse is an independent organization that monitors the state of artistic freedom worldwide, and it summarizes the tendencies of harassments against artists and their projects yearly. It also gives statistical information regarding the places, the various genres, and about the types and numbers of violations.

institutions; 2) "buying out the media"; and 3) "using regulatory changes and politicizing committees of public funds to pressure potentially critical voices into self-censorship" (Freemuse, 2019, p. 84). The previous Freemuse report (2018) already issued a warning about the ongoing cultural changes:

> 2017 was the year of a new rise of popular nationalist politics in the US and Eastern Europe, built on Brexit, the Trump election and nationalist rhetoric in Poland and Hungary in the previous year. [...] The rhetoric of hate and attacking messages from populist-nationalist leaders over a period of time creates legitimacy in dismissing "others" who are different, resulting in wide intolerance. This has created an enabling environment for large-scale and systematic violations of freedom of artistic expression as we have witnessed in 2017 (Freemuse, 2018, p. 28).

Cultural changes in this period are particularly significant for understanding the discourses for which the examined artworks are used. There is the privileged position of MMA such as getting extra financial support, real estates, and membership in the committee evaluating artistic tenders. The cultural community could also be familiar with the protest movements, such as *Ludwig Stairs* (*nemma*, 2013) made in support of Barnabás Bencsik, the ex-director of the museum, as well as the demonstrations of *Free Artists' Group* (*Magyar Narancs,* 2012) aimed at preserving the freedom of Kunsthalle in Budapest. The Freemuse report also notes that censorship, as a reinvented form of attack, has been present in the field of visual art, literature and theatre since 2017 (e.g., against the visual artists Borsos Lőrinc, János Brückner).

Actors of cultural communities are worried. They did not find the ideology of the program *Quality in Culture* of 2009 (Cultural Strategical Basics of Hungary) was sufficiently reassuring, which was not alleviated by the Prime Minister's statement about the new cultural epoch (in July 2017): "A new intellectual and cultural approach is needed. We are facing major challenges from September" *(Népszava*, 2018). Artistic reactions differ on a wide range (*Artportal*, 2015) and the actors of the cultural sphere are facing decisions such as do I accept a certain award or fee? Do I take responsibility for organizing a particular exhibition? Do I apply for a certain tender? Do I take system criticism, or is the department's position more important?

These questions as well as some of the aforementioned cultural political changes were reoccurring topics within the interviews that were conducted with artists for this article, aimed at better understanding the contextual factors (cultural, historical and so forth) and the artists' motivations concerning the artworks in which the Hungarian Parliament appears visually. The earliest critical use of this symbol which I was able to detect occurred in the late 1980s.

Hungarians participated in the section of *Documenta 8 in Kassel of 1987.* At that time, in a collaborative multimedia environment and action, János Sugár, Áron Gábor and Gábor Roskó used their bodies as a Budapest panorama: bridge, bridgehead and ship were used to refer the problem of physical and intellectual relationship and distance, while the paper model of the Parliament was cut in half during the last performance (Balázs, 2018, p. 43). In terms of its critical stance, it was no different when in 1988, Tamás Király presented his geometric-constructivist clothes including his system critical outfit in which the model wore the dome of the Parliament with a red star as a hat (Figure 1). This was also on display at the avant-garde show called *Dressater in West Berlin*, which led to an international career for Király. All the artists mentioned here, intended to express their emotions and thinking in relation to Eastern Europe and the international art scene, more specifically the West.

Figure 1. Tamás Király (1988). Geometric-constructivist clothes and the Parliament-set

Source: The photo was taken at the exhibition Black Hole in the Museum of Kiscell, Óbuda

FRAMING THEORIES

Framing as a concept is used in several scientific fields including sociology, political science and communication theory (Brugman & Burgers, 2018). Within framing, certain aspects of the experienced reality are chosen and highlighted during communication in order to define a problem, shed light on its causation, allow for a moral evaluation, and provide a solution (Entman, 1993, p. 53). A frame should be differentiated from another frame, and should be recognizable

by anybody; thus, it is not based on the researcher's fantasy (Capella & Jamieson, 1997, p. 47, 89).

Frames can be investigated in terms of *frame-building* (Burgers, Konijn & Steen, 2016) which helps to conceptualize the mental schema from the viewpoint of its creator. Nevertheless, society itself, social influence on the person and on the society also play an important role in the process of frame-building (De Vreese, 2005). As such, analyses of artworks provide insights into the frame-building process.

Framing can take place through both linguistic and visual metaphors (Krippendorf 2017, p. 97). Metaphoric framing is highly dependent on the cultural context and the political topic (Brugman, Burgers & Steen, 2017, p. 11), which is also accompanied by moral evaluation. Moreover, themes can be placed into various conceptual frames which can support or conflict with each other. When a viewer encounters alternative frames, he then chooses that particular frame which best fits his worldview, and his decision is independent of his interests in political subjects. In addition, the viewer shapes his worldview along competing, sometimes incompatible frames that refer to the same topic (Sniderman & Theriault, 2004). The acceptance of a certain frame is mostly unconscious; and probably in line with the viewer's previous moral and political attitude (most probably the alternative frame does not emerge at all for the viewer, because he is satisfied with the interpretation which is the easiest to reach for him). The metaphor might be grasped when the source domain is salient enough and is able to change the perspective of the viewer regarding the topic itself.

We must also keep in mind that images are able to hide certain things, or to push facts into the background (Wischmann, 1987, p. 70) and visual framing is one of the tools to highlight certain aspects. For example, Rodics's *Parliament* recalls the concept of a *Plush Toy*, and pinpoints childhood, emotion-based communication, flippancy (the 'it is just a game, and not more' attitude) and momentary entertainment, but also a non-toy quality (through its grey color), and critical, objective distancing. It wants to compete with huge plush bears through its extra size (1.5 m long), but it fails because of its form recalling the building of the parliament, and because of its impersonal character. By choosing this type of toy, the frame can be described as a role play as the structure has no strategical element; there is no chance of winning (like in chess or boxing, which are common sources in political metaphors). Instead, the plush provides a game based on roles and emotions.

There are at least three methods of determining visual frames. The first type works with thematic concepts (Patridge, 2005) and the second one identifies frames according to the ideological background (Griffin & Lee, 2005). The third type was developed by Rodriguez and Dimitrova (2011), who use their process on four levels. On the first level they understand the visual entity (generally a photo) as a *denotative system*. They describe the image and group entities

close to each other, comparisons are made, while the visual elements – placed in the same environment but a bit farther – are considered as the visual context of the main entities. Rodriguez and Dimitrova investigate *social distance*, visual modality (color, depth, tonal features) and the actors' behavior on the second level. (This level was not considered during the present analysis.) Visual analysts comprehend the visual entities as *connotative systems* on the third level. A culture dependent interpretation of symbols and metaphors often appear on this level. Visual artworks are considered as *ideological representations* on the fourth level which considers questions such as: whose interests does the artwork serve; what kinds of ideas are dominant in the piece of art; or whose voice can be heard? The experts aim to reveal power relations similar to critical content analysis (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011, p. 57). In this paper, after the description of the image, the research focuses on the third and the fourth level.

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

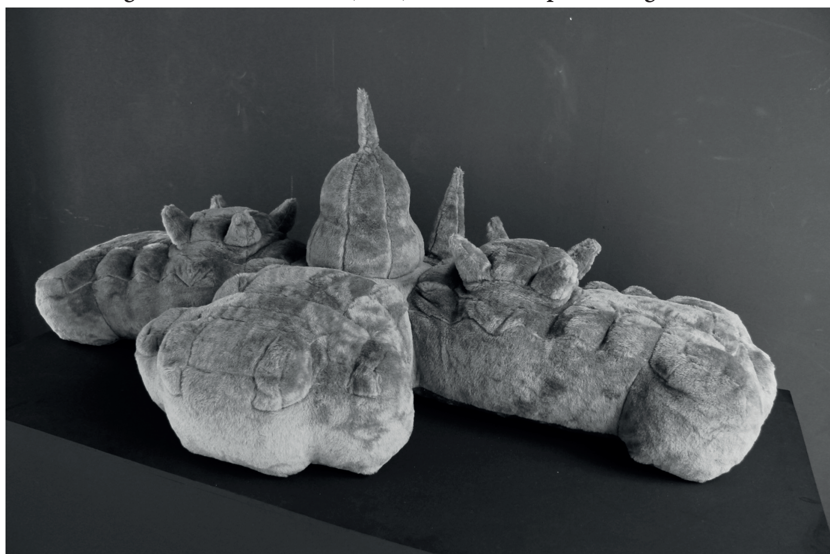
Britta C. Brugman et al. (2017) identified five generic metaphoric frames in political communication on the basis of a systemic corpus research (involving 319 studies): *politics is war* (part of frames strategy and conflict), *politics is an object* (part of frame value), *politics is sport and game* (part of frame game), *politics is art and images* (part of frame image), and *politics is a landscape* (part of frame view). We will see that artists used similar frames, including war, object, game, and landscape during their work processes. following the tradition of critical art, they have created artworks that require interactive discourses and dynamic processes; thus, the viewers' decisions about the most appropriate frames for them are based on the competing mental schemas created by the artist.

EXAMPLE 1: MARKO RODICS, PARLIAMENT 2010 (PLUSH, LENGTH 1.5 M)

As we shall see further on, most of the examined artworks focus on political structure. The first example has already been discussed in terms of the frames' ability to highlight certain properties of the target. Consider Figure 2 that shows the aforementioned huge plush toy, *Parliament* (literally Országház, or 'Country House' in Hungarian) which was originally created by the artist group K27 (although the work was linked exclusively to one of its members, Marko Rodics after the group disbanded). *Parliament* is one piece from a collection of twenty-seven objects, which were exhibited in a show MűLabor in a mechatronic high school. The objects are examples of typical genres of artworks such as readymade, collage, painting, sound installation, performance art, object, photo, and so on. They aimed to present a range of genres to students, who do not

often encounter contemporary art. The plush parliament belonged to the group of objects that represented the category of political art.

Figure 2. Marko Rodics (2010). Parliament, plush, length 1.5 m



The basic idea can be linked to Marko Rodics, who was a member of a radical group called Foundation for National Art. According to the artist, nationalist voices strengthened in the early 2010s. For example, the appearance of the party Jobbik (Party for a Better Hungary with radical nationalist views) and the Nemzeti Gárda (National Guard) were novel phenomena in the political scene, while the MMA (Hungarian Academy of Arts) also began to grow, getting more and more financial support from the Hungarian state. At that time, these happenings touched people emotionally. "Honesty and respect disappeared from the building of the parliament" Rodics says, adding: "I do not care who is attracted to the left, or to the right side, I am not committed to either side. I do system critical art" (personal communication, August 31, 2018).

Parliament is a 1.5 meters long, grey plush building, a neo-pop object that was planned by Péter Gurszki, with the help of a 3D program, and was sewn by hand by Réka Mózes. The building is transformed metaphorically into a huge plush toy. Hence, its meaning depends on the viewer's interpretation and on who they consider to be the toy's owner. According to Rodics, a viewer may think that *Parliament Is A Playhouse* in which the politicians play childish games instead of representing the population's interests. An alternative reading is that *Parliament Is A Plush Toy* and the politicians are conceptualized as children. The plush toy as a type of game references emotional, touch-based communication.

If *Parliament Is A Plush Toy* and is owned by the citizens, then *Citizens Are Children*. This interpretation reflects on the manifestation of the metaphor *Nation Is A Family*, in which the government is seen as parents and the citizens are conceptualized as children. According to Lakoff (1996), conservatives prefer the *Strict Father* model, while liberals apply the *Nurturing Parent* model during their decisions and activities. A viewer who applies the metaphor *Parliament Is A Plush Toy* most probably agrees with the *Strict Father* model, and imagines the politicians as parents, and himself as a child. The *Plush Toy* is comparable to the attractive image of a large plush bear that provides security.

The art group K27's object discusses the political system in a general frame of *game* that is mentioned among the five most often used metaphorical interpretations of politics by Brugman, Burgers and Steen (2017). In most cases, politics is understood as a strategic game in which there are decisions and logical steps (such as in chess); and where the players may win or lose the game. Rodics and his companions rewrite conventionally used game modes by choosing an untypical toy that is not a usual element of the political discourse. The artists manage to activate competing frames through the challenging choice of a game, and create a novel metaphor of *Game (Politics Is Playing With A Plush Toy)* by using an unusual type of toy in political discourse (ordinary toys would be chess or other logical games).

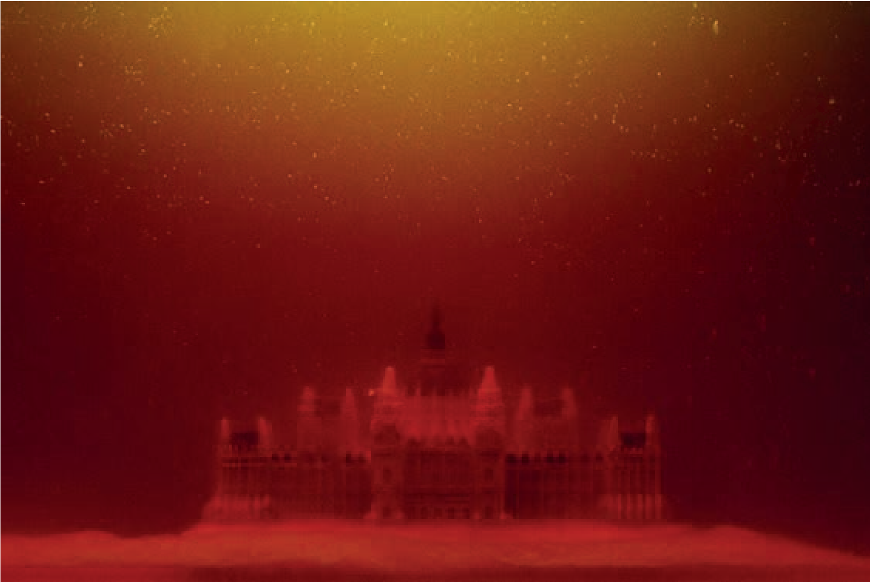
EXAMPLE 2: DEZSŐ SZABÓ, PISS PARLIAMENT 2009 (OBJECT, INSTALLATION, PHOTO)

Dezső Szabó created *Piss Parliament* (Figure 3) for the exhibition titled *Kis magyar pornográfia* ('Small Hungarian Pornography', a novel written by Péter Esterházy in 1991) in MODEM (Centre for Modern and Contemporary Art) in Debrecen in 2009. In that year, the twentieth anniversary of system change was celebrated. Szabó paraphrased Andres Serrano's artwork *Piss Christ* (1987), by drawing on the previous work both visually and verbally. *Piss Parliament* was also on display in the exhibition *What is Hungarian* in Kunsthalle of Budapest in 2012, where György Fekete (president of the MMA at that time) judged the art piece without mentioning the artist's name. He said that the work shows the "parliament [that] is soaked in pee." According to Dezső Szabó, if his name had been mentioned, then he could have had the opportunity to express his interpretation of the work to the audience, and he could have told them that "the work is not about desecration of Kunsthalle; instead, it's more about the entire Hungarian democracy that the political elite managed to pile up" (personal communication, April 13, 2018). He adds:

> I usually do not make direct political works. My private opinion is another matter. Political events happening after the system has changed summarize the missed opportunities caused by the Hungarian political elite with all its actors. I made this work to express my thoughts about the last twenty years. (ibid.).

Szabó bought a ten-liter aquarium in a pet shop, before looking for an appropriate parliament-shaped souvenir. While he purchased several, they were not the right ones, in terms of size or color. Finally, he chose one of them but removed the paint from it and carved it a little bit in order to obtain better proportions. The right amount of urine was collected over the course of a couple of days and became darker and darker as time passed and the protein precipitated. The artist took some photos of the object with a 35mm SLR.

Figure 3. Dezső Szabó (2009). Piss Parliament, object, installation, photo



Szabó's work might be interpreted within the general metaphorical frame of *Politics Is An Object. Parliament* might be understood as a *Sacred And Valuable Object*, which may explain György Fekete's indignation. He would probably have had a similar response to Andres Serrano's work: Christ on the cross, and the cross soaked in piss. The conception of the Parliament as a sacred and valuable object could lead to at least two possible interpretations: (1) Parliament should not be desecrated, because it has value, or (2) Parliament is not valuable now because it has been tainted, and hence should be cleansed. Andres Serrano accepts the second interpretation, and he lists his work among the Christian

artworks, drawing attention to the fact that we cannot walk away indifferently when it comes to the cross of Christ. Shocking and shaking people are among his goals and the second interpretation may shock people into action.

A competing frame that goes against the concept of a valuable object is the interpretation of the *Parliament As A Worthless Object* (trumpery). In this case a Hungarian saying, 'floating in the warm pee' acts as an anchor which might be connected to the metaphor in the context of the artwork. The saying refers to an accepted situation which is not good or bad for the person who is in it; indeed, the person does not really do anything to improve the position. It is a kind of existence without any goals and motivations, just letting time pass. Here, the symbol of the parliament has no real value, so its placement in the urine does not violate any taboo. It aims to describe the situation represented by the parliament; namely, that the Hungarian democracy somehow works without goals and motivations. Szabó's conception might be understood within this metaphoric frame, but the interpretation is not forced on the viewer, who can freely choose among the frames.

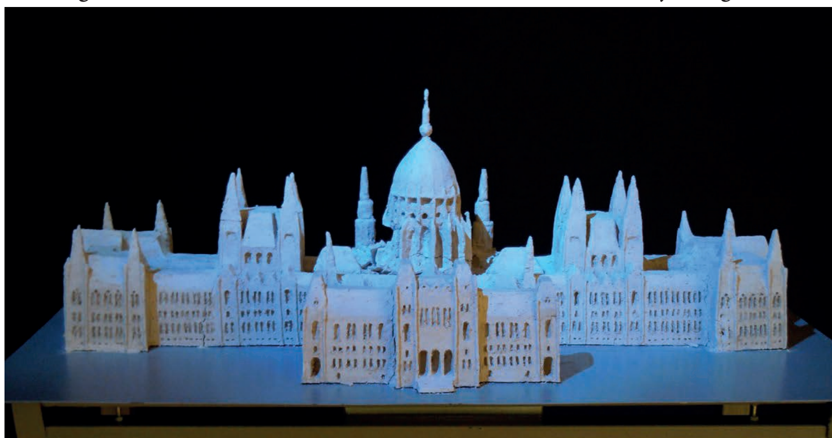
EXAMPLE 3: BORSOS LŐRINC, UNMOVABLE LAND 2010 (CHAMOTTE, JARRING TABLE)

The artist couple, Borsos Lőrinc made an installation in the form of a chamotte mock-up of parliament (Figure 4). Their mock-up is placed onto a vibrating table (originally used to solidify the concrete). The engine causing the vibration only starts when viewers' approach the piece. The fragile mock-up is expected to collapse, but if the viewer maintains sufficient distance, the table will not move at all.

Unmovable land can be compared to Dezső Szabó's work *Piss Parliament* from various aspects. Both of them deal with biblical citations and may work in the general metaphoric frame of *Politics Is An Object*. In the case of Szabó's art piece, the parliament is an analogue of Christ's cross and may be interpreted as an object that asks moral questions. The viewer's relationship to the *Piss Parliament* remains passive. He cannot influence the processes, but he may choose among the frames. Borsos Lőrinc's work cites a part of New Testament (to the Hebrews, 12:26-27):

> Yet once more will I make to tremble not the earth only, but also the heaven. And this 'word', Yet once more, signified the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that have been made, that those things which are not shaken may remain.

Figure 4. Borsos Lőrinc (2010). Unmovable land, chamotte, jarring table



Regarding *Unmovable land*, the viewer is active. He can participate in the piece, but he can also refuse the act of participation, and so it is also about taking responsibility. The dependent relationship between the vibrating table and the viewer reflects, "a stable symbol that begins to erode, for which we are all responsible, and everybody has role in the process" (personal communication, April 28, 2017). According to the first frame, *Parliament As A Valuable Object*, which should not be demolished (e.g., there were reactions from the viewers' side who considered parliament a valuable object and as a result were sad about the destruction of the mock-up). If we accept the title of the artwork, *Unmovable land* as a positive statement then the piece functions in the mentioned frame.

Within the second frame, *Parliament Is A Worthless Object* and it should be demolished. If the viewer accepts this metaphor, then he is glad, because of the radical changes and moves around the mock-up happily. He intends to end and abolish things from the earth which have no real value for him. If we accept the title, *Unmovable land* as a negative statement, then unmovable land is a country that is not able to transform, it is closed off from the modern world, which is featured by mobility.

A third frame might occur when the *Parliament Should Be A Value*, so deep structural transformation is necessary. It is also possible to understand *Unmovable land* ironically, where the meaning of the statement becomes its opposite, so that we view the country as movable. This frame takes place between the two radical standpoints. The viewer feels that the symbol should not be demolished, but there is a need to change or at least modify the values. János Borsos' statement can be interpreted using the last two frames: "We wanted to highlight how people themselves feel here. We wanted to present an alternative country image with our things" (ibid.). The viewer may choose among the potential frames here as well.

EXAMPLE 4: BIANKA DOBÓ, CLEAN COURT, TIDY HOUSE 2014 (ACRYLIC, MAP, PLEXIGLASS, LED)

Bianka Dobó made a three-part series with the title *Workers*. Figure 5 displays one of its pieces called *Tiszta udvar, rendes ház* ('Clean court, tidy house') that describes the building of the Hungarian Parliament. Its second piece shows the institute of the National Gallery which is located in Buda Castle, its title is *'Türelem rózsát terem'* ('Patience is a virtue'). The third part depicts the Heroes' Square, and its title is *'Ki korán kel, aranyat lel'* ('The early bird gets the worm'). All works show physical workers. Bianka Dobó lives and works in districts of Budapest that at the time had been under construction. As such she saw the parliament and Heroes' Square during her daily commute, and transformations of the various urban areas became not only part of her life but also significant motifs in her artworks.

> There are buildings which are overhyped ('gets too much attention'), all tourists want to go there, because they are advertised in their guide books. The Parliament carries extra meaning beyond the touristic appeal of the physical building, it is linked to power. It has dense meaning among people, because it is a symbol (personal communication, April 4, 2018).

Figure 5. Bianka Dobó (2014). Clean court, tidy house, acrylic, map, plexiglass, led

We may interpret Dobó's art pieces as a series of cityscapes which can belong to the general metaphoric frame *Politics Is Landscape/Cityscape*. The urban space planning around the parliament can be understood as actual 'tidying up', with the title of the painting, *Clean court, tidy house* being considered a positive statement. This interpretation can be motivated by the fact that the saying is used in countryside (Figure 6), and is often stated on boards placed by the outer walls of Hungarian cube houses so as to let people know that the person who lives there keeps a neat house. This habit usually has positive connotations and

people upholding this habit are seen as being a good example to others. This interpretation of the artwork strongly depends on cultural knowledge, and most probably the motivated literally understanding of the title cannot be understood without this knowledge.

The second possible frame competes with the first one, in that we may comprehend the title ironically, so we assume the opposite of *Clean court, tidy house*. This raises questions along the lines of whether "there is corruption, there are sort of 'mutyi' (dirty affairs) or whether everything is okay in the legislative process" (ibid.). In this case *Urban Space Planning Around The Parliament Is Not A Real Measure*.

Within the third frame the motifs of the urban space planning are understood symbolically. The general frame, *Politics Is Landscape/Cityscape* changes, and another metaphoric frame comes to the fore, namely *Politics Is War*. Urban planning motifs are invisible, but knowledge about the concrete sites and the press coverage concerning spatial planning might be recalled. The flower beds and water pools for example, may be considered as obstacles against demonstrations by the opposition. Here, urban space planning around the parliament is understood as a process of preparing for a possible war, or conflict. The site is transformed for the battle, in which the parliament is the potential target. "It is a kind of defense. The square is surrounded by bastions, but you do not even realize that the parliament cannot be attacked, it is protected skillfully" (ibid.). To be able to recall the frame of *WAR*, it is necessary to follow the news on local politics, and hence, this interpretation is likely to be prominent among people who are against the government. For the artist Bianka Dobó, the parallel existence of competing frames, ironic interpretations, and context modifications are the most important processes within her artwork. The essence of her artworks is the creation of ambivalence in an intellectual way: "I am not that direct, concrete type of person. I also had debates as a result of my stance as some people find me too indirect or euphemistic" (ibid.).

It might be stated that *Workers* is a series that provides competing frames for its audience. In the first two cases the metaphor *Politics Is Landscape/Cityscape* is activated, while in the third case the metaphor *Politics Is War* occurs.

EXAMPLE 5: KRISZTA NAGY TERESKOVA, KRISZTA NAGY IS CHAIRING IN FRONT OF THE PARLIAMENT BECAUSE SHE IS CHAIRING BETTER THAN HER COMPATRIOTS IN THE PARLIAMENT 2006 (PHOTO, TEXTUAL STATEMENT, VIRTUAL SHIT DELIVERY PROGRAM)

Tereskova's artwork (Figure 6) responds to the domestic political events of 2006 and their aftermath. The now ex-Prime Minister, Ferenc Gyurcsány's speech (known as speech of Balatonőszöd), which was given in a private meeting of the Hungarian Socialist Party, was leaked to the press on September 17, 2006. The

public received it with indignation, and protests began on the Kossuth Square in front of the Parliament, where people demanded the resignation of the PM and called for new elections. The riot police managed to disband the crowd on October 23, 2006 (which was a national holiday, the 50th anniversary of 1956). The aggressive and bloody clashes were broadcasted by the media and appeared on social media as well.

Figure 6. Kriszta Nagy Tereskova (2006). Kriszta Nagy is chairing in front of the Parliament because she is chairing better than her compatriots in the parliament, photo, textual statement, virtual shit delivery program

Tereskova initially published her photo in which she is squatting behind the row of the riot policemen at the corner of the parliament, after the speech came to light. She subsequently added a virtual shit delivery program and a verbal manifesto to the photo:

> the Hungarian patriots cannot *chair* (to shit) better than Kriszta Nagy. You can also *chair* (to shit) better than our politicians. They absolutely *shit on us* (do not care about us) independent from their party affiliation, and from their power. In case you cannot believe anything, whether am I lying… if you feel that those people who are there for us, but *shit on us*… if you are disillusioned, but you do not want to participate in grand or small assemblies, because you lost your trust and you do not feel like being a pawn in the career path of leaders driven by the desire for power… then you can *send a pink box of shit through this shit delivery system*. By October 23, it will become a wall in front of the building, we *can cause constipation* and *they will swim in shit* (literally in the Hungarian version 'shit will fall to their necks') (Tereskova).

People who were familiar with the verbal text of the PM's speech – which included the expression 'shit' eight times with its range of symbolic meanings – can understand the artist's brilliant play on that. Ferenc Gyurcsány used the following phrases: 'being in shit' (being in trouble), 'distribute the shit among each other' (having meetings and talks without solutions), 'shit on something' (do not care about something), 'scared shitless' (being afraid of somebody), and 'horseshit' (bullshit). The artist visibly expanded the series of list including both and beside the conventional phrases such as 'to chair' (to shit) and 'swimming in shit' (all the troubles reach him), invented as well as novel phrases as well, such as 'to send virtual shit' (to express your opinion) and 'to cause constipation' (to take revenge).

She uses both the frames of *Politics As An Object* or as a *Conflict*, in which the *Parliament Is A Worthless Object* (as in you can shit on it or do not care about it) but at the same time it is also a toilet (*Parliament Is A Toilet*). This is motivated by the multimodal metaphor according to which *The Expression Of The Opinion Is Shitting Or Virtual Shit Delivery.*

An alternative frame, *Politics Is War* is produced when Tereskova times the 'shit delivery' by setting a target and a deadline (October 23) for her comrades. This act transforms a simple opinion expressing dissatisfaction and disillusion into a war against the political elite chairing the parliament. Here the metaphor *Parliament Is A Fortress* can be identified, as *The Expression of Opinion Is A Revolutionary Act*. Within this metaphoric scenario, Tereskova becomes the military leader, members of the population her potential army, shit and shit delivery the weapons, while the political elite is their enemy.

Like Borsos Lőrinc's and Szabó's works, viewers can also maintain that the *Parliament Is A Valuable Object*, and in this case, Tereskova's action is dismissed by them as a vulgar, inappropriate behavior. This would contradict the two previous frames which relate to the viewer in different ways. In the first case (*Toilet*), the reception is passive while in the second (*War*), it becomes an active and collaborative act.

EXAMPLE 6: ANDRÁS CSÉFALVAY, COMPSOGNATION: NATION STATE THROUGH THE EYES OF A DINOSAUR 2012 – 2014 (VIDEO)

András Cséfalvay, a Bratislava-born artist describes his video on his website (http://www.andrascsefalvay.com/works30) as follows:

> Compsognation or the concept of the nation state beheld with the eye of a dinosaur is a work, a filmic report of a dialogue and a Budapest walk with Compsognathus Longipes. Through our discussion we focus on the Compsognatus' view on nation, and the cancerous metasthatic category system

> of language and how it processes and divides up reality. Is it not possible, that a culture which has inhabited this planet for hundreds of millions of years will provide a substantially different and valuable view on the earlier mentioned sets of relations?

Céfalvay sets up a metaphoric scenario of *Walking* in which *The History Of The Mankind Is A Walking, The Parable/Message (Mediated By The Dinosaur) Is A Guide(Book)*, and *An Angel/Mediator Is A Dinosaur*. He presents two clashing ideological frames, *Nationalism* and *Liberalism* within the metaphoric scenario of the narrated dialogue between the two protagonists. According to the nationalist view, *Nationalism Is A Painful Emotion/Cancer, Nation Is An Artificial Community With One Mother Tongue, Language Is A Supervisor*, while *The Parliament Stands For Too Much Pride* (part of the *Nationalism* frame). In parallel, following the liberal perspective, *Nation Is A Community With Multiple Languages, Language Is The Ship Of The Stories,* and *The Danube Stands For The Fluidity And Fluency* (part of the frame *Liberalism*).

Figure 7. András Cséfalvay (2012 – 2014). Compsognation: Nation state through the eyes of a dinosaur, video

Overall, the symbolic representation of the parliament and River Danube metonymically stand for associations linked to various views. Whether the parliament is considered a negative or a positive symbol highly depends on the viewer's attitude and worldview. While the parliament belongs to the *Nationalism* frame in both cases, its evaluation differs greatly. The entire shot – when the man and the dinosaur are philosophizing about the relation between nation and language on the riverbank – evokes the metaphorical frames in which *Politics Is Landscape* (part of the frame *View* in which the ideology is represented through the image of a place) and *Politics Is Conflict* (between the views, nationalism and liberalism). The artist's main

statement emphasizes that concept of nation does not cover the concept of language (on the basis of the interview conducted with Cséfalvay, March 21, 2018).

EXAMPLE 7: ÁGNES EPERJESI, WORDS OF POWER APRIL 13, 2015 (SERIES OF SPEECH PERFORMANCES)

Ágnes Eperjesi scheduled a series of performances (documentation is available on her website: http://www.eperjesi.hu/solo/hatalmi-szoval-words-of-power-1-2-3?id=240) that took place in spaces that reflect different levels of power. The first was held in the parliament, the second in a theatre (Back Gate), and the third on the Szabadság Square (Square of Liberty) and the places refers to the various levels of power and attention towards each other (artist's comment on her work during an interview, April 18, 2018). Eperjesi adds that this was 0 degrees in the parliament condition given the timing of the speech (1.30 AM) and due to the impossibility of responding in this political genre (speech after the agenda). "Parliament is the place of lawmaking and it is the peak of power" (detail from the interview with Eperjesi).

Figure 8. Ágnes Eperjesi (April 13, 2015). Words of Power, series of speech performances. (Parliament performance: April 13, 2015. Photos: The Orbital Strangers Project. Retrieved March 1, 2021 from http://www.eperjesi.hu/protest/hatalmi-szoval-1-performansz-a-parlamentben-performance-in-parliament?id=180).

The title of the series – *Words of Power* ('Hatalmi szóval' in Hungarian) – refers to power as an institution that has the right to hold speeches (*Power Is Force*) and also reflects on the speech that must reach power (*Power Is A Destination*). The latter is symbolized by a screaming mouth on a yellow lanyard card while the % sign stands for money on which power is based, created by Imre Lepsényi.

The first performance was presented by independent parliamentary representatives and those of the opposition parties as part of the questioning session (at 1.30 AM April 13, 2015). Four powerful reused speeches included the Polish ex-PM, Ewa Kopacz's text on the silence of the majority, the Estonian ex-President, Thomas Hendrik Ilves's text on annexation and justice, the ex-PM of Uruguay,

Jose Mujica's text on the civilizational model, and finally, the ex-PM of Australia, Julia Gillard's text on sexism and misogyny. Texts were rehaped by Péter Kárpáti.

Eperjesi applies the *Conflict* frame, more specifically *The Conflict Of Communication* frame, which is mainly triggered by the subordinate position of the opposition parties and the voters represented by them. On the one hand, a viewer can claim that the speeches are successful in the sense that they were allowed to be given in the Assembly Hall without violent silencing and fines. *The Parliament* in this instance metonymically *Stands For A Significant Place* where powerful communication happens. On the other hand, another viewer probably would not consider the speeches successful or would be indifferent given the circumstances within which they were presented (time and number of a few participants, etc.). Here, a sharp conflict over the power develops as the speeches are completely neglected, and hence *Parliament* metonymically *Stands For An Insignificant Place* where communication cannot take place properly.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

As stated in the introduction, this article provides an overview of the multiple possible interpretations of artworks that show the parliament through the use of competing frames or alternative specifications of certain frames despite the exclusion of direct political references (Table 1). This does not mean that the artists do not have their own private opinion, but that is not the subject of their artwork. As stated by Terkildsen and Schnell (1997), a similar approach is also characteristic of fair and impartial journalism which aims to present multiple points of view at the same time. The influence on the audience through this refined communicative manner is described by Eperjesi as follows (detail from the interview, April 4, 2018):

> Events that occur in the Parliament and texts spoken there, have a symbolic value, the strength of which I wouldn't underestimate. I believe that symbolic sentences and acts work from top to bottom. Therefore, it is important what those who are in power say and do, because their impact is obvious. It leaks down pretty slowly and soaks through all strata of society.

The first research question asked whether it is possible to identify any of the generic frames in artworks showing the parliament. According to the analyses, the most preferred frames are *Politics Is Object* and *Politics Is War (Conflict)*, but the sources *Landscape* and *Game* are also used. Some artists also apply multiple frames simultaneously. Besides the use of conventional metaphoric frames, artists applied creative ways to allow the viewers to reflect on the problems raised.

The solutions ranged from the use of a non-typical type of source (Figure 2), a non-typical frame added to the common one (Christianity) (Figure 3, 4), the use of local-cultural contextual knowledge (saying) (Figure 5), knowledge on the political discourse at the time (Figure 6), use of national symbols embedded in a specific metaphoric scenario (Figure 7), and finally, the collaboration with those in power (politicians) (Figure 8).

The second question asked what sorts of emerging ideologies can be detected within the parliament-representations and how are they realized within the frames offered. Some artworks present a system critical position, suggesting that society tolerates childish politicians, or even worse, that citizens behave as children (Figure 2), while other artworks suggest members of the society are politically indifferent (Figure 3), or responsible as citizens, as the lack of political activity is questioned (Figure 4). The artworks presented in Figure 5 and 6 suggest that members of the society can choose between the role of a good worker/passive mute observer or the role of a rebel, while the silent but also silenced masses is reflected in Figure 8. Finally Figure 7 draws attention to the dangers of extreme nationalist views and advocates tolerance and openness.

Following the characteristic features of framing as identified by Entman (1993), it can be claimed that the frames activated via the artworks aim to reveal shortcomings in the democratic process by highlighting the immoral political elite, the lack of social activity, and the lack of real dialogue among the parties. All of which can cause stagnation or 'still waters' in contrast to the desired prosperous economy. The art pieces point to the indifference and passivity of the citizens as a reason for these issues. The frames use critical, ironic and moral evaluations and provide access to multiple worldviews. They suggest radical change in the attitude of both the political elite as well as the citizens as a possible solution.

The present paper does not state that all political artworks use the strategy of competing frames, but rather that the political topics that are presented in art may well be linked to one of the five metaphoric frames determined in the field of political communication. To fully understand the symbolic meaning within the artworks that show the Hungarian Parliament, conventional knowledge about the possible metaphoric interpretations of politics does seems necessary. Understanding and applying the theory of competing frames is a forward-looking approach that allows the artworks to accommodate the viewer's perspective and thinking.

Table 1. Competing frames identified in the investigated examples

Artwork	Frame 1	Frame 2	Frame 3
Marko Rodics, *Parliament*, 2010	***Politics Is Game*** *Parliament Is A Playhouse Politicians Are Children* (Metaphorical framing)	***Politics Is Game*** *Parliament Is A Plush Toy Voters Are Children* (Metaphorical framing)	
Dezső Szabó, *Piss Parliament*, 2009	***Politics Is An Object*** *Politics Is A Sacred & Valuable Object* (Framed by hyperbolic metaphor, positive)	***Politics Is An Object*** *Politics Is A Worthless Object* (Framed by hyperbolic metaphor, negative)	
Borsos Lőrinc, *Unmovable land*, 2010	***Parliament Is An Object*** *Parliament Is A Valuable Object* (Framed by a hyperbolic metaphor, positive)	***Parliament Is An Object*** *Parliament Is A Worthless Object* (Framed by a hyperbolic metaphor, negative)	***Parliament Is An Object*** *Parliament Should Be A Value* (Framed by an ironic metaphor)
Bianka Dobó, *Clean court, tidy house*, 2014	***Politics Is A Landscape / Cityscape*** *Parliament Is A Tidy House* (Framed literally, based on its title)	***Politics Is A Landscape / Cityscape*** *Parliament Is A Tidy House* (Framed ironically, based on the assumed opposite of its title)	***Politics Is War*** *Parliament Is A Potential Military Target* (Metaphorical framing)
Kriszta Nagy Tereskova, *Kriszta Nagy is chairing in front of the Parliament because she is chairing better than her compatriots in the parliament*, 2006	***Politics Is An Object*** *Parliament Is A Valuable Object* (Metaphorical framing, positive)	***Politics Is An Object*** *Parliament Is Toilet/A Worthless Object* (Metaphorical framing, negative)	***Politics Is War*** *Parliament Is A Fortress* (Metaphorical framing)
András Cséfalvay, *Compsognation: Nation state through the eyes of a dinosaur*, 2012 – 2014	***Politics Is Landscape Politics Is Conflict*** *(Between Nationalist And Liberal Views) Parliament Stands For National Symbol / National Pride* (Framed metonymically, positive)	***Politics Is Landscape Politics Is Conflict*** *(Between Nationalist And Liberal Views) Parliament Stands For National Symbol / Too Much National Pride* (Framed by a hyperbolic metonymy, negative)	
Ágnes Eperjesi, *Words of Power*, April 13, 2015	***Politics Is Conflict Of Communication*** *Parliament Stands For A Place Where Successful Communication Takes Place* (Framed metonymically, positive)	***Politics Is Conflict Of Communication*** *Parliament Stands For A Place Where 'Successful' Communication Takes Place* (Framed metonymically combined with ironical approach, negative)	

Source: Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their inspiring questions and helpful comments on the manuscript. My thanks also go to Prof. Stanley Ward and Marlies de Groot for the English language corrections. I am grateful to the artists for their contributions to the interviews and also to the publication of the reproductions of their works. The present research was made possible by the Ernő Kállai Scholarship for art historians and art critics supported by the Hungarian state.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

DOI: 10.51480/1899-5101.14.1(28).6

Cultural Citizenship, Popular Culture and Gender: Examining Audience Understandings of The Handmaid's Tale in Hungary

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ABSTRACT: This article examines how audiences engage with popular culture in ways that forge political awareness and civic engagement. Through exploring the various levels of engagement of Hungarian women with the 2017–2020 television adaptation of *The Handmaid's Tale,* this study answers questions such as: How do Hungarian female audiences engage with topics raised in *The Handmaid's Tale*? How does their engagement with the show encourage cultural citizenship? Based on in-depth interviews with twenty-two Hungarian women, this qualitative empirical research sheds light on the role of television drama series in facilitating the manifestation of cultural citizenship as an arena of identity-construction and community-formation.

KEYWORDS: cultural citizenship, feminism, television entertainment, audience studies, Hungary.

INTRODUCTION

Serial drama has proven to be one of the areas of popular entertainment with potential as an instigator of public connectivity and political engagement (see Hill 2018; Hemes & Stello 2000; Askanius 2017; Nærland 2019). Joke Hermes (2005: 11) also argues that:

> [w]hile it allows political issues to be raised, the very strength of popular culture is that it is not a manifesto. (…) It makes the presence known to those who are not in positions of direct political or economic power.

In this study, I take this perspective as a starting point to explore the social and political potential of television entertainment in engaging audiences in pressing political issues of our time.

Based on in-depth interviews with twenty-two Hungarian women, this qualitative empirical research aims to shed light on the role of television drama series in facilitating cultural citizenship. This is understood as "an arena in which not only meaning is struggled over, but identity, subjection and subjectivity, community, and inclusion and exclusion as well" (Hermes, 2005: 6). Thus, the main motivation behind this scrutiny is to examine whether the engagement with products of popular culture can propel political interest, and to probe the statement that popular culture can be "celebrated as a domain of resistance against dominant power relations" (Hermes, 2005: 3). Here the broad topic of politics and popular culture is going to be studied through examining the political dimensions of television series, and through exploring the various levels of engagement of Hungarian women with the drama series adaptation of Margaret Atwood's book (1985) *The Handmaid's Tale* (HBO, 2017–2020).

The plot of the series revolves around the story of June, who tries to find her daughter who had been torn away from her, and free her from Gilead. The brutality, extreme inequality and violence of this totalitarian regime are conveyed to us through the protagonist's story, and as viewers, we are invited to identify with life in this dystopia through her eyes.

The current political developments in Hungary concerning the role of women and gender equality also make topics tackled by the drama series relevant. For instance, the declining birth rate is planned to be overturned by significant subsidies for families with three or more children (Miklós, 2015). At a 2015 party congress, László Kövér, the Speaker of the Hungarian National Assembly, stated that "the pinnacle of a woman's self-expression is to give birth" (444.hu, 2015). Also, accredited gender studies MA courses in the country were discontinued in 2018 (Balázs, 2018), and in 2020 according to new amendments to Law 2020 LXV only opposite sex couples can adopt children (Hungarian Spectrum, 2020). These incidents all suggest that for the Hungarian public – and women especially – topics connected to gender roles and the blurring of boundaries between the public and private spheres are all current and talked about, causing often heated debate regarding the social-economic impacts and ethical implications of the government's family policy (Átlátszó, 2016; Balogh, 2018; Bence, 2018).

Another, more universal reason for conducting a line of research fueled by feminist audience studies and focusing exclusively on women's opinions, was to draw attention to the well-known, oft forgotten phenomenon, that in society the norms of typical and accepted behavioral patterns for men and women are pre-set. These globally normative and widespread patriarchal societies privilege masculine behavioral patterns. This experience is in accordance with the statement by Josephine Donovan (2012: 187):

> [e]xisting patriarchal theory has no place for women as women; at best, women can be incorporated as pale reflections of men. Thus, many “gender-neutral” laws have failed to benefit women because they neglect the contingencies of most women’s social situations.

A consequence of this inherent, unavoidable, yet undetectable patriarchy, is that women often feel that public life is not commensurate with their needs, and does not tackle their problems, hence they withdraw from it, and remain silent regarding public matters.

Inspired by these topics, this interview study is informed by the following research questions (RQ): RQ1 – How do Hungarian female audiences engage with topics raised in the television series *The Handmaid’s Tale*? RQ2 – How do they react to the dystopian patriarchy portrayed in series and how does this prompt reflection on gender inequality and body politics in contemporary Hungary? RQ3 – How can we understand this engagement as expressions of cultural citizenship?

CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP

In establishing a thematic framework for this research, Joke Hermes’s notion of cultural citizenship is of vital importance, since it offers the possibility to “analyze the democratic potential of popular culture” (Hermes, 2005: 4). This aim coincides with the scope of the research questions about capturing Hungarian audiences’ reflections on gender inequality prompted by the series. According to Hermes’s understanding, cultural citizenship is “an arena in which not only meaning is struggled over, but identity, subjection and subjectivity, community, and inclusion and exclusion as well” (Hermes, 2005: 6). This concise but dense definition aptly captures two aspects of cultural citizenship: an arena for identification and of community-building. Thus, engagement with media products is not a solitary activity, but a “process of bonding and community building, and reflection on that bonding, that is implied in partaking of the text-related practices of reading, consuming, celebrating and criticizing offered in the realm of (popular) culture’” (Hermes, 2005: 10). Scrutinizing audience-reactions can become a territory to explore one’s identification processes in relation to social, political phenomena. Therefore, in this research, reactions to extreme gender inequality and patriarchy portrayed in the series mark the tendencies and peculiarities of a certain (interpretive) community.

As the research questions of this study indicate, the aim here is to capture audience-engagement inspired by the series. Yet, the scope of this engagement is somewhat vague to delineate. On one level it is clear that concrete actions (such as attending protest demonstrations, signing petitions) count as engagement, but

it is less discernable to draw a line on the other side, and decide whether more informal acts (for instance a chat with friends) can also be defined as engagement. To find an answer to this puzzle, I share the inclusive view of Dahlgren (2006: 278) according to whom "clinging too rigidly to formal deliberation risks losing sight of everyday talk and its potential relevance for democracy". Also Dahlgren (2006: 279) argues "[t]he looseness, open-endedness of everyday talk, its creativity, potential for empathy and affective elements are indispensable for the vitality of democratic politics". Hence, the means through which popular culture can fulfill its connective position is the act talking, since it is via talk that political issues become actualized, and hence "the interactional public sphere emerge as a sector of civil society" (Dahlgren, 2006: 276).

To be able to understand the interconnectedness between popular culture and politics, a wider definition of the latter shall be accepted and used here. In everyday conversation we tend to refer to politics in its institutional sense, however, – for this research it is more fruitful to work with a broader meaning of the term. According to which, as Van Zoonen (2005: 5) contends "politics is not just what politicians do. (…) Politics is also a "field" that exists independently from its practitioners and that accommodates the continuous struggle about power relations in society". The reason for the preference for this definition is that unlike other notions, which regard the public as passive masses who are only providing the background for institutional politics, this interpretation sees people as contributors to politics, and as active agents of the public sphere. This view is in parallel with how this study understands the notion of politics, and views the connection between the public and private spheres. Dahlgren (2006: 276) also arrives at a similar conclusion regarding the porous boundaries between the private and public spheres by stating that "we have the empirical permeability between public and private (…) not least in the blending of politics and entertainment and other forms of popular culture".

Yet, in addition to overarching theoretical studies within the field of media studies, there is also a need for a wide variety of empirical inductive research which should complement abstract approaches. It should also reveal new aspects of media theory from a social, hence often more relatable perspective, and can add nuances to the field of audience studies.

Empirical studies even have the potential of highlighting alterations the genre of drama series has undergone in the last couple of decades. For instance, in her seminal study *Watching Dallas* published in 1985, Ian Ang gathered the most typical features of serials as displaying episodic character, 'unrecorded growth' between episodes, cliffhangers and the potential for becoming endless (Ang, 1985: 51–56). She also captured the prevailing ideology of mass culture "which arouses definitely negative associations" (Ang, 1985: 94). Even though aversion to serials can still be traced (Van Zoonen, 2005: 11), by the late 2010s the

consumption of television series has become a socially accepted form of entertainment. As the content of television drama series often relates to "scenarios and dilemmas already of significance within broader society" (Hodkinson, 2017), popular TV-genres have transformed into "starting-points for the reflection on matters of societal or political significance" (Nærland 2019: 665).

Having read these insightful articles examining audience-engagement with popular culture, and seeking for other, even more relevant for my close field of research, a knowledge gap presented itself. For although there has been valuable research conducted in the field of audience studies in Hungary (Bényei, 2001; László, 2005; Munk, 2009), the examination of genres of popular culture from the point of view of feminist audience studies have remained understudied within the discourse of Hungarian media research. Hence, this study attempts to fill in (or at least lessen) this knowledge gap.

METHODOLOGY

This study draws on qualitative in-depth individual interviews with female interviewees (N=22, aged 17–56) conducted in the period of April to May 2020 in Hungary. I intended to meet personally with all of the interviewees, yet this was possible only in seven cases. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing was enforced, and traveling was restricted, hence the rest of the interviews were conducted remotely over telephone, or via Skype, or Messenger.

Since I decided to analyze Hungarian women's reactions to and engagement with the series, non-probability purposive sampling appeared to be the right path. Within this chosen group I had no further requirements in terms of whom I intended to include in the research, hence anyone could participate regardless of age, location within the country, or how many episodes they had seen. Therefore, my data became homogenous in that regard. In terms of finding respondents, I initially confined myself to convenience sampling: I looked up friends of mine on Facebook who liked or followed the official page of *The Handmaid's Tale's* latest adaptation. This way I found three people who agreed to talk to me. The fourth interviewee joined through snowball sampling: one of the interviewees recommended her daughter to participate. The rest of the participants joined by responding to my call on Facebook, which I shared both on my personal timeline, and in order to find interviewees who are not my friends and acquaintances, in various Facebook groups.

The interviews were conducted in Hungarian, with the exception of Respondent 1, whose command of English was advanced due to her family's background, and hence the expression of her thoughts was not compromised despite not using her mother-tongue. The interview questions were designed to allow the participants

to verbalize their engagement with the series, while they also encouraged participants to make connections to their own socio-political context.

Analyzing qualitative interviews often entails textual analysis as a main guiding principle. Yet, this method has its pitfalls, since textual analysis can covertly represent, as Hermes 2005: 86 argues "the researcher's (superior) reading of a set of texts against the partial or no politicized understanding of audience groups". To avoid this trap it seemed to be an advantageous step to ameliorate the hierarchical nature of textual analysis by harnessing the hermeneutic tradition, and employing the infinity of the hermeneutical circle (Kvale, 2007). When applying this tradition, I first re-listened to and transcribed all of the interviews, which provided me with an even deeper insight. I re-read the most crucial parts to allow the dynamic interplay between the individual passages and the entire text to reveal new layers of meaning. This way many contradictions of the interviews explained themselves, and answers to questions were found sometimes scattered in the text.

During the coding process I sought for reflections on the fictional world of Gilead and its characters, then expressions of engagement with the series were traced, which was later extended to reflections on inequality prompted by the series. By close reading of the results, the following thematic clusters were formed: 1) Comparison of Gilead and their context; 2) Engagement with the series manifesting in active civic participation; 3) Factors derailing manifestations of cultural citizenship, and leading to civic disengagement. Although a hermeneutic process is infinite, here it ended when a sensible coherent meaning was reached (Kvale, 2007).

Since the interviews were recorded in Hungarian, the relevant parts needed to be translated into English. All in all, this experience supported the assumption that although audience research is not easily combined with textual analysis (Hermes, 2005), if applied sensibly this combination can lead to rewarding results.

FINDINGS

To find answers to RQ1–3, as presented earlier, the interview questions were designed not only to reveal reactions given to the characters and their plotlines portrayed in *The Handmaid's Tale*, but also to capture articulations of the participants' identity-construction prompted by the program. The participants were encouraged to employ a certain suspense of disbelief, and to view the world portrayed in *The Handmaid's Tale* from within, as if they were part of the story, and not as a media product. In this way, the questions should elicit spontaneous reactions and preferences as opposed to premeditated answers.

PARALLELS BETWEEN GILEAD AND THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

To guide the participants towards discussions of socio-political topics, they were asked whether they see any parallels between the fictive Gilead and "our world." The reason for this choice of words was to make the interviewees free to associate Gileadean patterns to their micro or their macro (national or even international) contexts. Thus, a wide variety of similarities were enumerated.

One of the most commonly mentioned parallels identified by the respondents was the overarching feeling of mistrust.

> Respondent 5: "They [the handmaids] don't dare to say even obvious things aloud, which are in everyone's minds, they are just carefully testing who they can trust and who they can't".

To underscore these thoughts, during the interviews a similar reluctance to verbalize concrete beliefs was also palpable. Hesitation was often expressed through non-verbal communication by glancing at the recording device, slowing down of speech delivery, asking permission or expressing doubt: Respondent 5: "I don't know if I'm allowed to say this".

However, even though many participants concretely expressed reluctance to talk about politics, most of them eventually acted otherwise, and after an initial hesitation discussed political issues lengthily. A statement that captures this ambiguous attitude to politics was uttered by one of the respondents: "I think – but I don't want to talk about politics – in Hungary today there is no democracy" [Respondent 8]. In another interview of a similar structure, the interviewee's hesitation was followed by a well-formed opinion:

> Respondent 22: "I don't want to talk about politics, but in the recent past there was a scandal when certain politicians and the government suggested that a woman has to have three children, and these statements make us, women feel that those men, up there in the Parliament want to decide what shall happen to our bodies".

These statements suggest that in addition to capturing reactions and preferences, popular culture often provides the audiences with topics in connection to which they are willing to express their opinions and their political beliefs. This finding underscores Dahlgren's (2006: 276) statement that "popular culture helps people to connect the private and the public, the personal and the political". As in these cases – through the mediating subject *of The Handmaid's Tale's* fictional events – these Hungarian women were eventually willing to talk about socio-political topics, and verbalize their objection to gender inequality, patriarchy and totalitarian regimes. These participants were not characterized by the customary

Hungarian political apathy (Timar & Republikon Institute, 2017), as despite their initial reluctance they engaged in discussing political issues. This lack of apathy strengthens the assumption that popular culture can be more than mere entertainment, and emerge as a sphere of "interpretation and evaluation and the space to be excited, frightened, enthralled" (Hermes, 2005: 10).

Motherhood, and the appearance of the female body as a common commodity of the state of Gilead were echoed frequently in the interviews. This circumstance reminded some participants of their own maternity.

> Respondent 22: "When I was pregnant I was bothered by the hype and admiration, because I felt that it was not because of myself, but only because of the baby. That I'm only wanted because I'm pregnant".

Another similarity between Gilead and our present day experience identified by the respondents is the way women are treated while giving birth; Respondent 18: "in hospitals women are extremely vulnerable, you're forced to accept everything, they say that it is the child's life which ultimately matters". One participant went as far to say that the similarity between Gilead and her experiences is that in both worlds "women are machines for giving birth" [Respondent 7].

However, although most participants see the parallel between the attitude to women and childbirth in Gilead and present day Hungarian governmental decisions, this is not necessarily a negative trait for everyone. For instance, one respondent admitted that despite the similarities, she thinks that their current manifestations should be welcomed, since in Hungary this ideology:

> Respondent 15: "doesn't appear in such a sick way. Rather that women are encouraged to opt to have more children, one, two, three, four, as many as one wants, not every woman has to have a career".

While processing the plethora of answers, it was especially thought-provoking to witness how the interpretation of this media product happens through one's own personality and world view. To provide evidence to this observation, while most respondents notice the extreme inequality the series portrays, these episodes conjure very different associations in them. Some are reminded of present day gender inequality; "women still earn less than men, which is also a form of discrimination" [Respondent 10].

Some associated the dictatorial regime of Gilead with historical events of the past by stating that "there could be many similarities including the events during World War II and communism" [Respondent 6]. The current socio-political climate in Hungary also seemed reminiscent of those in Gilead for a few of the respondents:

> Respondent 7: "it is an existing problem in current politics (...) that we don't expect anything else from women just to give birth. This has been stated clearly, and our welfare system is based on this".

Yet, during the interviews the scope of attention occasionally went beyond the borders, and the issue of global inequality was also raised:

> Respondent 15: "as we can see, the pillars of the world work that way that there are extremely wealthy countries, but this is only possible because there are very poor ones. (...) So, there shouldn't be famine, but there are countries where they gobble more than they can eat".

Also the inherent hierarchy of religious communities was mentioned: gender inequality "is typical at Christians and Jehovah's as well. I'm saying that as being a Catholic. (...) There are no female priests in the Catholic church" [Respondent 18]. These different perceptions of the same media product suggest that one's interpretation of works of art is guided and transformed by one's own experiences, knowledge, cultural and social background.

Apart from political parallels, more universal ecological-biological similarities were also noted. In Gileadean society, one of the key problems which fuels its radical (and desperate) dictatorial and patriarchal regime, is environmental pollution and the rapidly declining birth rates. Some interviewees see such correspondences with our lives, where "the number of barren women are also increasing" [Respondent 12]. Environmental concerns connected to bodily issues were also voiced: "mankind is not doing well regarding looking after their natural habitat. (...) We can feel that women have more and more physical difficulties [to conceive]" [Respondent 5].

CULTURAL CITIZENSHIP AND CIVIC PARTICIPATION

A key aim of this research was to reveal more about the various levels of engagement of the audience with the program, and to find out how they react to the patriarchy shown in the series, and how the program prompts reflections on present day issues in Hungary. Responses to this query were usually articulated by the respondents when explaining how they would behave in a dictatorial world like Gilead, and how they respond to every day inequality.

Some thought it essential to demonstrate active civic responsibility. The actions these interviewees do, in order to attempt to induce change, include signing or setting up petitions [Respondent 21], participating in protest demonstrations [Respondent 21], raising awareness to participate in elections [Respondent 20], and write articles about pressing issues [Respondent 20].

In this sample even the socially-politically more active interviewees questioned the efficiency of democratic acts (like voting, signing petitions), but they would not cross the line towards illegitimate actions. Yet, occasionally the limitations of democratic institutions and practices were verbalized: “social initiatives can only be successful if they grow into demonstrations or even into a revolution which can bring forth real change” [Respondent 20].

Respondent 3 gave an intriguingly self-reflexive description of her engagement. She revealed that the series does not motivate her to carry out certain actions, but it stops her from acting a certain way. By becoming more perceptive to gender inequality she consciously focuses on avoiding situations – such as being humiliated, lacking equality, suffering mental and physical abuse. Respondent 3 also aims to put an end to these kinds of incidents both for herself and for women around her. Gaining inspiration from the series is not unique to her, finding encouragement in fiction was mentioned by other respondents. For instance:

> Respondent 19: “That’s why it is good to watch the series (…) If you get into similar situations, for example, if you are treated unfairly, then you can find strength in what you have seen”.

Another way to act against harmful behavioral patterns seems to lie in the domain of child rearing. When talking about how to implement change and work towards gender equality, a significant number of the interviewees said that they consciously raise their children according to a less conventional, less patriarchal set of rules. This idea appeared regardless of whether the respondents were raising female or male children, yet those who were talking about boys, men of the future, seemed to be even more devoted. For instance:

> Respondent 22: “It is very important for those who have sons like me, that we raise them that way that they won’t think when they come home from work that they have done all their duties”.

In the case of girls, the intent to protect them, and keep them away from negative experiences is usually more dominant. “I have two daughters and I always pay attention that they don’t have to go through what I had to” [Respondent 21].

Intriguingly the power of education always appeared in discussions with participants who are teachers or lecturers, who often displayed a sense of devoted optimism. These interviewees did not follow June’s overtly rebellious methods, rather the covert strategies of the Marthas, who would rather choose the strategy of undermining the system from inside, and believe that their role as teachers also entails the responsibility to make younger generations aware of the importance of equality and standing up for basic rights. “As a lecturer our position

is quite good. Because we can encourage students to think critically and to stand up for themselves" [Respondent 6]. Another sense of teachers' duty appears in Respondent 4's thoughts:

> Respondent 4: "[If I were in Gilead] I would save those who are rebelling. (…) But actually this is what I'm doing now, I'm saving those who are rebelling. That's why I work in teacher training".

Even though, as we have just seen, there were many examples of concrete engagement, some more subtle forms of participation were also noticeable. Almost all participants recalled that they first heard about the series through someone recommending it to them. Respondent 12: "Once I was at one of my friends' place, and she recommended it [*The Handmaid's* Tale]. I watched the first episode with her, and then I started to watch it on my own".

In addition to recommending it, discussing issues related to the series with friends, family members or online social media groups is also typical. These discussion topics include male-female roles, raising children to be aware of patriarchal patterns and plans to change a flawed system. As the following respondent (the youngest participating in the research) shares:

> Respondent 1: "As a teenager I don't really have the means to stand up. But I do like to talk about it with my friends, my female friends and just get their opinions on what they think of the society, and what we could do in the future as well".

Respondent 2 shared the experience of watching the series with her sister, with whom they often dwell on the horrors the program displayed. Another interviewee shared the experience of the series with her daughter: "My daughter – 11 at the time – watched a few episodes of the series with me, (…) and we discussed how women are silenced in the series" [Respondent 5], thus highlighting that talk is a "constitutive of publics and is thus both morally and functionally vital for democracy (Dahlgren, 2006: 277). Through these accounts it can also be witnessed how audiences shape their identities and simultaneously bond through capacity of television entertainment to launch a dialogue about crucial matters. When offline dialogues are not possible, discussions often take place online, either in various social media groups or on one's own timeline: "Interesting that I posted about The Handmaid. If something is like wow!, then I immediately post about it on Facebook" [Respondent 9]. These statements display the potential of popular culture to not only amuse its audiences, but also to become "a means of understanding society and social relations" (Hermes, 2005: 158).

The articulations of community and bonding expressed by respondents in this study pay testimony to how TV series and other popular genres can facilitate dialogue especially regarding 'sensitive' topics, which divide society such as power inequality, corruption, and the question of women's roles in reproducing the nation. Contemporary Hungarian society is deeply divided by party preference with no dialogue between the two sides. *The Handmaid's Tale* – along with other drama series – has the potential to catalyze discussions between the two groups about topics which they usually avoid and to forge various forms of engagement. The mobilization of curiosity to initiate discussion with people of opposing opinions suggest that readers indeed "may use their knowledge of particular subgenres or authors to communicate with others, and thereby build the community itself in its most concrete forms" (Hermes, 2005: 68).

Based on these accounts, the assumption is formed that the experience of watching the program provides audiences with a sense of community, imagined or real, online or offline, thus manifesting the essence of an interpretive community (Hermes, 2005: 155). The constituents of a particular interpretive community are "shared knowledge of the history of the subgenre, the building of virtual texts, and the ability to use one's knowledge of this form of popular culture to communicate and make contact with others" (Hermes, 2005: 68). Through analyzing the interviews, it can be seen that all three factors materialize in this research. First, the viewers have a thorough understanding of the genre in general, in which they can place *The Handmaid's Tale*. Secondly, they have their own individual reading of the tale. Thirdly, they are also capable of implementing this covert knowledge in their real life activities, as we have seen when they spoke about engaging with others and engaging with socio-political topics. Thus, due to the formation of an interpretive community "a particular form of cultural competence may be seen as a bond between groups of readers who never meet physically" (Hermes, 2005: 67). Therefore, the participants' attempts to position themselves as members of the imagined audience of *The Handmaid's Tale*, and also as members of their socio-political context while also probing its prevailing norms, delineate patterns of cultural citizenship "as a domain in which we may question how we belong to society" (Hermes & Stello, 2000: 230).

It is also a common feature of the participants that they often questioned the importance of their own actions. They often claimed that as individuals they are "too small" to act and induce change. Yet, when asked what they would do to stop inequality, they often describe actions similar to those of grassroots movements, in the sense that the participants often revealed that they make "efforts to mobilize individuals to take some action often of a political nature" (Kaid & Holtz-Bacha, 2008). Even recommending either or both the book and the series to others, or getting involved in online or offline discussions about topics suggested by the series and sharing the knowledge and experience of the narrative

with others can be seen as an act of bottom-up social activism. Nevertheless, for a few interviewees, social activism is a conscious choice, motivated by the belief that imposed top-down initiatives are less efficient then those when individuals can act in "their own context, where they can still rely on their own personal ties and connections" [Respondent 5], and when they can "help and induce change within their own context" [Respondent 20]. These statements capture grassroots activities as initiatives and movements coming from "the people: ordinary men and women, who autonomously organize themselves to cope with their predicaments" (Esteva, Shiva & Prakash, 2014: 3).

However, it is necessary to see that the actions and thoughts materializing after watching the series were merely conjured by the media product, but not created by it. As Respondent 3 observed: these feelings were inside her, only watching *The Handmaid's Tale* brought them to the surface. Hence, we can assume that watching the program does not alter fundamentally the interviewees' core beliefs and thoughts. Rather, watching the series heightens existing feelings, and legitimizes frustrations felt over social inequality. In these cases the emotions invoked by the TV program are turned into fully formed thoughts and get integrated into the respondents' world-view. Thus, these interviews provide us with examples about the assumption that media texts can indeed shape one's identification processes, and spectatorship can be "conceived as a set of subject positions constructed in and through texts" (Ang, 1996: 112).

CAUSES OF DISENGAGEMENT

Even though audiences display different levels of engagement with the television production of *The Handmaid's Tale*, a tendency can be seen that when respondents talk about the scope of their real-life actions prompted by the program, they often describe reasons why they often fail to act against injustice. When analyzing results about methods of withstanding inequality and injustice – both hypothetically in Gilead and in real life, the phenomenon can be traced among interviewees that they are often aware of right actions and choices, but various feelings and forces hinder their actions. In this research, the background of these restrictive forces are quite heterogeneous, hence to make them more comprehendible they are organized here into four categories.

Fear is one of these forces, which stops them from acting against injustice. Intriguingly, this sense of intimidation increases according to the level of one's professional position. Employees and blue collar workers experience a bigger sense of freedom, and feel that they would always stand up against oppression. In their case, examples of injustice often come from their own lives, and are usually of a personal nature. On the other hand, those in leadership positions feel that their freedom to express their views is limited.

> Respondent 12: "Probably I shall voice my opinion more that I do.
> *Interviewer: And what stops you?*
> Respondent 12: "Mostly, political fear. That as a leader I can't say things the way I really think about them".

Or in another case: Respondent 17: "[O]ne is scared to act, because of their work. What will the people say? And things like that."

Apart from fear for oneself, the fear or even the potential threat against one's offspring is also a significant force to make one collaborate and withhold one's opinion. Those respondents who have children, shared the feeling that they would be braver, and more active politically and socially had they not been mothers: "If I didn't have anything to lose, and if I didn't have to have my children in mind" [Respondent 5]. One woman even went as far as saying that "children are biological weapons" [Respondent 4]. As an explanation she added: "[T] hrough her children, a woman becomes vulnerable. Hence, women who want to stay independent do not have any children" [Respondent 4].

In addition to political issues, the other dominant force stopping women from acting, seems to be a social one of deeply ingrained gender norms. Due to these norms, women are often complicit in maintaining an authoritarian patriarchal system, and prevent other women from displaying unconventional behavioral patterns. Typically and somewhat paradoxically, mothers – out of good will – often encourage their adult daughters to act according to the perceived rules of patriarchy:

> Respondent 19: "My mother often says that sometimes one has to give in, and sometimes I shall give in too. And then I say OK, OK, but what if I know that I'm right?" Or in another episode from the same mother-daughter relationship: "These days my mother often says that I shall be more humble. But actually I think I'm humble enough."

The gender norm that a wife shall please her husband with her appearance can still be seen, though not so much according to the interviewees' views, but according to those of their mothers:

> Respondent 22: "If I have my hair cut then my own mother asks immediately whether my husband likes it. And if I say yes, then she says: that's the most important. But no, what is important is whether I like it or not".

Interestingly, the conservative suggestions of mothers usually meets with their daughter's disapproval and dismissal, which might suggest that even

though patriarchy is still dominant, a slight shift towards a more liberal order has started to appear.

A less benevolent, but similar behavior is that of the female leader. The experience is often shared that "if women become leaders they take up masculine behavior patterns, and they are not very tolerant with women" [Respondent 20]. In the series, Aunt Lydia is the character, who embodies this type of female leader. The opinion on her was not favorable because she turned against and betrayed women. Yet, some of the interviewees have either read *The Testaments* or heard about its storyline concerning Aunt Lydia starting to subvert the system from within, and they tended to see her character in a more positive light.

The experience of the masculine female leader is not rare. Once women are in a leadership position instead of displaying compassion and encouragement often the opposite happens, and intolerant, insensitive behavior is acquired (Margit, 2002). This study does not have the scope to trace the background and motivation for this behavioral pattern, yet we can assume that the lack of female leader role-models also contributes to this. For instance, in Hungary "[i]n the sub-domain of social power, Hungary has the second lowest score in the EU. There are no women on the boards of research funding organisations. Women comprise 29% of board members of publicly owned broadcasting organisations and only 10 % of board members of the highest decision-making bodies of national Olympic sports organisations" (Gender Equality Index, 2019). Also, a traditional patriarchal system still prevails, which privileges masculinity, "which marginalizes not only women but also feminine qualities expressed by men" (Duvall, 2012: 267), thus enhancing competitiveness, intolerance, and authoritarianism.

It seems challenging to arrive at an overarching conclusion regarding factors, which curb one's willingness to rebel. However, maybe this heterogeneity can provide us with an answer, and a surprising discovery: it has been clear and expected that an authoritarian regime can stop its underprivileged citizens from acting and standing up against injustice. But what is more baffling is that ingrained gender norms, which exist unnoticed, also do just as much harm, since they enforce the rule that "public discourse requires the exclusion of femininity and women" (Donovan, 2012: 187). Hence, it appears from this research that all the listed factors: the existential and social threat, the fear for one's children, and a prevailing patriarchy often upheld by other women, all contribute to the same phenomenon, the maintenance of the traditional silence of women.

CONCLUSIONS

One of the key intentions of this article was to explore particularities of Hungarian female spectatorship. When analyzing the interviewees' responses to *The Handmaid's Tale*'s fictional world and the associations it triggered, it became visible that participants often revealed a shared knowledge of Hungarian gender-related expectations, current issues of family politics and history. From these reactions, it can be gleaned that for this particular interpretive community the experience of a child-centric and conservative political discourse is common. However, the ways interviewees reacted to these experiences were diverse. These heterogeneous responses also drew attention to the potential of popular television to emerge as a suitable arena for socio-political discussions. This is achieved through several features. Primarily, the distinct characters' experiences and intriguing plotlines. There are also abstract notions of politics (such as dictatorship, freedom of speech, family politics), which become tangible, hence providing the viewers with vicarious experiences, and examples of injustice, which can facilitate audiences to measure their world against the fictional one. This kind of engagement with the TV series prompting cultural citizenship as a continuous re-construction of one's identity, also resonates with Ang's (1996) situational and particularist view of gender identity, which is considered "ambiguous and incoherent, permanently in process of being articulated, disarticulated and rearticulated" (Ang, 1996: 125).

The silence, withdrawal and mistrust of the handmaids in the television series were often associated by the interviewees with everyday experiences of present-day Hungary. Participants revealed that they often stay silent and do not act against injustice because of political fear for themselves or their family members. Even though the respondents' withdrawal from the public sphere appears as an act of civic disengagement, the admission of this decision still shows political consciousness: through displaying a self-reflexive attitude and acknowledging passivity, they mobilized their political awareness. Thus, paradoxically, the act of admitting political passivity and intimidation became a manifestation of cultural citizenship. Therefore, the reluctance of women to discuss politics during the interviews, is not a marker of neglect or ignorance, but a sign of their distrust towards the dominantly masculine structures of the current authoritarian regime.

If we attempt to conclude these results of cultural citizenship through the lens of feminism, the answers seem somewhat controversial. The ambiguous findings that Hermes and Stello (2000) reveal about the feminism's relationship with cultural citizenship through the engagement of crime reading audiences, also hold for audiences of *The Handmaid's Tale*:

> [i]n how readers are constructed as economic and political subjects there is evidently enough space for them to find cracks in dominant culture to build sustaining identities and critical forms of empowerment, that paradoxically result in continuing allegiance to that system. (Stello, 2000: 230)

When analyzing the responses of the study's Hungarian women, the same paradox is revealed. Through the different manifestations of engagement, critical identities are constructed along with interpretive communities, yet these constructs – at the moment – are not subversive, and still contribute to the maintenance of the status quo.

Nevertheless, we can witness that popular culture can indeed become the stepping stone between the political and the private spheres through adapting social matters into narratives which are digestible for larger audiences, and making the otherwise seemingly remote political issues relatable to one's private experiences. In the case of *The Handmaid's Tale*, we can witness the phenomenon of the series providing a context for Hungarian women to contemplate on concepts of social and gender inequality and the right to one's body. Thus through discussions taking place in informal online and offline groups, the TV series formed an environment, which facilitates the appearance of citizenship.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
I would like to thank Dr Tina Askanius at Malmö University for her invaluable comments and suggestions.

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APPENDIX I.

List of participants

	Age	Profession
Respondent 1	17	high school student
Respondent 2	23	university student
Respondent 3	46	PR consultant
Respondent 4	56	university instructor
Respondent 5	41	lawyer
Respondent 6	45	university lecturer
Respondent 7	36	office worker
Respondent 8	35	secretary
Respondent 9	55	nurse
Respondent 10	34	office worker
Respondent 11	46	teacher
Respondent 12	43	head of education
Respondent 13	38	office worker
Respondent 14	26	beautician
Respondent 15	43	political advisor
Respondent 16	38	kindergarten teacher
Respondent 17	45	teacher
Respondent 18	25	waitress
Respondent 19	27	PhD student
Respondent 20	46	critic
Respondent 21	29	environmental manager
Respondent 22	28	office worker

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

DOI: 10.51480/1899-5101.14.1(28).7

Exploring Citizens' Perceptions-based Intangible Resources in the Public Sector: An Analysis of the Relation Between Wealth and Engagement and Trust in 17 Countries

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ABSTRACT: Across the globe, public administrations are employing communication to develop programs to respond to the challenges of bringing society to the core of policy making and of searching for innovative ways to generate growth. But how much do these programs achieve, and to what extent are their consequences positive? Building on theorizing about intangible assets in the public sector and based on economic indicators as well as on survey data from 17 countries, this paper explores whether specific intangible assets that are citizens' perceptions-based can operate as sources of growth. More specifically, the article looks at citizen engagement and trust, intangible resources that are built upon organizational behaviors as well as activated through communication. Results allow us to compare the relation of these resources with growth with the relation of tangible capital with growth in 17 countries. Based on findings, the article discusses implications for public sector communication.

KEYWORDS: public sector communication, intangible capital, intangible asset, engagement, trust.

INTRODUCTION: INTANGIBLE CAPITAL AND WEALTH

Across the globe, public administrations are facing the challenge of placing their societies at the core of policymaking. In a context, in which resources are becoming scarcer, they are being challenged to look at value differently (Bryson et al., 2015), as well as to search for innovative ways to foster growth

(Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019). This paper assumes that the intangible dimension of capital might provide an innovative approach to fostering growth, and it focuses on public sector communication capacity to build intangible value by their fostering citizen engagement and their behaving in a trustworthy manner.

But how much do governmental programs focused on intangible capital achieve, and to what extent are their consequences positive? The literature documents mixed results, and the debate centers in part on the high costs that programs of this kind entail (see, for instance, Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015; Coursey et al., 2012). Do public sector's intangible assets built through communication provide access to tangible wealth? This is the question that this paper addresses.

Debate about the relationship between intangible capital and growth was triggered by the World Bank when, via two well-known (not to mention controversial) reports, it posed questions about the drivers of nations' wealth (World Bank, 2006, 2011). The bank's conclusion was blunt: intangible capital was a significant factor in influencing growth in all the countries analyzed in the report and accounted for 60-80 percent of total wealth.

The relevance of this finding can be explored from different angles. In this paper, two such angles are highlighted. First, the question of policy consequences is considered: What does the World Bank's finding imply for governance and policymaking? The reports found that most of a country's wealth corresponds to intangible capital, and this was found to be the case especially for rich countries. They even found that intangible capital was the only significant factor of production in OECD countries, which suggests that strategies for creating wealth should be oriented toward the generation of intangible capital. But what is intangible capital exactly, and what produces it?

The causes and sources of intangible capital are the second salient dimension that will be examined here. This issue is particularly important in the case of intangible capital that depends on relations between public sector organizations and citizens. In the World Bank's reports, intangible capital was conceptually described in terms of human capital (the skills and know-how embodied in the labor force) and social capital (the "trust among people in a society and their ability to work together for a common purpose") (World Bank, 2006, XVIII).

These two reports certainly raise questions about the way in which capital is measured, and they were probably the first warning issued at a worldwide level that elicited awareness about what is driving growth in the twenty-first century, and they raise important questions about policymaking. As the second report states, "As long as intangible capital is a black box, governments may be tempted to conclude that all public expenditures that exclude physical infrastructure are in some sense investments in intangible wealth" (World Bank, 2011: 102).

This paper attempts to explore that "black box". It seeks to identify specific assets that: a) can be built by public sector organizations; b) are assets that

lay on perceptions (stakeholders' acknowledgement) activated via communication; c) might have a relation with growth. Building on theorizing about intangible assets in the public sector (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2015 and 2019), this paper explores intangible capital from the perspective of the "intangible asset" concept, and more specifically, from that of intangible assets that are based on citizens' perceptions to say, on the capacity of organizations to make their publics acknowledge their strengths. Based on survey data from 17 countries, it explores whether specific public sector intangible assets such as engagement and trust can operate as sources of growth.

The structure of the paper is as follows. Its aims, research questions, and methodology will be presented in the next section. A theory-focused section then follows, in which the paper discusses the role of communication in generating intangible capital, and builds on the concept of intangible assets to elaborate on the meaning of engagement and trust. In the final part of the paper, we present data on the wealth and intangible and tangible capital of 17 countries. Based on the theorizing from the previous section, we then analyze the data to examine differences between strong economies and weaker ones in terms of the weight of intangible assets and its effects on national wealth. Finally, suggestions are provided to improve public sector communication.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research attempts to:

1. Ascertain whether a relationship between intangible assets and growth can be established, and if so, compare that relationship with that between tangible capital and growth.
2. Collect cross-country comparative data to verify the differences and similarities that exist between wealth data and citizens' perceptions of public sector organizations.
3. Provide governments, policymakers, and public sector professionals with baselines for public policies that increase public administrations' capacity to build intangible capital via communication and, potentially and as a consequence, tangible wealth.

The research questions explored in this article are:

- What aspects of intangible capital show a relationship with wealth?
- What is the relationship between wealth and citizen-perception-based intangible assets as compared to the relationship between wealth and tangible capital?
- Are there differences between strong economies and less strong ones in what regards the relationship of intangible and of tangible capital with wealth?

- What do the findings from empirical observation reveal about the practical implications of public administrations' development of intangible assets via communication?

BUILDING INTANGIBLE CAPITAL THROUGH PUBLIC SECTOR COMMUNICATION

This paper builds on a previous definition of intangible assets in the public sector context (Canel and Luoma-aho, 2019, p. 77) to place emphasis on two assumptions. First, an intangible asset enables access to tangible assets. Second, the existence of certain intangible assets is conditional upon the existence of acknowledgement of those assets (somebody has to *attribute* a given intangible asset to an organization). This implies that intangible assets require communication if they are to be developed (we take a concept of public sector communication which includes the one carried out inside organizations and between organizations and stakeholders, and thus, it also includes public administration communication). Therefore, key to the assets that are analyzed in this paper is the role communication has in activating stakeholders' acknowledgment of them, and thus we understand they are perceptions-based assets. Those intangible assets which are not communication-dependent, such as patents, are disregarded in this paper.

In exploring perceptions-based intangible assets, it should be taken into account that citizens' perceptions of public sector organizations are usually negative, especially due to excessive bureaucracy, inefficiency and corruption (Luoma-aho, 2008); and that the judgments issued by citizens do not respond to a cause-effect relationship, but are the result of a complex dynamic influenced, among other reasons, by their satisfaction with public policies, the communication and information they obtain, and trust (Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2003; Carmeli & Tishler, 2005; James, 2009, 2010, 2011; James & Moseley, 2014; Sanders & Canel, 2015).

Finding a relation between wealth and these kind of perceptions-based intangible assets would lead to rethinking organizational and communication culture, and also to derive implications for the practice of public sector communication. In previous research some of these implications were discussed (Canel et al., 2020), and we bring here part of that discussion to frame the role communication might play in developing growth. Intangible assets derive from good practices and experiences, and so although such assets can be managed, they cannot be created from scratch; they have to be supported by actual experiences. This means that intangible assets are activated through both organizational behavior as well as sense-making, and that a culture of deeds-based messages need to be developed. Being oriented to intangible assets fosters a citizen-centered

culture, and thus the communication that is activated focuses not on impressions management but on relations (for these are assets that cannot be built without a relational approach).

Several practices are inspired by this approach, among which the following can be mentioned. First, building intangible assets requires a detailed knowledge of stakeholders' needs and expectations, which only can be discovered through ongoing interaction with those stakeholders. Second, building intangible assets requires an approach to communication that is strategic, with measures of intangible assets informing decision making and helping organizations to improve performance. Third and as a consequence, new quality criteria would be needed for assessing outcomes, and the evaluation of communication performance would thus be focused on the quality of established relations and on the extent to which citizens are engaged.

BREAKING INTANGIBLE CAPITAL DOWN INTO DIFFERENT ASSETS IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

In the "black box" of intangible capital, this paper focuses on those intangible assets that derived from searching those survey items which, according to the literature, seemed to show a logic relation with a concept that referred to a specific intangible asset in the public sector. Those were engagement and trust. The theoretical basis for each of these will now be discussed.

CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is an intangible asset that, in broad terms, refers to what citizens do within public life or the public sphere. Globally, citizen engagement has become a central aim of public policy and practice, based on the assumption that involving those who are served is a key prerequisite for a blooming society (Fung, 2015). But research provides mixed evidence about how engagement operates, and this paper attempts to look specifically at how it is related to the tangible growth of a country. One of the critical issues in engagement research has to do with what should be taken as expressions of civic engagement, and hence with how to measure it (see, for instance, Teorell et al., 2007; Ekman & Amna, 2012). In an attempt to go beyond a "classic approach" such as that of Putnam (1995), for whom "civic engagement" includes explicit behaviors such as voter turnout and attendance at public meetings, researchers have attempted to produce wider typologies that see engagement in "latent forms of participation" such as citizens' involvement in the public sphere through organizations other than political ones (Teorell et al., 2007; Dahlgren, 2009; Ekman & Amna, 2012).

This distinction is parallel to that of what we call 'political' *versus* 'public' engagement. There is literature that claims that a political nature of engagement ("the action of ordinary citizens aimed at influencing some political outcomes" (Brady, 1999, p. 737) with expressions such as contacting political representatives, should be differentiated from actions that seek the benefit of the community through solidarity behaviours, such as recycling or donating organs; political participation should be differentiated from public participation (Wang & Wart, 2007), and thus, 'public engagement' should be differentiated from 'political engagement'. The reason why this is relevant is because, some authors argue, only if research makes this differentiation, it will be possible to capture the engaged citizen of today who might be moving away from the political character and is approaching a more nonpartisan or public commitment (Dalton, 2008; Dahlgren, 2009). If this "new" engagement is identified and measured, governments will be better equipped to foster and deal with it.

Based on the results of the literature review, and using the available items in existing surveys that contain data for OECD countries, in this paper two items are taken from the European Social Survey and the Eurobarometer as politic forms of engagement: 1) During the last 12 months, have you worked in a political party or action group? 2) During the last 12 months, have you contacted a politician, government or local government official? Both items involve questions that elicit binary responses (yes or no). Another two items were taken as public forms of engagement: 1) During the last 12 months, have you signed a petition? 2) Have you done any of the following for the environmental reasons in the past month? Separated most of your waste for recycling. Answers to these questions were given using a binary scale (yes or no).

Although there is a growing body of literature that documents the positive outcomes of engagement arising from the direct involvement of citizens in the assessment of needs and in deliberation over practical solutions (Yang and Barrett and Brunton-Smith, 2014; Fledderus, Brandsen and Honingh, 2015), little work has been done to explore the relationship between engagement and growth.

TRUST

Literature on trust is huge, for huge is the amount of aspects and angles that can be deployed to observe the phenomenon of (dis)trusting (for an updated discussion on the concept and measures see Oomsels & Bouckaert, 2014; Oomsels et al, 2019). The specific interest of this research is, on the one hand, to explore how trust as an intangible asset is related with other intangible assets, and here the focus is on engagement. Evidences are mixed. There is an overall consensus attributing benefits to citizens and communities as result of citizen engagement (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015; Coursey et al., 2012). It is argued, for

instance, that this intangible resource increases citizen trust in governments, legitimacy, and social capital (Coursey et al., 2012; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015; Heikkila & Isett, 2007; Yang & Pandey, 2011). However, there is also research which shows skepticism about the impact of engagement on trust, due to the suspicion generated by governmental messages that citizens see as partisan and with electoral interests (Sanders & Canel, 2015); to the lower quality of the public services that derive from coproduction (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012); and to frustrated expectations (Font & Navarro, 2013). The second aspect of interest is the relation between the intangible asset of trust and tangible growth, about which literature is very scarce.

Interestingly, the European Social Survey does not include items that relate to trust in the public sector or more specifically to trust in public services or in public administration. The closest items that were pertinent to the present study were assessments made on a ten-point scale of individual trust in public institutions such as parliament, the legal system, the police, and politicians.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology combines theory-based research with empirical data. The theory part builds on the concept of intangible assets, and more specifically, it considers engagement and trust as possible intangible assets, built through communication, that explain wealth. Literature was reviewed with the objective of identifying what could be useful to measure a specific intangible asset.

Two sets of empirical data are used in this study. First data produced by the World Bank on growth. Variables regarded as measures of tangible capital include GDP per capita, the unemployment rate (which measures the productive potential of an economy) and inflation rate (which provides information about the purchasing power of the population). Second, data from the European Social Survey are used to measure intangible assets. Since this paper deals with intangibles that are grounded in citizens' perceptions (Canel & Luoma-aho, 2019), the survey data that the article draws on centers on citizens' judgments about public sector organizations. The data relate to 2014 (this is the most recent available data provided in the conditions that this research requires) and cover 17 countries. Items were reviewed with the aim of identifying what could be of use to measure a specific intangible asset of the following two: engagement and trust.

Data were collected and treated with SPSS software. Pearson correlations were deployed to explore the relations between growth (GDP) and tangible capital (unemployment and inflation rates) comparatively with relations between growth (GDP) and intangible capital (engagement and trust). These correlations were conducted with each specific item, and all the variables with a correlation

over 0.4 have been selected. In addition, the level of significance (bilateral) was determined. Following the standard criteria, the statistical significance (bilateral) was considered to be $p < 0.01$ or $p < 0.05$.

In order to establish comparisons among countries, information referring to intangible assets was synthesized: a factor analysis was carried out including the variables that could yield an indicator of a specific angle of intangible value. Variables were thus grouped following a logic that derived from the literature review on the concepts.

Finally, for comparing countries, the 17 analysed countries were clustered according to their income level, and two groups emerged: stronger economies and weaker economies. Values for the variables are in Annex 1.

FINDINGS

The results are reported in the following order: an examination of data looking at each specific item that compose each intangible asset; an elaboration of an indicator for each asset which allows for comparisons; an overall comparison between tangible capital and intangible capital; and finally, a comparison of the data on the groups of countries.

ENGAGEMENT AND WEALTH

Table 1 shows the specific correlations for items that measure engagement.

Table 1. Engagement and GDP (correlations)

Variables		GDP correlation	Significance (bilateral)
Expressions of political engagement	Having worked for a political party	0,433	0,083
	Having contacted a politician or a government official recently	0,899**	0,000
Expressions of public engagement	Having signed petitions	0,641**	0,006
	Having recycled	0,530*	0,029

Source: own elaboration with data from the World Bank, the ESS and the Eurobarometer
** Correlation is significant at level 0,01
* Correlation is significant at level 0,05

The results show that, overall, there is a strong association between GDP and items that measure citizen engagement. Almost all correlations with all the items measuring engagement are high and all, except from "having worked for a political party" are statistically significant; all are positive. The results reported in Table 1 allow to look at the relation between engagement and GDP

differentiating somehow 'political engagement' from 'public engagement': items referring to more social forms of engagement (such as "having signed petitions" or "having recycled") have a stronger correlation than items that question about political behaviors (such as "having worked for a political party" or "having contacted a politician or government official"). Overall, these data allow to state that the more engaged citizens in a given country are, the higher the country's GDP. The wording of this relationship could be reversed: citizens from high-GDP countries tend to be more engaged in politics, and this issue of causality will be discussed later on.

TRUST AND WEALTH

Table 2 shows the specific correlations for the items that measure trust.

Table 2. Trust and GDP (correlations)

Variables	GDP Correlation	Significance (bilateral)
Trust in parliament	0,753**	0,000
Trust in the legal system	0,795**	0,000
Trust in the police	0,793**	0,000
Trust in politicians	0,741**	0,001

Source: own elaboration with data from the World Bank, the ESS and the Eurobarometer
** Correlation is significant at level 0,01
* Correlation is significant at level 0,05

The results show that, overall, there is a strong association between GDP and items that measure citizens' trust in parliament, the legal system, the police, and politicians. All correlations are high, statistically significant, and positive: the higher the level of trust, the higher the GDP. Again, this relationship could also be worded by stating that citizens from high-GDP countries tend to trust their public organizations. In this case, no other items were available to examine other dimensions of trust, and here to some extent the prevailing performance-trust hypothesis, which posits that trust results from a positive assessment of governmental performance, may be applicable in the context of wealthy nations (Houston et al., 2016). But it could also be argued that more trustworthy public sector organizations are in a better position to make binding decisions, attract public resources, fulfill aims, and guarantee the fulfillment of public policies (Easton, 1975; Rudolph and Evans, 2005).

ELABORATING INDICATORS OF INTANGIBLE ASSETS

In order to establish comparisons between intangible and tangible assets and among countries, it was explored whether indicators could derive from those variables identified for giving information about an intangible asset. Factor analysis is a statistical technique which reduces a set of data into few factors, being these factors independent from each other. For this research, factor analysis was carried out with the eight variables (items) found logically related with the concepts of engagement and trust. Varimax rotation method was used with Kaiser normalization, with a high explained variance of 90.4% (see Annex 2 for details), the resulting factors are shown in Table 3).

Table 3. Factor analysis results

FACTOR 1 (coefficient)	FACTOR 2 (coefficient)	FACTOR 3 (coefficient)
TRUST	**POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT**	**PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT**
Trust in Legal System (0,975) Trust in Politicians (0,958) Trust in Parliament (0,942) Trust in Police (0,813)	Have worked in Political Parties (0,934) Have contacted politicians (0,671)	Have recycled (0,963) Have signed petitions (0,570)

Source: Own elaboration with data from the World Bank, the ESS and the Eurobarometer

Three each-other independent components derived from factor analysis. The first factor includes all items asking about trust in different institutions (all of them have a high coefficient), and it looks reasonable to establish 'Trust' as a first component. The second factor grouped two variables ("having worked in political parties" and "having contacted politicians"), the two of them referring an explicit political behaviour, what lead to call this component 'Political Engagement'. The third and final factor grouped another two items ("Having recycled" and "Having signed petitions") which seemed to be measuring involvement or commitment with issues which were not specifically political, and thus this component was called 'Public Engagement'.

COMPARING THE RELATION WITH WEALTH OF TANGIBLE AND OF INTANGIBLE CAPITAL

Once indicators for intangible assets were found, the relation between growth and tangible assets on the one hand, and between growth and intangible assets on the other were compared, and results are shown in Table 4. It presents correlations between all countries' GDP on the one hand and variables relating to tangible capital (unemployment and inflation rates according to the World Bank data) and to intangible capital (the three factors which resulted from the factor analysis: 'Political Engagement', 'Public Engagement', and 'Trust') on the other.

Table 4. Tangible/intangible capital and wealth (correlations)

	Tangible capital		Intangible capital		
	Total unemployment (% labor force)	Inflation (%)	Trust	Political Engagement	Public Engagement
GDP (per cápita)	-0,270	0,540*	0,779**	0,835**	0,681**

Source: own elaboration with data from the World Bank, the ESS and the Eurobarometer
** Correlation is significant at level 0,01
* Correlation is significant at level 0,05

The results show, first, that both tangible and intangible capital have a relation with GDP. In the case of tangible capital, the correlation with the inflation rate is positive and, therefore, the higher it is, the higher the level of GDP. As is to be expected, the correlation with the unemployment rate is negative, so the higher the latter is, the lower GDP is; therefore, employment is positively associated with GDP. However, correlation between this variable and GDP is low and non-statistically significant.

For the three variables measuring intangible assets, correlations are positive, high and statistically significant, meaning that the higher trust, political engagement and public engagement, the higher GDP is. Comparatively, the relation between intangible capital with wealth seems to be higher than that of tangible capital: the correlations are higher (around more than thirty tenths) and more statistically significant. It seems that the findings presented by the World Bank in 2006 and 2011 are reflected in the results of this study: certain specific aspects of citizens' perceptions of public sector organizations regarding engagement and trust are more strongly associated with growth than tangible capital is.

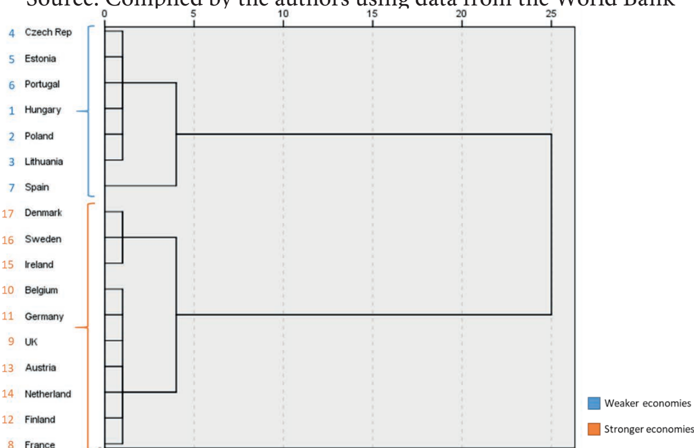
COMPARING GROUPS OF COUNTRIES

The comparison among countries was carried out by means of clustering according to the level of GDP. Table 5 shows the countries belonging to each group.

Table 5. Groups of countries according to GDP

Strong economies	Less strong economies
France, United Kingdom, Belgium, Germany, Finland, Austria, Netherlands, Ireland, Sweden, Denmark	Hungary, Poland, Lithuania, Czech Republic, Estonia, Portugal, Spain

Source: Compiled by the authors using data from the World Bank



Note 1: These countries are numbered (left column) based on their GDP per capita. Thus, the one with the number 1 is the country with the lowest income per capita and the one with the number 17 is the country with the highest GDP per capita
Note 2: The cluster analysis was performed with SPSS software

Table 6 contains the results of the comparison between clusters on the basis of the relationship between GDP on the one hand and tangible and intangible capital on the other.

Table 6. Tangible/intangible capital and wealth (correlations). Cross-country groups' comparative data

	Tangible capital		Intangible capital		
	Total unemployment (% labor force)	Inflation (%)	Trust	Political Engagement	Public Engagement
GDP stronger economies	-0,706*	-0,386	0,602	0,706*	-0,222
GDP weaker economies	-0,361	0,711	0,902**	0,717	0,165

Source: own elaboration with data from the World Bank, the ESS and the Eurobarometer
** Correlation is significant at level 0,01
* Correlation is significant at level 0,05

Based on information from Table 6, it seems not to be possible to note the existence of a pattern that indicates that the association between intangible capital and wealth is different according to the level of the economy. In stronger economies, whereas the correlation is higher and significant with 'Political Engagement', no correlation appears to be between the other two variables that measure intangible value. In weaker economies a very high, positive and statistically significant relation is shown between GDP and 'Trust', but no correlation appears to be between GDP and the other indicators of intangible value. In any case, both for stronger economies and for weaker economies the relation between intangible capital and growth is higher than that between tangible capital and growth. Tables 7 and 8 show results for each specific item that compose the indicator.

Table 7. Engagement and GDP (correlations). Comparative data on cross-country clusters

Variables		GDP (stronger economies)	GDP (weaker economies)
Expressions of political engagement	Having worked for a political party	0,265	0,906**
	Having contacted a politician or government official	0,699*	0,852*
Expressions of public engagement	Having signed petitions	-0,039	0,872*
	Having recycled	-0,378	0,409

Source: own elaboration with data from the World Bank, the ESS and the Eurobarometer
** Correlation is significant at level 0,01
* Correlation is significant at level 0,05

Table 8. Trust and GDP (correlations). Comparative data on cross-country clusters

Variables	GDP (stronger economies)	GDP (weaker economies)
Trust in parliament	0,581	0,246
Trust in the legal system	0,686*	-0,081
Trust in the police	0,536	0,885*
Trust in politicians	0,656*	-0,233

Source: own elaboration with data from the World Bank, the ESS and the Eurobarometer
** Correlation is significant at level 0,01
* Correlation is significant at level 0,05

Concerning 'Engagement', data for each specific item show that all items except 'having recycled' have a higher correlation (statistically significant) in weaker economies than in stronger economies; concerning 'Trust', no clear trend is shown, since in stronger economies there are high correlations in two of the four institutions measured, whereas in weaker economies only 'Trust in the police' seems to be correlated.

Overall, it seems to be that the stronger correlation that is found between growth and intangible capital (as compared to that with tangible capital) does not behave differently in stronger economies than in weaker economies, does not support the part of the World Bank's findings that in rich countries wealth corresponds to intangible capital more than in less strong economies. The level of the economy, according to these research findings, does not make a difference for the relevance of the intangible capital.

DISCUSSION

Might communication play a role in the growth of a country? This question has been addressed via presenting another, which looks specifically at intangible assets: Do public sector intangible assets that are based on citizens' perceptions give access to tangible wealth? This research has sought to explore the "black box" that constitutes an important source of wealth: intangible capital. The analysis has focused on the relationship between GDP and public sector organizations' perceptions-based intangible capital, and it could be argued that in doing so, the social dimension of public management has been left out. This area has been considered elsewhere (see Canel and Luoma-aho, 2019) in the form of a discussion of the need to find the methods and measures that best allow the public sector to assess its impact in a way that includes social value. This paper suggests, however, that it is also very important to conduct research that places an economic value on intangible aspects of public sector organizations such as the quality of the relations that are built between the latter and citizens. This has been the aim of this study.

The analysis of aggregate data from 17 OECD countries consolidates the finding that intangible capital is a significant factor of wealth across countries. In this research, the variables that measure intangible capital strongly correlate with GDP, and all of them do so to a greater degree than the measurements of tangible capital correlate with GDP. It seems to be the case that the extent to which citizens trust their public institutions, or the degree to which they are prone to be engaged with said institutions, are factors that are more strongly associated with wealth than unemployment and inflation levels. The quality of institutions as perceived by citizens, which is an intangible asset, clearly matters when it comes to wealth.

This research makes it possible to state that the concept of intangible asset is a helpful construct for the purpose of conceptually and operationally disentangling and breaking down the possible sources of intangible capital and, hence, of wealth. It has identified some specific intangible assets that emerge within the relationship between citizens and public sector organizations. More specifically,

it has provided measures for citizen-perception-based intangible assets such as engagement and trust.

Concerning engagement, data corroborate the relevance of this intangible resource for growth, and, based on factor analysis results that yielded two different components, allow differentiating the relation of political engagement from the relation of public engagement. Relation of both with GDP is high and positive, being the relation with political engagement slightly higher than with public engagement. Another finding of interest is that out of all forms of engagement, having worked for a political party is the one that is least strongly associated with high GDP. These results support the claim that measures of citizen engagement need to be developed to capture more social aspects of this asset (Dahlgren, 2009; Ekman and Amna, 2012), in order to identify and acknowledge a possible committed citizen who is politically independent, and who focuses on solidarity and on civil action (Dalton, 2008). This might suggest that public sector organizations should look for new forums in which people might be developing engaging practices. As data presented here indicate, these new forums are also efficient in terms of enabling access to tangible wealth.

Finally, trust is also strongly associated with GDP, suggesting either that wealthier citizens have a greater tendency to trust their public organizations or that trustworthy organizations generate wealth.

Regarding the comparison between the two GDP-based clusters of countries, the data are not clear and do not allow to establish a solid pattern that differentiates the behavior of intangible capital in stronger economies from that of weaker economies. It is notable, however, that trust is more clearly correlated with GDP among the group of strong economies, but the same is not true of less strong economies, with the exception of the measure of 'Trust in the police'. It might be the case that in these countries the lack of trustworthy public sector organizations means that none of these organizations is relevant for growth, except for police forces, which therefore become a major driver. But the opposite is shown concerning engagement: certain expressions of political engagement ('having worked for a political party' and 'having contacted a politician') and of public engagement ('having signed petitions') are highly correlated with GDP in weaker economies. This highlights the relevance of working in governmental programs of citizen engagement in these countries, since, according to these findings, they might have a positive relation with growth.

Ascertaining what actually drives citizens to be engaged is certainly an ongoing challenge for both researchers and public sector communication professionals; the findings presented here indicate that developing new studies that allow more precision in terms of the sources of engagement would be worthwhile.

This study does, of course, raise the question of causality, as has been pointed out all along the paper: Could it be that the higher a country's GDP, the better its

organizations perform and, hence, the more they engage citizens or are trusted? This research has not explored causal relationships, and therefore at present opposing arguments may be made. One could argue that in wealthy countries citizens tend to trust public organizations, possibly because they attribute the country's high GDP to a well-performing public sector; but it could also be the case that more trustworthy public sector organizations make countries more productive and wealthier. Further research is needed to establish more precise causal relationships, but it is understood here that some policy consequences can be identified with the available data, as also implications for public sector communication.

CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC SECTOR COMMUNICATION

Whatever the causal relationship may be, this paper concludes that both directions of interpretation provide an interesting hint for further research on the development of intangible resources in the public sector, as also for recommendations to improve public sector communication.

First, the findings presented here show an association between intangible resources and real wealth, and thus they support the argument that intangible assets derive from good practices and experiences and, as such, can be managed but not created from scratch. In other words, even citizen-perception-based intangible assets are not the result of a successful perceptions-management communication strategy alone; they need to be supported by facts. Any communication that aims at building these intangible assets should combine organizational behaviors with citizens' perceptions. This requires messages that stress actual achievements over the personality of the leader, and skilled leaders in crafting deeds-supported messages with which make citizens acknowledge actual strengths.

Second, since what has been shown is that the quality of institutions matters for wealth, public sector organizations should develop strategies to identify, build, maintain, and measure the black box's intangible assets, exploring the relationships between them and, ultimately, their relationships with society. This research findings underline the relevance that communication departments should be granted in order to improve relations between public sector organizations and citizens that, ultimately, derive in greater intangible resources, at least of those explored here, engagement and trust. Governmental programs of engagement and of trust should be developed in public sector organizations of democratic nations through cross-departmental relations that include the communication office, and this implies redesigning organizational charts.

Third, building perceptions-based intangible resources requires public sector communication that centers on listening instead of on selling, and that collects

society's feedback to make sense of data about citizens' needs and expectations. It is only through ongoing interaction with different publics that engagement and trust can be built; it is this interaction what can provide useful insights about what are the standards according to which citizens are going to assess how trustful public leaders, policies and organizations are; and subsequently, whether to engage with them.

Finally, these research findings about the different relation that political forms of engagement (focused on influencing some political outcomes) have as compared to the relation of public forms of engagement (oriented to the benefit of the community) can illuminate the communication of governmental programs of citizen engagement. Citizens might be more prone to engage with public institutions when the benefits for public services are stressed over the political battles that are entangled in any public service deliverance. Communication professionals should develop skills better attuned to that kind of "apolitical" engagement.

There are important caveats to be made regarding this study. One is the limitations that are implied as to the nature of the intangible assets dealt with in this paper. Since they are perception based, the available data will always come from surveys. And data on facts—for instance, how people actually engage—would enrich the analysis of an important aspect of the asset. All efforts oriented to build consistent data that allow cross-country comparisons of actual behaviors would be welcomed. The issue of the inclusion of measures of social growth (and not only measures of the state of the economy) is also an important one. A deeper analysis of the impact of specific intangible assets on growth through comparisons of wealth across time is also required. Previous research suggests that significant and rapid institutional change, while not the norm, is feasible and does take place in practice (Kauffmann et al., 2005). A combination of intangible assets management and appropriate communication strategies could indeed improve the quality of organizations and hence make a difference to growth.

Strengthening democratic institutions via the building of specific intangible assets through communication will be wealth enhancing; and working on citizen-perception-based intangible assets will help to better calibrate the gaps between public sector organizations and citizens' needs and expectations. The latter will also make it possible to develop route maps for communicating to citizens what can be expected from a specific public policy and to design subsequent governmental actions. Ultimately, assessing social and economic growth, which is associated with the capacity of a specific government to build intangible assets (those of engagement and trust according to this research), will foster competitiveness among public administrations to provide public value to the society they serve.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank Tom Corkett for his extremely helpful and professional aid in the editing of the manuscript.

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ANNEX I. MEANS OF ALL VARIABLES FOR EACH COUNTRY

		ENGAGEMENT				TRUST				Tangible capital	
	GDP p/c	Worked political party	Contacted Politicians	Signed Petitions	Recycling	Trust Parliament	Trust Legal System	Trust Police	Trust Politicians	Unemployment	Inflaction
		yes (%)	yes (%)	yes (%)	yes (%)	1 to 10	1 to 10	1 to 10	1 to 10	(% labor force)	(%)
(AT) Austria	51322,6	6	19	28	75	3,9	5	6,5	3,4	5,6	1,6
(BE) Belgium	47439,3	4	14	23	81	4,8	5	6	4,1	8,5	0,3
(CZ) Czech Republic	19744,5	2	9	17	78	3,9	4,7	5,7	3,3	6,1	0,3
(DE) Germany	47902,6	4	17	36	76	5	5,7	6,7	3,8	5	0,9
(DK) Denmark	62425,5	4	21	30	60	5,9	7,4	7,7	4,9	6,6	0,6
(EE) Estonia	19941,4	4	14	10	56	4,4	5,2	6,1	3,5	7,4	-0,1
(ES) Spain	29600,4	8	16	32	74	3,7	4	6,3	2,2	15,9	-0,2
(FI) Finland	49914,6	5	19	32	75	5,5	6,7	7,9	4,6	8,7	1
(FR) Francia	42955,2	5	16	38	82	4	5,1	6,1	2,8	10,3	0,5
(UK) United Kindong	46412,1	3	19	40	79	4,3	5,5	6,3	3,5	6,1	1,5
(HU) Hungary	14117,9	0	9	5	64	3,8	4,6	5,3	2,9	7,7	-0,2
(IE) Ireland	55503,3	5	19	25	84	3,8	5,3	6,3	3,3	11,9	0,2
(LT) Lithuania	16554,9	4	10	6	62	3,2	4,3	5,5	3	10,7	0,1
(NL) Netherlands	52157,4	4	18	29	80	5,1	5,9	6,4	4,8	7,4	1
(PL) Poland	14341,6	2	8	14	69	2,8	3,5	5,1	2	9	0,1
(PT) Portugal	22077,5	5	15	15	71	3,1	3,7	5,7	2	13,9	-0,3
(SE) Sweden	59180,1	6	19	47	86	6,2	6,4	6,9	5	8	-0,2

ANNEX 2. TOTAL VARIANCE EXPLAINED WITH THE ANALYSIS OF MAIN COMPONENTS

Component	Auto initial values			Sums of removal of loads squared			Sums of rotation of squared charges		
	Total	% of variance	% accumulated	Total	% of variance	% accumulated	Total	% of variance	% accumulated
1	4,817	60,207	60,207	4,817	60,207	60,207	3,894	48,670	48,670

Component	Auto initial values			Sums of removal of loads squared			Sums of rotation of squared charges		
	Total	% of variance	% accumulated	Total	% of variance	% accumulated	Total	% of variance	% accumulated
2	1,557	19,772	79,979	1,582	19,772	79,979	1,980	24,752	72,423
3	0,836	10,449	90,428	0,836	10,449	90,428	1,360	17,006	90,428
4	0,409	5,117	95,545						
5	0,222	2,776	98,321						
6	0,085	1,061	99,382						
7	0,031	0,288	99,769						
8	0,018	0,231	100,000						

Note: With the distribution of the variables in 3 factors, the 90,42 % of the total variance is explained

INTERVIEW

DOI: 10.51480/1899–5101.14.1(28).8

Professional Role Performance in Journalism

Interview with Claudia Mellado
Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile

You have just published your new book, entitled Beyond Journalistic Norms. Is hybridization of journalistic cultures an irreversible process?

Hybridity is inherent to journalism. If you think about it, journalists constantly need to adjust and perform multiple roles. For example, with the COVID19 pandemic, the world has seen that news professionals have an extraordinary capacity to adapt their roles and practice to changing circumstances, so the idea of conceiving journalistic cultures as static and monolithic oversimplifies the complex reality that our profession is going through. Journalistic roles are situational, dynamic, and fluid, and cannot be considered discrete categories. Even if we as journalists adhere to specific journalistic norms, it is completely understandable that context-specific roles will guide their everyday work.

In our new book, *Beyond Journalistic Norms* (Routledge, 2021), we go in-depth into that discussion. We start from the position that journalistic practice transcends normative expectations, challenging pre-established assumptions about a "dominant type" of journalism that prevails in different political, geographic, and cultural contexts. Our studies suggest that there is no single dominant journalistic model across countries and that journalistic cultures are based on a combination of role performances.

Models of journalistic professionalism coming from the Western world have significantly impacted our mindsets when thinking about this topic. That is why journalism students around the world learn that facts must always be separated from opinions, that hard news are serious while soft news are not, and that journalists should always act as watchdogs but never perform loyalism because both are not compatible with each other. These norms are indeed pedagogical for constructing discourses of occupational legitimacy. Still, we shouldn't think about journalism in the abstract because, in practice, things do not work in that way, so those binary expectations do not help us understand how journalism and the media actually work. Because of the same, it is also dangerous to make

absolute claims about the relationship between the practice of our profession and concepts that are quite culturally bound, such as democracy, objectivity, autonomy, among others.

From the perspective of role performance, roles should not be taken as uniform, whole constructs but instead as permeable practices. Professional roles are intermediary translation devices in the process of practicing the profession. Because of that, I strongly believe that identifying the practical co-occurrences of different roles is key to better understand the multiple layers of hybridization across and within journalistic cultures. In our studies we argue that roles interact with one another, creating potentially intermediate roles. We have already found strong evidence of a significant co-occurrence of professional roles used simultaneously by journalists around the world to inform the public. For example, about the audience approach domain, we have found a strong tendency to blend the performance of the interventionist role with the infotainment role in the print media of most countries. In several countries, we have also seen the co-occurrence of the watchdog and civic roles, of the civic and the loyal role, and the infotainment and civic roles, and even sometimes, of all of them together.

Journalists work for different media platforms, create stories from different beats, and write for many different audiences simultaneously. Their work can also change dramatically from one day to the next, and they must occasionally negotiate their ideals with situations that require specific role performances. This means that a single news story must meet different requirements associated with the merging of diverse roles. For example, they can be critical of the president but praise the leader of the opposition in a country; or inform citizens of their duties and rights in an entertaining way. We should not be that surprised that this happens anyways. The co-existence of roles is inherent to any given occupation because people need to respond to ongoing demands in complex societies like ours.

How do you see the future of international studies of journalistic cultures and professionalization that adopt a role performance approach? What kind of research is now needed the most?

Our Journalistic Role Performance (JRP) project was pioneering in that it was the first one that empirically unfolded the different layers of journalistic cultures through the study of both ideals and professional practices around the world. Nevertheless, science is always a work in progress. There are so many things to learn, discover, improve, change, and develop.

One of the major limitations of the first wave of our JRP project was that it focused on analyzing a single media platform: print media. The project demonstrated that the analysis of national print media systems was a necessary

and useful stage for analyzing professional roles in different contexts. However, we know that the practice of journalism is much broader, including multimedia and audiovisual dynamics, and social media and interactive elements that are nonexistent in print. Another important limitation was the inclusion of news from the National Desk only, ignoring how professional roles may play out differently in other topics. In acknowledging our limitations, the new wave of our project (2019–2021) analyzes professional roles and journalistic performance on different traditional media platforms, and in different news topics/ beats. Nevertheless, we have not included social media platforms in our analysis, so definitively that is a much-needed contribution that future research must accomplish, especially in terms of the developments of news measures that can better address the specific media logics of social media spaces.

Role performance research also poses new challenges that can serve as a roadmap for future scholarship considering the complexity of the factors that influence journalistic cultures. For example, future studies should be able to approach this topic using different methodologies. On the one hand, qualitative studies have a lot to contribute in this regard. On the other hand, the automatization of some measures and the use of machine learning techniques can also bring new possibilities to this area of study.

About the performance of journalism itself, future research could make a tremendous contribution thinking not only about how journalists perceive and practice their profession but also about the impact of the audience on current journalistic ideals and practices. Future work might also consider studying more in-depth the blending of different roles when journalists cover specific events that transcend national boundaries, such as COVID19.

Are media systems and journalistic cultures too complex to cluster?

Both media systems and journalistic cultures are complex indeed. From the perspective of role performance research, I can say that the fluid and contextual practice of journalism is much more difficult to fit in existing typologies than specific media system categories. Media systems are not static either and also change and evolve, but the pace of their change is different.

If we look at the interplay between both media systems and journalistic cultures, we can then see to what extent media system categories hold true in shaping reporting practices and narratives. So far, our studies have shown that media systems theory is especially useful for predicting the performance of roles related to the public sphere. About these roles, our results reveal that news media are shaped by society and politics much more than news media actively shape society and politics. Nevertheless, we have found that media system models lack explanatory power for other roles.

Should we then forget about models of media systems?

No, of course not. Media systems' models identify crucial political, economic, social, and cultural characteristics that determine the context in which the media operate, so they are beneficial for understanding how journalism work at the structural level, as well as the relationship between macro-level factors and professional roles associated with the public sphere as I mentioned in the previous question. What is necessary, though, is more theory on media systems outside the Western world. Specifically, media systems scholars must develop new dimensions that allow for the inclusion of realities of countries from Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America, which have experienced different levels of conceptual dependency in this area of study.

How would you describe the state-of-the-art media and journalism studies in Latin America?

Media studies in Latin America developed significantly more than journalism studies, especially because of the interests of most communication scholars in the region since the field started to grow. But things have changed lately. Until two decades ago, studies on Latin American journalism were marginal and mostly related to working conditions. There was no real interest in theorizing about the profession or empirically addressing global questions that could help understand journalistic ideologies and practices compared to other cultures. Journalism was not considered as a proper field but more as an appendix of communication studies. Thank God globalization has helped connect Latin American scholars with the rest of the world and professionalize journalism studies in the region. Of course, some countries show much more representation than others if we look at their publications and what we know about journalism within Latin America, but the field has started to flourish.

Are Latin American researchers sufficiently represented in the global context?

My answer is no, we are not visible enough. With some exceptions, more Latin Americans that stand out in the international or global context are the ones that moved to the U.S. or Western countries a long time ago. In the meantime, there are hundreds of incredible scholars in Latin America that are not visible in a mainstream context, although their work largely contributes to our understanding of the profession. I have seen the establishment of some politically correct current discourse about more equality in terms of scholars' representations in the academic field. That is quite positive, but I would like to see a bit

more than only a discourse. On the other hand, I would also like to see more proactivity from the part of some Latin American colleagues as well.

Besides having a very marginal representation in the field, we are always in disadvantage. We always need to convince reviewers and editors every time we want to publish our work on why studying a Latin American country or the region is relevant for academic purposes. I cannot imagine asking that question to a Western European scholar or U.S. researchers. Language is another barrier, but I believe that the main issue is that we are still not accepted as a "legitimate other" in the field. We still need to justify our existence. I strongly believe that research creates significant knowledge when questioning the familiar and the known, opening the scope to the unexplored. And there is a lot to do in this regard.

Claudia Mellado was interviewed by Michał Kuś in November 2020.

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DOI: 10.51480/1899–5101.14.1(28).9

CLAUDIA MELLADO (ED.) (2020), BEYOND JOURNALISTIC NORMS. ROLE PERFORMANCE AND NEWS IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE. NEW YORK: ROUTLEDGE, 320 PP., ISBN: 9781138388499.

The book is the result of an international project entitled *Journalistic Role Performance* conducted between 2013 and 2018, across 18 countries worldwide. Claudia Mellado, Professor of Journalism at the School of Journalism of the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, in Chile started to work on the project by doing research focused on her native country. Soon the potential of this innovative approach was recognized by communication scholars interested in journalism studies. Claudia Mellado's capacity to build a global experts forum around the idea of exploring the role of journalists between normative vision and actual practice has to be acknowledged. An outstanding international group of scholars from Western and Eastern Europe, from Asia, from North-America and Latin America contributed to the study that led to this book. The inclusiveness and the diversity-driven perspective of the book is also reflected in the authorship of the chapters that included both well-known scholars from the field of communication science and early-stage researchers.

In his foreword to this book, Silvio Waisbord underlined the perspective of the book as a positive example of "thinking together across multiple borders" (Mellado, 2020, p. XVII) and thus the research gap that the book is addressing. This is not a study in the field of journalism "in abstract", but a study that focuses on the practice of journalism. Existing comparative research has focused more on seeking typologies (e.g., Hanitzsch et al., 2011; Hanitzsch, Hanusch, Ramaprasad & de Beer, 2019) that have rather heuristic values and often practices that do not fit in the existing categories. As mentioned above, the strength of the current approach lies in looking for a common ground to study the current significance of professional roles in everyday journalistic practice. Claudia Mellado and her team embraced a de-westernized perspective (Waisbord & Mellado, 2014) of journalistic norms, not only throughout the theoretical view, but also by choosing an inclusive and more heterogeneous sample of countries based on Hallin and Mancini's (2004; 2012) Liberal, Democratic Corporatist, and Polarized Pluralist system models, and on the Democracy and Freedom of the Press Indices. Even with this type of sample, the book does not focus only on categorizing norms and practices based on nationality and region.

A cross-national comparative design using the mixed method was conducted in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Hungary, Ireland, Malaysia, Mexico, the Philippines, Poland, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, and the United States. First, content analysis was conducted on over 30,000 news stories from 64 print media outlets from the above-mentioned countries. The content analysis aimed to reveal how journalistic roles are reflected in the final news outcomes. The research of journalistic role in the relationship with news outcomes is a new approach that was first used only one decade ago. Second, a survey focusing on the current significance of the journalistic roles in everyday practice was applied to journalists that authored the analyzed news. By using this tool, the authors of the chapters of the present book are in line with other studies that addressed journalistic roles (Hanitzsch et al., 2011, 2019; Weaver & Willnat, 2012). Third, data on organizational, societal, political and economic aspects from the selected countries were collected and introduced into the analysis.

As a result of the *Journalistic Role Performance* Project, the first book focusing on the theoretical framework was published before the present book (Mellado, Hellmueller & Donsbach, 2017). The theoretical rationale previously developed was applied in the present volume and is grounded in the assumption that journalistic roles are based on journalistic voices, on the relationship between journalists and power holders, and the relationship between journalism and audiences. The book addresses six of the most common roles that are related to journalistic voices (the interventionist role), to the relationship with power holders (the watchdog, and the loyal facilitator), and the relationship with their audiences (the infotainment role, the service and the civic role) and their hybrid forms. The structure of the book consist of three parts and twelve chapters is in line. In the first part, entitled *Professional Roles and Journalistic Performance,* the book editor introduces the readers to the project development and presents the theoretical background of the study. Furthermore, the cross-national comparative design and methodology together with some of the results of the study are presented. The second part of the book is dedicated to the results of the empirical analysis. Chapter 4 addresses the way professional roles are reflected in the news content across the 18 countries analyzed. The ensuing chapters follow the theoretical structure. Thus, chapter 5 is dedicated to the journalistic voice, reflected by the performance of the interventionist role. Chapter 6 is dedicated to the power relations reflected by the performance of the watchdog and loyal-facilitator roles. Finally, in chapter 7 the audience approach is addressed, with the performance of the civic, infotainment, and service roles.

The third part of the book started with chapter 8 dedicated to the link between professional role conceptions, perceived role enactment, and journalistic role performance across countries that is empirically measured. Chapter 9 presented the analysis of role perception at the story-level, chapter 10 at the organizational

level and finally, chapter 11 at the society level. With the third part of the book, the analysis is moved to the organizational level (chapter 10), and the society-level approach (chapter 11), following the presentation of the story-level approach in chapter 9. Chapter 12 is the final chapter, and includes conclusions but also the challenges that the project has faced, while also presenting its limitations in an honest manner.

The results of the cross-country study showed that journalistic role performances, which are influenced by historical developments and by the transformation of the news-making processes, vary across and within countries and proved the existence of a multilayered hybridization of journalistic cultures. In some countries like the United States and Argentina, accompanied by Poland, Hungary, and Russia, the interventionist role was prevalent. Also, the watchdog role was identified in Poland, Spain, and Greece, while it was not present in China, Hong Kong, Cuba, Chile, and Switzerland. The loyal facilitator role was widespread in Cuba, and less so in Malaysia. The civic role was identified in the United States and Greece, and to a distinct lesser extent by Russia, Mexico, Cuba, Argentina, and Malaysia. The infotainment role was mostly present in Poland, Germany, Argentina, Chile, and Malaysia, and finally, the service role was present in the Eastern European countries in the sample, and the Philippines.

The findings are, to a certain extent, in line with previous research in the field of journalistic roles in the sense that the disseminative stance of journalists dominates compared to the interventionist stance, that journalism is more fact-based than opinion-based, regardless of the country (Hanitzsch et al., 2011, 2019; Weaver & Willnat, 2012). No evidence was found for the traditional media system grouping in the sense that differences and similarities across countries cannot always be explained by belonging to Western or non-Western regions. According to the findings of the study, journalistic cultures are based on a combination of role performances.

Beyond Journalistic Norms. Role Performance and News in a Comparative Perspective is an excellent example of embracing diversity and successfully working internationally even without substantial transnational project funding. The book is valuable both for the strong theoretical background and for the complex methodological approach. It proved to be an excellent example of a rigorous approach in communication science that can be followed by both young and experienced scholars. The analysis that was developed on several levels, including journalistic outcomes, the opinions, the attitudes, and the reported behavior of journalists, combined with organizational, economic, and societal variables draws a complex picture of journalistic roles. Especially for countries such as Poland or Hungary, referred to in the book as Eastern European, this approach seems to be more appropriate than a survey-based study.

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BOOK REVIEW

DOI: 10.51480/1899–5101.14.1(28).10

SERGEY DAVYDOV (ED.) (2020). INTERNET IN RUSSIA. A STUDY OF THE RUNET AND ITS IMPACT ON SOCIAL LIFE. CHAM: SPRINGER NATURE SWITZERLAND AG, 298 PP., ISBN 978-3-030-33015-6.

Internet in Russia. A Study of the Runet and Its Impact on Social Life edited by Sergey Davydov was one of the most interesting promises expected in 2020 and published by Springer Nature Switzerland AG. For a researcher of communication and media, the title seemed to be intriguing at least for two reasons. The editor explains the main idea of the book in the opening sentences of the publication:

"What is Runet? There are at least three possible answers to this question. First, it is a segment of the Internet with content in Russian language. Second, it is a segment of the Internet associated with the domain zone .RU. Third, it is the national—Russian–segment of the Internet. The latter definition is the closest one to the idea of this book".

Firstly, it is a bold thesis, especially because this way of thinking about online reality is often criticized by network researchers. As we know, the internet differs from other types of media and communication tools by not having its own nationality. The network embraces the whole world, and its language mutations or those based on national domains seem insignificant from a global perspective (according to W3Techs, websites in Russian include 8.6% of online resources in 2020). Secondly, this way of thinking about your own uniqueness may be the source of the original sin: seeing specificity in something that ultimately turns out to be universal. *Internet in Russia* – by the title itself – tried to contradict these paradigms.

The book consists of an introduction and four parts (*Theory and History, Economy and Regulation, Digital Culture, Participation, Representations and Discussions*). Among them, 15 articles and the Afterwords can be found. A fairly large number of articles for a composite work have undoubtedly something in common – meticulous source queries made by all of the authors. It results in a solidly prepared theoretical basis for the reflections presented in the book and seems to be one of the greatest advantages of this work. Anyone who would like to deal with the local contexts of how the internet functions should treat this publication as a kind of textbook, in which one can find cataloged and richly described media/communication theories. All the articles also include the long lists of sources that may enrich the reader's knowledge about internet research.

On this basis, the book constructs a broad and detailed picture of the internet in Russia. Numerous perspectives can be found – historical, media studies, legal, etc., which proves the various points of view of the authors invited to publish articles. This fact makes the book full of interesting paradigms for a researcher of the internet sphere. However, in such an editorial solution there is a threat to the reader: surely not all perspectives will be equally interesting for everyone. Additionally, the texts are quite unequal in terms of research value. So perhaps it would have been worthwhile to have employed the old marketing adage: less is more.

The variety of threads is overwhelming, which makes the book a complex "science fabric". Unfortunately, there are a lot of dead ends: strands related to media other than the internet can be found, which go beyond the declaration made in the title. But also, for example, out-of-date data appears (see below), which is an unforgivable sin in this type of publication. The internet, so dynamically changing, requires special care as a subject of knowledge. The date of publication of the book should coincide with the current data taken from reliable sources. Authors of the articles are not consistent in applying this rule.

Reading consecutives chapters, there is the impression that the division of the chapters seems to be dictated by the subject matter of individual interests of the researchers invited to the publication. It always should be made the other way round – the chapter content is adjusted to the general concept of the book. As a result, both the list of topics, as well as the division into individual chapters, seems to be rather random. This is quite a common problem in such books, especially when including a long list of publications. The inability to thoroughly discuss the concept of a book with all the researchers has the tendency to result in a mosaic of texts that do not always correspond to one another. Accordingly *Internet in Russia…* does not seem to be the conceptually coherent text. The most glaring and banal proofs of this are uneven technical issues – e.g., various fonts in graphics, which are sometimes blurred and underdeveloped (p. 108). The proof from the content can be found in the large inconsistency of the texts.

Although individual texts have well-structured compendiums on theories and concepts devoted to internet research, the book as a whole does not contribute much to scientific knowledge in the analyzed area. Therefore, it is worthwhile giving some attention to the 15 articles published in this publication.

The opening text (*Digital Inequalities in European Post-Soviet States*) is a comparison of the development of the internet in post-Soviet countries, showing the historical dimension of the problem. However, it partly contains data until 2016, which makes it difficult to consider its conclusions as up-to-date. Similar problems can be found in the other article: *Elite Russian Students' Internet Strategies: Trust, Persuasion, and Rejection*, in which conclusions are partly based on research conducted in 2011, i.e., a decade ago.

Many interesting statistical data are also provided by the author of the second text (*The Internet in the Structure of the Russian Media System*). However, a lot of side threads (e.g., regarding other types of media) and modest conclusions based on them give the impression of "distorted proportions" and cause a lack of satisfaction at the analytical field, leaving the reader with a descriptive image of online reality. A similar problem concerns the text *Runet in Crisis Situations*. The data collected and used in the text seems to be not sufficiently analyzed and not backed up by own research.

The third text (*The Rise of Runet and the Main Stages of Its History*) is an example of the above-mentioned inconsistency throughout the idea of the book. One of the authors claims that the history of the internet in Russia has already been described. Meanwhile, another text on the same subject was created as part of the publication. As in the previous text, a lack of conclusions and a shortage of more cross-sectional analytical thought is visible. The same problem applies to the following two chapters (*Investments in Runet; Regulation of Online Freedom of Expression in Russia in the Context of the Council of Europe Standards*), in which a lot of data does not translate into an in-depth analysis. The latter of the two chapters is also based on questionable methodology.

The sixth contribution (*Digital Literacy Concepts and Measurement*) takes up an important problem, recalling various studies in an interesting way, but without in-depth statistical analysis that could be a key enrichment of it (taking into account e.g., criteria such as age, education, economic status, etc.). Another article (*Journalistic Cultures: New Times, New Gaps?*) is also cognitively valuable, but the author falls into the trap of an excess of data and gives the impression that it does not fit the concept and the main goals of the publication formulated in the introduction.

The next article (*Diversity of the Internet in Russia's Regions: Towards an Alternative Research Agenda*) is the case study of several regions, but with very vague criteria for selecting cases and for the conducted analysis. A similar problem accompanies the research presented in the other text (*Russia in International Social Media Discussions: Pro and Contra*). The author writes: "The relevance and importance of the communities and groups were decided on the basis of the size of the membership (looking for higher membership), the frequency of postings and quality and quantity of the resulting discussion". It is difficult to find here a clear criterion for selecting a research sample.

The same doubt can be found in the article *Making Ruins Great Again: Documentation and Participation on Instagram*. This text additionally shows another problem: quoting a few comments without any clear criteria, a codebook, operationalized concepts, a shared database does not render the research into a content analysis, as the author declares. It may be concluded that the subjective

approach to the above-mentioned issues basically overturns the scientific value of such an analysis.

The text *Data Turn and Datascape in Russia* is the most symptomatic of the entire volume, clearly reflecting its problems. One article devoted to smart cities, medicine, education, art, etc. makes it difficult to follow the author's line of thought. At the same time – as in the entire publication – there are no *threads related to the threats* arising from the described and studied trends and phenomena. These are common in scientific dialogue and are beginning to dominate the literature on internet issues. It should be also admitted that this text, one of the few, tackles contemporary problems generated by the network (artificial intelligence, big data, etc.) that are important from the point of view of researchers all over the world.

Undoubtably crucial topics accompany articles on progressive and left-wing movements: *The internet: Its Influences on Environmental Communication and Environmental Movements* as well as *Gender Activism in the Russian Segment of the Internet*. However, it is also difficult to find the author's perspective of research in either of the texts. Additionally – in the latter text – reducing the #metoo phenomenon to a flashmob seems to be at the least a controversial procedure.

It seems that *Afterwords*, by Marlene Laruelle, outlined the problems of the internet in contemporary Russia in the most interesting way. It would be worth following her diagnoses on this issue if the book project were to have any continuation. So perhaps the distanced perspective of the outside observer is more proper when trying to describe a mediated area anchored in a specific cultural area. It is well known that we cannot build a vision of identity without comparing it to others (actually only one author of the opening text does it, and to a limited extent). So maybe other countries are also facing similar problems, but after reading Davydov's book we will not be able to find it out. Is it possible that the qualities of Runet, *ipso facto*, are not specific only to Russia?

The book, published by Springer, is a good starting point for those who are looking for basic knowledge about internet research from a territory-oriented approach. The impressive list of theories and concepts in which the researchers have embedded their thoughts is worth emphasizing. However, this should not divert attention from errors in the research procedures and shortcomings in the individual parts of this work. Perhaps the best symbol of this is the cover of the publication – a graphic symbolizing the fall of the Berlin Wall announcing a book about contemporary Russia. Something is wrong here.

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DOI: 10.51480/1899–5101.14.1(28).11

KAARLE NORDENSTRENG (2020). THE RISE AND FALL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION OF JOURNALISTS BASED IN PRAGUE 1946-2016. USEFUL RECOLLECTIONS. PART III. PRAGUE: KAROLINUM PRESS, CHARLES UNIVERSITY 546 PP., ISBN: 978-80-246-4505-6.

With this book, Kaarle Nordenstreng completes his undertaking of recording the 120 years of the history of the international movement of journalists. Two previous volumes of *Useful Recollections: Excursion into the History of the International Movement of Journalists* (Part I, 1986 and Part II, 1988) were written together with then Secretary General Jiří Kubka and published in Prague by the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ). Kaarle Nordenstreng himself was at this time in the role of the President of the IOJ (altogether 14 years, from 1976 to 1990). In addition, before the current Part III, a collection of histories of all the main international journalists' associations – *A History of the International Movement of Journalists: Professionalism versus Politics* – was published in co-authorship with four other academics by Palgrave Macmillan in 2016. Considering that the entire Part III is dedicated to the IOJ, this organization has received the most detailed and proportionally the greatest coverage among the international journalists' associations. The reason is not that the IOJ was the most important, but due to the personal involvement of Nordenstreng in the activities of the IOJ. He does not try to conceal this fact; he does not give the reader a promise of neutrality or "objectivity". On the contrary, he states: "I do not claim to present the definitive account but rather history as I see it, with the advantage of personal involvement" (p. 11). At the same time, he emphasizes his aspiration "to tell the story of the IOJ honestly and openly for posterity"). In so doing, he also discloses that he has "benefitted from a great deal of unique inside knowledge" and from his personal document collection of the 14 years of his presidency.

The documentary foundation of Nordenstreng's work is fundamental: the entire story of the rise and fall of the IOJ is based on an abundance of unpublished documents, which today are all stored in the National Archives of the Czech Republic. The Appendix part of the book contains about 200 pages of various documentation; a bibliography of published sources (about 300 titles) completes the range of the source base of the book. Visually, the reader can imagine the wealth of detail in this book, looking at the photograph on p. 213, where the author is trying to find a foothold among the huge pile of haphazardly stored IOJ documents and

publications found by him in 2011 in a warehouse outside Prague. The story of the IOJ is illustrated with a number of photographs that help the reader to get better familiar with the people, places and events that make this story.

Part One of the book draws a detailed account of the rise and fall of the IOJ from its founding in 1946 to the demise in 2016, preceded by a short pre-history (1894–1945) on the pre-WWII Fédération International des Journalistes (FIJ) in the first chapter. Following a chronological order, the next nine chapters describe the life course of the IOJ year by year. Finally, Nordenstreng synthesizes the chronological chapters into six periods of the history of the IOJ. These reflect the decisive role of the context: the political events and processes in Europe from the Cold War to the collapse of the communist regimes, and the ensuing decades of the democratic transformation of the former Soviet bloc countries. The founding years (1946–47) of the IOJ were colored by "a post-war atmosphere of joy and optimism" (p. 218), which were followed by crisis and split (1948–52) caused by Cold War confrontations. The western member unions left the IOJ in 1948 and founded the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) in 1952. The years 1953–72 was the time of consolidation and growth for the IOJ when the member unions of the Soviet bloc and China and other developing countries were joined by many unions from the Third World. The years of détente and co-operation (1973–89) followed, when the IOJ became increasingly active in journalists' training, publishing, and other professional undertakings. The IOJ also managed to advance cooperation with the IFJ and regional federations in Africa, the Arab world, Asia and Latin America getting support from UNESCO. This success was followed by disintegration (1990–97) and demise (1998–2016) as the consequence of the global changes: the end of both the Cold War and the Soviet Union. As the author states, "the IOJ lost its eastern support pillar and found itself in an unwelcoming geopolitical environment" (p. 177). The previous decades of antagonism between the two world powers had positioned the two main journalists' organizations on opposite sides, and the good will of the bridge-building was insufficient for the reunification of the international movement of journalists. After the IOJ lost its stronghold in Prague along with the closing of the local national member union by the Czech government, many member unions joined the IFJ, and the IOJ was practically dead by the end of the 1990s. It continued its existence *de jure* until the summer of 2016, when the last two presidents informed the congress of the IFJ of closing of this page of history, and officially passed on to the IFJ the heritage of the pre-war FIJ. It was the author of the book Kaarle Nordenstreng who presented the letter of the Presidents to the IFJ congress in Angers (France).

Kaarle Nordenstreng's book is not only a conventional history, but a sizeable part of it presents personal recollections of the people related to the IOJ in one or another way. The second part of the book consists of 18 stories in three

sections. First come ten individuals whose names the reader meets repeatedly in the historical first part of the book, who reflect on their experiences as insiders in the IOJ Secretariat: Josef Klánský, Executive Secretary 1947–50, Jiří Meisner, Secretary General 1958–66, Vaclav Slávik, head of documentation services 1966–92, Ferdinando Zidar, Secretary of International Organizations 1968–72 and Christopher Muzavazi, Secretary for Africa 1988–92 among them.

In the second section, the last four IOJ Presidents give their "testimonies", responding to the same three questions: 1) When and how did you first hear about the IOJ and what were your contacts with the IOJ before your presidency? 2) How did the process of being elected President go and what were your main achievements and disappointments? 3) What is your current assessment of the IOJ, with the wisdom of hindsight? Those four last Presidents were: Kaarle Nordenstreng (Finland) 14 years, Armando Rollemberg (Brazil) 3 years, Manuel Tomé (Mozamique) 1 year, Suleiman Al-Qudah (Jordan) 21 years. The issues and concerns the Presidents express comprise difficulties in reconciliation/bridge-building between the IOJ and IFJ concerning the re-unification of the international movement of journalists. Also, all of them very clearly see the decisive role of political circumstances and events that changed the world at the end of the 20th century. None of them was personally responsible for the disintegration of the IOJ in political turmoil of the 1990s. None of them was able to re-unite the international movement of journalists into a confluence, although each one made some steps to this direction. All four Presidents, however, seem to admit the criticism Manuel Tomé expresses in his "testimony": "We were unable to make the necessary analyses so as to take wiser decisions, to bring the IOJ into line with the new international context" (p. 315).

The third section contains four reflections from outside the IOJ, the most remarkable among them being Théo Bogaerts, Secretary General of the rival organization IFJ in 1952–85. During his term, he had several contacts and meetings with the representatives of the IOJ on various occasions and assesses them as useful for the development of relations between the IFJ and the IOJ. He emphasizes, however, a basic difference between the principles of the two organizations: "the IOJ was particularly interested in the general political objectives, whereas the IFJ restricted its claims to the free flow of information and the exercise of the profession under the most appropriate conditions" (p. 324). Hifzi Topus, communication specialist at UNESCO in 1959–83 reveals the important role of the IOJ in UNESCO's initiatives to establish training centers for journalists and arranging international training meetings in the countries which did not have institutions of journalism education (Ecuador, Turkey, Tunisia and many others). In the work for developing measures to protect journalists working under dangerous conditions UNESCO had good cooperation with the IOJ and also the IFJ and other journalists' organizations. Both, the President of the National Federation of the Italian Press (FNSI)

in 1974–84 Paolo Murialdi, and Wolfgang Mayer, a board member of German dju (Deutsche Journalistinnen und Journalisten Union) in 1986–2016 express their concern about the solidarity of the journalists' organizations and rivalry deeply ingrained in their relationships. Wolfgang Mayer articulates the thought that most probably has passed the minds of all 18 authors of the recollections: "What would have happened if it had been possible to merge the IFJ and the IOJ and to create a really open and inclusive international unity? /---/ I consider this question purely rhetorical and not serious. History is as it happens…" (p.342). The author of the book seems to agree with Mayer, while stating that "the IOJ was an object rather than a subject of history" (p.231). This is a conviction that he reached through the personal experience of his presidency and the criticism of his opponents both in the academic and activism fields, the latter unavoidably influenced by political climate of the era.

Within the west-east political discourse, the IOJ as the eastern pillar of the movement was "stigmatized as a "communist" or "Soviet organization" (p.220). The fact is that the largest member organization of the IOJ was the Soviet Union of Journalists, which in reality was not a professional organization nor a proper trade union, but an ideological institution supervised by the Soviet Communist Party. This fact directly affected the reputation of the IOJ as well as of its Presidents from the western viewpoint. As the president of the IOJ for 14 years, Nordenstreng became a marked man in the eyes of a number of his academic colleagues and many western political actors. In his "testimony" in the book, he casts light on the circumstances of his acceptance of the Presidency of the IOJ, and the consequences of this action thereafter on his professional life. The key individuals involved in the process of nominating Nordenstreng as the President of the OIJ belonged to the top of the Soviet *nomenklatura*: the Vice-President of the Soviet Union of Journalists, Alexander Losev, and the Dean of the Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University, Professor Yassen Zassoursky. Small wonder Nordenstreng became labelled a collaborator or even a "communist", and in Finland "suffered from the political stigma as a fellow traveller of the Soviets" (p. 230). Nordenstreng does not make a secret of his "far left political orientation" (p. 298) at that time, and the belief in the progressive impact of the communist state on the world order. As he confesses, his "overall motivation for this voluntary work was an idealistic desire to change the world for the better by influencing developments in journalism" (p.230). He admits that he still has mixed feelings about his role as the President of the IOJ, and finds several reasons for self-criticism, including the harshest sounding: "I failed to maintain trust in relations with strategic colleagues in the Secretariat and the leadership" (p.231). When describing the success and failures of the IOJ, Nordenstreng does not, however, have doubts about the importance of the organization for the international movement of journalists. The (historical) truth is that having been left

in limbo outside the IFJ because of unreconcilable ideologies, the journalists' organizations of the Soviet bloc countries got a chance to conduct international networking under the umbrella of the IOJ. They received a window of opportunity to reach out beyond their countries and, as Pál Tamás has put it in his recollection, "the local IOJ projects offered them a set of alternative feelings, adding to their direct experience and real environment." The IOJ also brought the national media elite in Central and Eastern European socialist countries a certain prestige in their local circles, and a possibility "to create themselves more room to manoeuvre with the local State and Party control" (p. 266).

The Rise and Fall of the International Organization of Journalists is a capital piece of work that is not possible to read through in one sitting. It contains a lot of information that will open the eyes of even the most knowledgeable, doing it in both ways – as a documental evidence and as a personalized account.

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BOOK REVIEW

DOI: 10.51480/1899–5101.14.1(28).12

DMITRY CHERNOBROV (2020). PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF INTERNATIONAL CRISES IDENTITY, ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY AND SELF-AFFIRMATION. LANHAM: ROWMAN & LITTLEFIELD PUBLISHERS, 256 PP., ISBN: 978–1786610034.

With his book *Public Perception of International Crises Identity, Ontological Security and Self-Affirmation*, Dmitry Chernobrov tries to show the relationships between crisis, social movement, national identity, and the public perception. The author has attempted to present the particular case of the Arab uprising thatstarted in 2010in order to research public perception of the meaningful event. The subject matter and the presented problems were characterized and discussed in a very original way.

The author compares Russians and Britons in the context of each nation's perception of the Arab uprising. The UK and Russia, two countries with imperial histories, are treated by the author as examples of Western and Russian identity. Chernobrov emphasizes the mass media's shaping of public perception as the main information for the communities and individuals. The book includes empirical layers as well, as the author compares data from 51 semi-structured interviews with citizens of the UK and Russia.

In his introduction (p. 4), Chernobrov says:

> "Collective identities – or the communities of people united by the subjective sense of common belonging and inner imagining are central to public perception of international events. Making sense of complex international crises is a process in which self and other identities are constructed, and multiple others become idealised, repelled, accepted, or rejected. Vast literature has illustrated how self-identity develops through contrast with otherness, making both self and other present in the representations of the international. Identities are an inherent part of describing international events and their agents, while news about these events is received in complex social contexts".

The book comprises three parts. The first, "The Drawing Self," starts with the chapter "Perception and Collective Identity." In this chapter, theauthor tries to establish a link between collective identity and perception. Chernobrov says that the term "international" has been related to the contexts of states, nation structures, elites, or groups of interest, but is rarely related to individuals.

Moreover, he analyzes identity formation in external and internal understandings. In Chernobrov's opinion, the perception of what constitutes 'international' and 'individual' is always involved in communication in a social context. The media are the main information source about international events for most citizens, responsible for agenda setting and interpretation of international events. The author points out that beliefs, opinions, and behaviors are not only personal, but social as well. An individual is created by a collective, as Chernobrov indicates.

In chapter two, "Anxiety of the Unknown and (Mis)Recognition," the author describes several aspects of the problem of security, demonstrating that security as an identity is still an incomplete project. The author presents ontological security theory, the idea that unexpected events like a crisis can destabilize a community. The anxiety of the unknown can trigger a sense of uncertainty, upset identity, and interrupt the sense of continuity. Such events involve a self-defense mechanism. The (mis)recognizing gives an illusion of knowing or recognizing unexpected events. The communities maintain self-conceptions and meanings as sources of security and empowerment to protect the continuity in the international affairs aspects as well.

In chapter three, the author focuses on the phenomenon of self-drawing, the term Chernobrov understands as a constant renegotiating of the identity in the context of internal and external sources. Individuals strive for security; however, this security can be narcissistic. As Chernobrov observes: "Narcissistic security is dubious as it is likely to cause aggressive responses and self-affirmations, and to damage the physical and identity security in the long run" (p. 75). This chapter closes the first part of the book, which is devoted to the links between the anxiety of the unknown and the protections of positive self-conceptions.

Chernobrov focuses on the problem of perception of others in the second part of the book. In the fourth chapter, he analyzes what it means to be similar or different, noticing that difference is often associated with negative attitudes. Dialogue and mutual reconciliation can be an antidote. The language of difference and hierarchy is especially crucial. The author considerers the relationships between sympathy/antipathy and similarity/difference, underlining the importance and need to discuss these issues.

In chapter five, the author discusses how events are constructed in community memory, which he terms "collective memory." The collective memory plays a key aspect in constructing the self-conceptions of communities, characterized by selective memory and the image of the crisis. Chernobrov (p. 145) also notes:

> "Chosen memories become chosen for the usability and inner significance they can offer for identity construction and the reduction of anxiety. Remembering creates a boundary between selves and others, while forgetting can prevent the

> self from perceiving the other for what it is, outside the self's own troubling past and the need to revisit and reconcile with".

The third part of the book is empirical. In the sixth chapter, Chernobrov focuses on the public perception of international crises. The author is interested in public perception in Russia and the UK of the Arab Spring, particularly related to Libya and Syria. His goal is to compare opinion about the uprising through similar (un)conscious mechanisms among the general public of two nations. The author analyzes 51 semi-structured in-depth interviews of Britons and Russians about their understanding of the Arab Spring in Libya and Syria. The study took place in 2012–2013. The author explains the field of research (p. 152):

> "The choice of Russia and the UK was also driven by considerations of effective linguistic and cultural interpretation: interviews were conducted directly in English in the UK and in Russian in Moscow. Interviewees were British and Russian nationals respectively, shared a common national and cultural identity, and were primarily following their national media".

A discussion about qualitative research has always been as challenging, the researcher is torn between the lack of objectivity and the comprehensiveness of qualitative studies. In my opinion, qualitative research can be treated as a worthy contribution to the academic discourse. The main advantage is the depth of research because objectivity is less important. The findings of the research presented by Chernobrov gives the reader compelling conclusions about two nations. However, we must remember that these conclusions are rather an impetus for further studies. Most Britons described the uprising as a Western-inspired struggle of democracy against oppression, while most Russians saw the event as a dangerous destabilization. The attitudes and opinions expressed by those interviewed are characteristic of their own sense of identity related to opinions disseminated among nations, both familiar and troubling experiences.

Chapter seven comprises the study of the wider societal, political, and media narratives concerning the Arab Spring in Russia and the UK. Chernobrov notes that the UK is representative of the West. It is worth quoting (p. 10):

> "I witness the construction and the gradual downfall of the 'good rebel' in British public discourse as a Westerner fighting for democracy in an Arab street. In Russia, the political and media representations evolved from (mis)-recognising the first uprisings as familiar economic crises to explaining themas a rejection of stability forced by Western strategic interference".

In my opinion, Chernobrov's book is a valuable contribution to the discussion about national crisis perception. The conclusions about the national identity, public opinion, opinion leaders, and the media's function in public perception of international events seem to me particularly crucial. The advantage of this book is its attempt to show two perspectives of the same event—Russian and Western. The qualitative study analyzing public perception is the best tool to achieve a comprehensive outcome.

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BOOK REVIEW

DOI: 10.51480/1899–5101.14.1(28).13

TERRY FLEW (2018). UNDERSTANDING GLOBAL MEDIA. SECOND EDITION. LONDON: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 227 PP., ISBN: 978-1-137-44653-4.

Written by internationally recognised Australian scholar and Media and Communication professor Terry Flew, *Understanding Global Media* presents readers with a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of communications media and its relations to various aspects of modern societies. Some examples of these aspects are political and media cultures, media policies and national media systems, modern production and consumer culture, and the questions of identities within a globalised world. Being the second edition of the 2007 original, the textbook proves to be a rather up-to-date source of information about global media. The author covers events such as the 2016 election of Donald Trump and the Brexit referendum, and analyses their lasting consequences and what we can learn from them on the subjects of, among other things, global media and communications, the role of nation-states and the dilemma between national and cosmopolitan identities, and even media economics.

In his work, Flew presents us with a well-structured and extremely thorough overview and precise analysis on the different approaches of global media with special emphasis on the different theories of modernisation, political economy and globalisation, all of which are more closely explored in their respective dedicated chapters. Flew not only describes and compares the different approaches, but also places them in a historical overview, enabling us, the readers, to gain a valuable insight of how the examined approaches changed over time in accordance with the various socio-cultural, political and technological changes.

Carefully displayed groundwork ensures even readers without excessive background knowledge regarding modernisation and globalisation theories can easily follow his arguments. Flew then presents us with a wide range of perspectives, with which he explores the connections and interdependencies between, for instance, global media and national governments, participatory communication and media consumption, network society, cultures and technological systems, as well as media geography and global media production. While doing so, Flew also supports and illustrates his arguments through various case studies, one of them being the exemplification of the co-productions of movies between China and the United States in the late 2000s and 2010s. This endeavour seemed to be blooming despite the obvious political and ideological differences, and

the fact that the two countries have been increasingly seen as rivals for global leadership.

Additionally, to the author's evident knowledge in the explored fields, the tone of the book is also refreshing. Since all of the explored concepts and theories are put into a greater perspective, it results in an unbiased end-product that approaches all questions and debates by considering all sides of the arguments. This aspect seems to be all the more important as it allows the author to take a unique approach towards the analysed material, which tends to be the most visible in the case of globalisation theories.

Flew argues, for example, that while overstating the extent, to which ostensibly global companies have been able to disconnect their pursuits from national governments, in many cases such corporations are rather just national actors with external operations that tend to face a strong competition from local competitors. In close connection with that assumption, a tendency to understate the significance of national identity and the importance of national-cultural symbols can also be observed, even though television studies have long shown that media consumers generally prefer local content over anything imported when presented with a choice. Globalisation theorists however tend to see connections both between culture and identity and between nation-states and national media systems in a sense that they are all becoming increasingly de-territorialized, resulting in "the proliferation of identities that are less and less connected to nation-states" (p. 188). Consequently, these theories also tend to link these 'post-national' identities and the growing role of NGOs and civil society in shaping governance, hence decreasing the attributed importance to the pull factors of national identities.

By analysing a diverse works of authors such as Giddens, Castells and Appadurai, Flew concludes that we get rather conflicting messages regarding the role of nations and nation-states which – as he convincingly argues – continue to have considerable significance. Accordingly, he states that while globalisation theories tend commonly to see global media and communication as of the utmost importance in determining the nature of production and consumption, culture and identity, practices of power and governance, they also tend to underestimate said continuing significance of nation-states. As Flew explains (p. 98):

> "On the one hand, globalisation is seen as deterritorialising production, power and culture to such a degree that it no longer makes sense to focus on the national level, and that substantive engagement requires a turn to supranational or even global form of governance. On the other hand, the continuing and possibly growing, strength of national media systems, and the proliferation of new media capitals around the globe suggest that globalism per se is a less powerful force than is being sometimes assumed, and that the

> international expansion of media is driven more by regional or geolinguistic dynamics than by those of an omnipotent global culture".

He adds that it is also important to note that certain movements that have challenged the power of nation-states in the past have themselves been of a nationalistic nature (such as the Scottish, the Catalan or the Basque nationalist movements), while resistance towards globalisation can also manifest in the form of nationalism. Flew points out that with the Brexit referendum and the elections of leaders such as Trump in the United States, Erdoğan in Turkey, Orbán in Hungary and Kaczyński in Poland, the 2010s provided us with a noticeably high number of examples to illustrate the latter case.

As a conclusion to his detailed work, Flew reminds us that even though the internet was global from its inception, "national governments never really left the stage", and thus it is only a matter of resources and political will for national actors to significantly shape and manage global media. As he puts it "media can ultimately be as global as those who consume its content wish it to be". This, Flew explains, leads to the continuing coexistence of national identities and more deterritorialised, cosmopolitan versions, which all should be taken into consideration when studying the phenomenon of global media.

All in all, given the extensiveness and the complexity of the book, detailed with illustrative case studies and examples to bring the theories closer to the reader, *Understanding Global Media* could prove equally essential to seasoned experts seeking to deepen their knowledge of global media even further, and to newcomers from different backgrounds seeking a good entry point into the field.

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BOOK REVIEW

DOI: 10.51480/1899–5101.14.1(28).14

CHRISTIAN HOFMANN AND MONICA KIRNER-LUDWIG (EDS.) (2020). TELECINEMATIC STYLISTICS. LONDON: BLOOMSBURY ACADEMIC, 352 PP., ISBN: 9781350042872.

This multi-authored collection of articles is a highly valuable and useful contribution to the growing field of research on tele-cinematic stylistics, developing extensively since the early years of the 21st Century. The book revolves around the five major topics of the telecinematic studies: the particular stylistics of genres, sub-genres and formats, both fiction and non-fiction; the specific aspects of various genres and formats (as dialogue, characters, uses of sound or editing etc.); linguistic methodologies, usable and useful in the analysis of film and television; multimodal analysis of film and television texts; representation studies as applied to these texts with their cultural context-relatedness and ideological meanings in view.

Four chapters are, therefore, devoted to the role and functions of the language and the language patterns developed in the telecinematic discourse. The diversified source material varies from feature films, through the soap operas, to sitcoms. The main methodology used here is a corpus analysis, although the scope and specificity of research vary – between the micro-analyses, focused on one particular trait of the telecinematic discourse, to the wide-reaching analysis of the entire corpus of the verbal language of a particular TV station (in this case, Sydney TV) or genre (soap opera).

The second cluster, consisting of five articles, deals with the cinematic discourse, composed of images and other (non-linguistic) resources. The analyzed materials are documentaries, horror movies, comedy/drama, and cinematic trailers. Pragma-stylistics, critical discourse analysis, conversation analysis, close textual reading, and multimodal methodologies are applied here, while the authors combine them to come up with their own qualitative methodologies. Such as, the first creative combination of the analysis of linguistic pragmatic markers and the qualitative analysis of the relationships between characters and mise-en-scene.

The third part – four papers – deals with the intermediality and transcoding or transmodal adaptation, i.e., the transfer of meaning between different semiotic resources. The authors also tackle, albeit not extensively, the issues of intertextuality. They compare and analyze the use of various semiotic modes in the texts transferred from one medium to another (form example from a literary text to a film) or between different layers of the same text (like spoken dialogue vs. captions). The source material here would be historical drama, advertisements,

and various motion pictures, including Steven Spielberg's adaptation of Tintin comic strips and some Hitchcock films. The methodology draws on pragmatics, and intertextual and semiological tools.

All the authors draw from the shared basic definition of the telecinematic discourse, which in turn is based on the classic definition that was coined in the book "Telecinematic discourse: Approaches to the language of films and television series" by Piazza, Bednarek and Rossi and published in 2011. Still, the editors of "Telecinematic Stylistics", Christian Hofmann and Monica Kirner-Ludwig propose to broaden the meaning of televisual language to include all kinds of modes and cross-modal links (while also admitting that the visual and aural experiences of the viewer constitute two possibly separate realms). Hofmann and Kirner-Ludwig also – with media convergence in mind – propound the application of the concept of the telecinematic discourse to various media genres. They do not want to restrict the discourse to just fictional genres, nor to only cinematic, even though they also acknowledge the multi-layeredness of the use of language in the film (i.e., not just dialogues, but also monologues, off-screen voice, voice-over, written language, combined with the diegetic and no-diegetic sounds, music etc.).

The editors provide a relatively comprehensive overview of the relevant telecinematic analyses conducted heretofore. The overview helps to place the analyses proposed here in the larger scholarly context. A valuable and interesting part of the book is also the discussion (together with some solutions proposed) of the technical and methodological problems associated with the analysis of audiovisual text, like sources, transcription, the multi-levelled character of communication, designed audiences vs. actual. The authors solve these problems in various ways, while using the existing corpora of media language, their own transcriptions, or the transcriptions found online.

Overall, the publication shows the wide array of tools and analytical devices useful in the analysis of the televisual and cinematic text, thus presenting the cinematic stylistics as the all-encompassing field of analysis of the audiovisual text or discourse in film and television. The object of the analysis of this particular set of tools can be stylistics of televisual and cinematic texts as a whole, particular stylistics of different media genres, formats, particular films or series, or stylistics of chosen directors or directors of photography The methodology developed within its area, though, can be also used for a multitude of other purposes in many research projects – which can be a very useful outcome of this book for scholars using various languages and analyzing a variety of media texts and discourses.

While the collection is undoubtedly valuable and useful, particularly to those interested in media-study methodologies, there are also some shortcomings. Probably most relevant stems from the overarching interest with the spoken

language. While the authors admit the multimodal nature of the telecinematic text, they either limit their efforts to the analysis of the linguistic layer of the material or only acknowledge its double-layered (language and image) character. The book could probably contribute to the progress of the multimodal analysis of the telecinematic stylistics, but the actual analyses do not practically account for the complex nature of this phenomenon. Another shortcoming will concern mostly non-English speaking readers, and researchers interested in non-English language material. Linguistic analyses, both quantitative and qualitative, are carried out on the English corpora and English texts, respectively. Due to the grammar, syntax and semantic differences between languages, part of them (particularly the most detailed ones, like the research on the demonstrative pronouns in film or on "problem talk" in soap operas) are rather difficult or even impossible to extrapolate. The results are then rather ideographic than universal, and their relevance – for non-English speaking researchers – is thus limited (unless they are used for comparative purposes). This reservation, though does not apply to all the articles. The level of universality is diversified, and some findings (like the interesting categorization of humorous devices in TV series, the application of cooperation principles to the analysis of horror movies, or the attempt to grasp the image-language relationships in the close-captioned films) can easily transcend language limitations.

Despite these limitations, the collection of the essays on telecinematic stylistics is a valuable resource of methodology, interesting insights, and creative solutions for methodological problems. The book can be recommended to both students of media and communication, as well as seasoned media scholars.

Małgorzata Lisowska-Magdziarz
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RIPE@DIALOGUE. A WEBINAR SERIES ON UNIVERSALISM AND PUBLIC SERVICE MEDIA GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN, SEPTEMBER 9, 16, AND 23, 2020

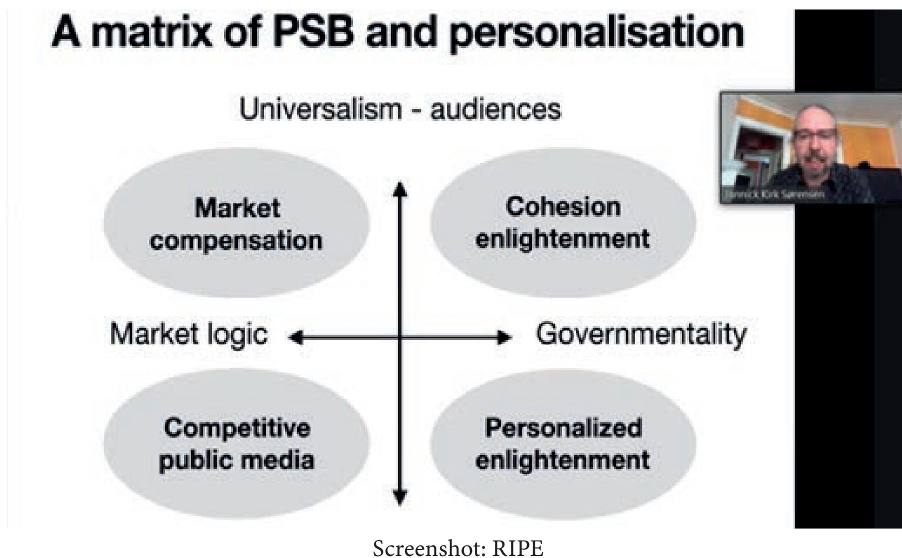
The three-part webinar series, entitled RIPE@Dialogues, was dedicated to discussing the issue of the need to revitalize the universalism mission by re-envisioning its conceptual and practical dimensions. RIPE@Dialogues were hosted online by the International Association of Public Media Researchers (IAMPR) and co-curated by Nordicom at the University of Gothenburg. The seminars were organized with the support of the CORDI Research Consortium, University of Helsinki, and Tampere University.

The first session took place on September 9th 2020, and was focused on fundamentals – it addressed the foundations of universalism and their translation to current contexts. At the beginning of the session, a few words of introduction were spoken by Lizzie Jackson (London South Bank University), who is the President of the International Association of Public Media Researchers. Afterward, Barbara Thomaß (Ruhr-University Bochum) gave a presentation on the history of universalism and PSM, as well as modern statehood. She claimed that universalism emerged as an intellectual reality to promote the idea of equality and, although the concept becomes more and more inclusive, in practice there are more exclusions. Later on Peter Goodwin (University of Westminster) argued that in the current, digital age, the PSB concept evolves into PSM, which also signifies that the content (no longer limited geographically) is delivered through all possible platforms, and this situation poses new opportunities and challenges. During the discussion dedicated to the fundamentals section, the case of tension between the presumed universality of rights and the individuals granted those rights was raised. There were also comments on the challenge to change the basis of universalism, as currently it is not just based on European ideals but is a global concept.

The following session, addressing the practical aspects of PSM organizations and the challenge of universalism, occurred on September 16th 2020. Hilde Van den Bulck (Drexel University) with Karen Donders (Free University of Brussels-VUB) presented the first example using their research of the universality of PSM and preschool audiences in Flanders. The main conclusion is that there is a broader trend where public broadcasters while trying to maintain their position in the highly competitive environment, relinquish the principle of universality, which in turn is being gradually eroded. Next, the webinar

attendees had the opportunity to listen to a speech given by Julie Münter Lassen (University of Copenhagen), who presented the example of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation. She focused on the multi-channel strategy and the issue of audience fragmentation and said that PSM can be valuable only while being used by the people, so it is crucial to curate the content in a way that the public knows about its variety. The discussion devoted to PSM's practical aspects contained many interesting cases, such as the case of a "too successful" PSM raised by Gregory F. Lowe (Northwestern University in Qatar) or the issue of public support addressed by Philip Savage (McMaster University). Moreover, Roberto Suárez Candel (European Broadcasting Union) noted that the discussion highlighted the case of how *ex-ante* regulation kills innovation.

Figure 1. Jannick Kirk Sørensen's presentation during Session 3 of RIPE@Dialogue.



Screenshot: RIPE

The third and final session, addressing the (near) futures of universalism, such as datafication, took place on September 23rd 2020. Firstly, Jannick Kirk Sørensen (Aalborg University) gave a presentation on personalized Universalism in the Age of Algorithms. Starting with the tension between the public and private media, he introduced the concept of „personalized enlightenment", describing an editorially curated recommendation system, (which takes into account the PSM values) of the content of high relevance to individual citizens. Next was a speech by Michał Głowacki (University of Warsaw) who with Lizzie Jackson conducted research on creative media clusters. The presentation focused on the differences in organizational cultures between high tech companies and PSM, which have often been described as „fortresses", which believe they have done enough regarding adaptation to the new media environment. During the

discussion, it was noted that there is often an assumption that PSM organizations are unified. However it was stressed that the organizations, despite their similar structures, do vary greatly, and there are even internal antagonisms, sometimes even between specific divisions or departments, resulting in resistance to change due to competition over resources. The case of PSM's dialogue and interaction with society were also discussed.

The webinar series pointed out the crucial challenges that PSM are currently facing. It also provided the chance to share and discuss best practices regarding PSM organizations and their attempts to adapt to the modern, digital environment. Both organizers, speakers, and debaters agreed that this was a great opportunity for the reflection on universalism and PSM.

Dagmara Sidyk
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THE 4TH PILLAR OF DEMOCRACY: FREE MEDIA AND MEDIA SELF-REGULATION IN POLAND WARSAW, POLAND, SEPTEMBER 25, 2020

The Erich Brost Institute (EBI) for International Journalism of the Technical University Dortmund organized a conference entitled: "The 4th Pillar of Democracy: Free Media and Media Self-regulation in Poland", which took place on September 25th 2020, in the Marriot Hotel in Warsaw. One of the main objectives of the event was to raise awareness among Polish journalists, media associations, and representatives of journalism training and the judiciary of international standards for media self-regulation in Poland. For this purpose, experts from the Universities of Dortmund, Warsaw, and Wrocław, representatives of the Council of Europe, as well as those of firmly-established and internationally recognized press councils were invited to participate in a one-day workshop in Warsaw.

The conference started with the warm welcoming of the main conference organizer – Isabella Kurkowski of the EBI, who drew up the plan and agenda for the workshop. The event was officially opened by the Dean of the Faculty of Journalism, Information and Books Studies of the University of Warsaw – Janusz Włodzimierz Adamowski, who emphasized the role of media in post-communistic Poland with the (still-needed) necessity of the discussion on the importance of media as power and expressed his concern about the state of the media in Poland. The participants were also welcomed by Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska and Adam Szynol, both from the University of Wrocław, and Suzanne Fengler from Technical University Dortmund.

The opening speech was given by Mirosław Wróblewski (the Office of the Commissioner for Human Rights in Poland), who addressed the freedom of expression in Poland from the perspective of human rights and international standards. The speaker noticed that talking about the media situation in Poland is very difficult and unfortunately many Polish institutions do not respect national and international standards dedicated to freedom of speech and access to information. During the speech, the main challenges for media freedom and freedom of speech were mentioned and discussed, including the lack of effective institutional and democratic control over the public media operation, the disturbance in public media narratives in the electoral campaigns, and the problem of the chilling effect regarding media and journalists. The speaker also pointed out the most important future threats to media freedom and freedom

of speech in Poland, include "repolonization" of media, implementation of the media owner concept, and poor self-regulation of journalists.

The next speech addressed the Council of Europe's standards and its support to journalism and media self-regulation, was given by Urška Umek (Council of Europe). The presentation started with a reminder of the rationale for media self-regulation: U. Umek emphasized that it is not only a dialogue between the media and the public, or a commitment of the media to assume the responsibility for the quality of public debate, but also a quicker and less expensive (than the judiciary) dispute resolution mechanism, which can serve as a media literacy tool. The core of the speech was the presentation of the Council of Europe's self-regulation standards, especially the PACE Resolution 1636 (2008) – Indicators for media in a democracy. The presentation also addressed the emerging challenges for media self-regulation.

In the next part of the conference, there was a plenary session entitled "Media Self-regulation and Journalism Ethics in Poland: A perspective from the academic journalism education" with the participation of six speakers from various research institutions. The session began with an opening speech by Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska about "Democracy and the Media. Media Accountability Systems in Central and Eastern Europe. Poland in a Comparative Perspective". B. Dobek-Ostrowska has attempted to identify the media model to which Poland belongs and has qualified the country as a representative of the Politicized Media model. This model is characterized by strong political instrumentalization of the public media, strong political engagement of the media owners, deep differentiation in the journalistic culture, and a sharp division in society.

The plenary session's second speech was given by Michał Głowacki (University of Warsaw) and Michał Kuś (University of Wrocław), who presented the polarized model of media accountability based on their research of the Polish media landscape. The main idea – as emphasized by the speakers – was to provoke a discussion in the context of the current Polish media system. The presentation emphasized the fundamental problem: the weak condition of the Polish media accountability system. Self-regulation in Poland's media does not support the development of professionalism because it has been left to the journalistic associations that do not speak with a united voice. Głowacki and Kuś presented the basis of the polarization process in Poland by distinguishing both systemic and behavioral elements. In their closing remarks, they discussed how to prevent the negative effects of the polarization process, which damagingly impacts the sense of community.

Adam Szynol (University of Wrocław) then delivered a presentation focused on the repolonization, deconcentration, and redefinition of Polish media. A. Szynol tackled the problem of media ownership in Poland and explained in detail the concepts and consequences of the concepts of repolonization and

deconcentration. These twin ideas had been raised by the representatives of the Polish Government and Parliament from the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice) political party. Szynol finished his presentation by stating that the repolonization and deconcentration of Polish media will lead to a redefinition of not only the media landscape but also the whole democratic system. Szynol argued the current situation of the media is, as a topic, now more important than either their regulation or self-regulation. He called for a stop to this "madness" and to fight for the media because soon there might be nothing left to regulate.

Jacek Nożewski (University of Lower Silesia) presented a speech entitled "From media to political participation: The media's role in the social polarization of Polish Twitter users during the 2020 presidential elections", which was based on big data research – a huge amount of data from 8 million internet users. The research results showed that Twitter facilitates communication heterogeneity thus leading to the fragmentation of the relatively focused public spheres that are influenced by the media. In addition, polish Twitter users are not only more willing to join structures with high heterogeneity but also to show greater interest in socially and politically important issues.

Katarzyna Kopeć-Ziemczyk (University of Warsaw) presented the methodology of her research project entitled "Media polarization in Poland – empirical evidence from the 2018 Elections". Ms Kopeć-Ziemczyk analyzed media through the lenses of a three-dimensional model of polarization: politics, media, and tools for effecting polarization. She stressed that media plays an important role for society but politics use media as a tool of war and also reminded that the most important person in the communication process is always the receiver of information.

After a short lunch break, the participants of the workshop had the opportunity to learn more about press self-regulation mechanisms implemented in Germany, through the presentation given by Manfred Protze (German Press Council). He not only explained the organization, structure, and rules of procedure of the Press Council in Germany, but also presented (in a story-telling manner) the idea of the current power of the media. He stressed that, according to the German Federal Constitutional Court, press freedom is a very high-ranked value, and the Press Council works only with the help of the public. Every reader has the right to report a (possible) violation of the Press Council guidelines, and the judgments of the Press Council are available to the public – this seems to be the best way to punish the violator. In his closing remarks, M. Protze stated that the Press Council in Germany is not a result of media regulation, but cooperation between journalists and media owners, and found this phenomenon remarkable.

Ljiljana Zurovac (Independent Media Expert; Former Executive Director of the Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina) talked about "The Press Council in Bosnia and Herzegovina" where she considered challenges of establishing

media self-regulation in a transitional multi-ethnic country aiming to join the EU. As Ms Zurovac said Bosnia and Herzegovina faces a lot of ethical challenges in most of its media such as breaches of professional standards and one-sided stories or political propaganda, fake news, and hate speech based mostly on nationalism and prejudices. Her presentation emphasized that establishing and developing media self-regulation in any post-conflict country, is a huge and demanding work and it demands education and a mindset reset of the media people, politicians, decision-makers, and public in general. As a solution, one of the improvement activities of the press council could be a School for Media Ethics for Students of Journalism or an Online School for Media Ethics.

Participants of the round-table discussion during the conference.

Photo by Paulina Pacuła (European Journalism Observatory

In the final part of the conference, there was a round-table discussion amongst all the workshop participants on the future outlook. M Głowacki emphasized the importance of thinking "out of the box" about media culture and professionalization and the first step in that direction could be a round table to establish a common good for the media environment. J. Nożewski mentioned agenda setting and framing as one of the most important communication theories nowadays. He also admitted that there is no comprehensive regulation of social media in Poland and there should be a dialogue between media associations about ethics. B. Dobek-Ostrowska emphasized the role of two kinds of groups which are important for media self-regulation – researchers and practitioners of media. S. Fengler suggested this issue should be analyzed on the international level, and M. Wróblewski stressed the idea of integration of different environments connected with media. On the other hand, Paulina Pacuła (European Journalism Observatory) stressed the problem of the lack of ethics education at workplaces such as newsrooms and not very good terms of job contracts for journalists.

The event was a great platform for the exchange of various research approaches, thoughts, and practices, which enabled a discussion on the state of media freedom and freedom of speech in Poland. The country is still experiencing a strong politically motivated polarization of the media and substantial actions are needed to create free and independent media. The expected outcome of the workshop is preparing relevant recommendations for the possible implementation of self-regulation of politically independent media in Poland.

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11TH NATIONAL METHODOLOGICAL CONFERENCE OF MEDIA EXPERTS "VIRTUAL: WORDS, SOCIETIES, IDENTITIES" WARSAW, POLAND, NOVEMBER 19–20, 2020

The Laboratory of Media Studies at the University of Warsaw with the cooperation of the Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies, organized in the second half of November 2020, 11th edition of National Methodological Conference of Media Experts entitled "Virtual: Words, Societies, Identities". Scholars and researchers from top Polish universities and research centres gathered for the two-day event, where they had an opportunity to firstly, share their newest research interests, results and conducted studies, and take part in the workshops which are traditionally organized along with the conference itself. Due to restrictions imposed by the University of Warsaw and the Polish government, the conference was carried out entirely via an online platform.

The event, which took place between 19th and 20th of November, was split into two parts – on Thursday, 19th of November two workshops were held and on 20th of November, 26 researchers and scholars had an opportunity to present their papers and presentations. The common theme which linked the first part with the second was the perception of virtual in modern reality. The participants tried to address questions which appear during gradual process of virtualisation of human's lives, among them whether this phenomenon can be seen in positive or negative light, how does it fits in thoughts and ideas developed by Neil Postman's techno-pessimistic theory versus Marshall McLuhan's techno-optimistic concepts, or what could be the possible impact of mentioned processes on the direction in which civilization and culture will advance, and finally, how this new, immersive reality supported by engaging media can shape and create new, alternative virtual cultures and societies.

DAY 1

First day of the conference began with the official opening and a short speech from the organisers who thanked the participants who declared their will to attend one of two available workshops. The first one, entitled "Virtual ethnography in the light of social distancing" was carried out by prof. Jakub Nowak (Maria Curie-Skłodowska University). Attendees of the workshop were able to hear about virtual ethnography – a topic of increasing importance and interest in the era of the COVID-19 pandemic. The discussion during the workshop focused, among other things, on what network discourses are, what methods and tools

are useful in ethnographic studies, and when can we talk about digital technology as an object of discourse.

Meanwhile, the second workshop entitled "Semiotics and discourse analysis of sVOD platforms" was hosted by prof. Małgorzata Lisowska-Magdziarz (Jagiellonian University) and dr Agnieszka Całek (Jagiellonian University) . A few days before the event, participants who decided to attend this workshop were asked to watch certain titles available via sVOD platforms. At the event itself, prof. Lisowska-Magdziarz and dr Całek presented certain tropes, figures and possible meanings which linked the watched materials and moderated a discussion between participants, who, by following the prepared guideline, debated about the material, and tried to decompose it into the prime factors.

After the end of both sessions, all participants meet once again and discussed the outcomes and gained knowledge from past few hours of the workshops. The discussion threads were a introduction to the second day of the conference.

DAY 2

The second day of the 11th National Methodological Conference of Media Experts began with the official speech given by prof. Janusz Adamowski, the dean of Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies at the University of Warsaw. In his brief opening, he thanked both the organizers and participants, that even under such difficult conditions, they continued to support the tradition of organizing this conference and other events with vast, previous history and fruitful past editions. Prof. Adamowski concluded his speech with an expression of gratitude to such endeavors thanks to which Polish academia can develop and thrive even during unprecedented circumstances.

The plenary session was opened with a presentation by dr Radosław Sojak, MA Beata Królicka and MA Andrzej Meller from the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń. Their presentation was devoted to the image of women in contemporary Polish TV series – the analysis covered eight TV series broadcasted by TVP, TVN and Polsat and was focused on stereotypes subordinated to convention – for example that women are more often presented as emotional and family-focused. The second presentation – by prof. Jacek Wasilewski and MA Agata Kostrzewa – showed the danger of the Internet, especially for young people. The researchers presented the most popular myths about menstruation, showing at the same time that menstruation can be treated as an element of stereotyping. The third presentation on virtual worlds in the field of communication was held by Professor Monika Kaczmarek-Śliwińska (University of Warsaw). Then, dr Alicja Waszkiewicz-Raviv (University of Warsaw) spoke about the fact that VR should be seen as an opportunity to build understanding between stakeholders.

The second panel chaired by dr Monika Kożdoń-Dębecka (University of Warsaw) focused on ways in which virtual reality can influence humans in everyday life. Dr Krzysztof Flasiński (Szczecin University) presented how VR technology can be used in communicating climate change and its impact on the lives of modern society. In his presentation, he stressed that one of the key and often greatly underestimated factors which have an impact on a person immersed in a climate change app, is the ability to hear sounds correlated with watched images. M.Sc. Dagmara Tarasiuk (University of Lodz) showed on the example of hatha yoga the paradoxes which emerged due to coronavirus pandemic outbreak, highlighting that though yoga is traditionally perceived as an individual practice, in modern, mostly western culture, it became a social phenomenon where the link both between participants themselves and with their instructor is essential. MA Wojciech Dudziak (Każda Pomoc) and MA Martyna Kisio (University of Warsaw) presented the results of a report which summed up social initiatives created because of the coronavirus pandemic outbreak.

The third panel was chaired by prof. Jacek Wasilewski from the University of Warsaw. The first speech was presented by MA Filip Gołębiewski, from the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń and the Institute for Discourse and Dialogue. In his paper, he presented the topic of identity media in digital reality on the example of an analysis of television materials during the 2020 presidential campaign in Poland. This topic was also discussed by MA Mateusz Bartoszewicz from the University of Wrocław, who spoke about the usefulness of the concept of political parallelism in explaining the crisis of the Polish public debate. Another speech on the election subject was given by MA Grzegorz Kowalczyk, from the University of Warsaw, on fake news during this election period. MA Bogdan Andrushchenko (University of Warsaw) gave a presentation on the Belarusian spring and the role of social media. MA Katarzyna Piórecka and MA Marlena Sztyber (University of Warsaw) analysed online media content in the United States and Poland.

The fourth and final panel, chaired by Dr Karolina Brylska (University of Warsaw) centred around younger generations of media users. Dr Karolina Brylska and prof. Tomasz Gackowski (University of Warsaw) presented the first results from their study on different ways of learning and teaching via traditional face-to-face lessons and ones performed via VR application and equipment. MA Anita Kwiatkowska (University of Warsaw) presented her thoughts on changing identity of Polish high school students influenced by constant visibility in social media sites. MA Ksenia Wróblewska (University of Warsaw) explained how fandoms can be infused by the possibilities available through social media and how they react to new possibilities introduced by the phenomenon of binge watching. The presentation of MA Konrad Krystian Kuźma (The Maria Grzegorzewska University) which thoroughly explained the specificities

of Lord of the Rings' and Harry Potter's fandoms, concluded the participants' presentations.

11th National Methodological Conference of Media Experts, which main theme was strongly embedded in the reflections about virtuality in its many variations, was closed with a joint discussion where the participants shared their thoughts on the matter and hopes for future development of subjects touched during the two-day event. At the end of the discussion, representatives of the Laboratory of Media Studies and Faculty of Journalism, Information and Book Studies at the University of Warsaw thanked all participants for their scientific contribution and announced that the 12th edition will take place in November 2021.

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THE MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY KAROL JAKUBOWICZ AWARD 2021: NOMINEES

Six publications by scholars from Belgium, Croatia, Hungary, Poland and the United Kingdom and the United States of America were nominated for this year's edition of the Media and Democracy Karol Jakubowicz Award.

On April 14, 2021, the Selection Committee reviewed books submitted for this year's edition of the Media and Democracy Karol Jakubowicz Award – an award supporting significant publications in media systems, media policies, media ethics, and public service media. Scholarly contributions to the research and practice of media and democracy in 2020 and 2021 were submitted by members of the Leadership team of the International Association of Public Service Media Researchers (IAPMR), Editors, and Associate Editors of "Central European Journal of Communication" (CEJC), previous Award winners and the Selection Committee. Through evaluation of three highly interwoven criteria: 1) methodological correctness, 2) contribution to media knowledge and 3) impact on democratic society, the following books and authors have been nominated:

- **Bajomi-Lázár P. (2020). *A patrónusi-kliensi médiarendszer. Magyarország 2010–2018* [The Patron-Client Media System. Hungary 2010–2018]. Budapest: Napvilág.**
  For explaining the ongoing party colonization phenomenon in the Hungarian media and for advancing media theory with a set of practices responsible for illiberal media turns in Central and Eastern Europe.
- **Bond Potter C. (2020). *Political Junkies: From Talk Radio to Twitter, How Alternative Media Hooked Us on Politics and Broke Our Democracy*. New York: Basic Books.**
  For transdisciplinary scholarly examination of the close ties between media, politics, and the rule of law as well as for going beyond scholarly analysis and engaging with non-academic forms of writing.
- **Donders K. (2021). *Public Service Media and the Law: Theory and Practice in Europe*. London and New York: Routledge.**
  For raising the importance of a healthy public service media (PSM) in today's democracies, as well as a brave investigation of normative theories of media with the PSM practice in Western and Eastern Europe.
- **Peruško Z., Vozab D. & Čuvalo A. (2021). *Comparing Post-Socialist Media Systems. The Case of South East Europe*. London and New York: Routledge.**
  For a novel methodology and holistic overview of comparative media studies in the Western Balkans, as well as a reconceptualization of traditional media systems criteria via a blend of modernism and socialism.
- **Stępińska A., Lipiński A., Piontek D. & Hess A. (2020). *Populist Political Communication in Poland: Political Actors – Media – Citizens*. Berlin: Logos Verlag.**
  For an exhaustive image of populist discourse based on comparative qualitative and quantitative methodologies, alongside offering useful recommendations to stakeholders engaged in political communication in Poland and beyond.
- **Tumber H. & Waisbord S. (2021). *The Routledge Companion to Media Disinformation and Populism*. New York: Routledge.**
  For an in-depth examination of misinformation and populist rhetoric on today's democracies and for raising the importance of truth and transparency in public political discourses.

More information about The Media and Democracy Karol Jakubowicz Award: https://www.ptks.pl/en/awards/the-media-and-democracy-karol-jakubowicz-award

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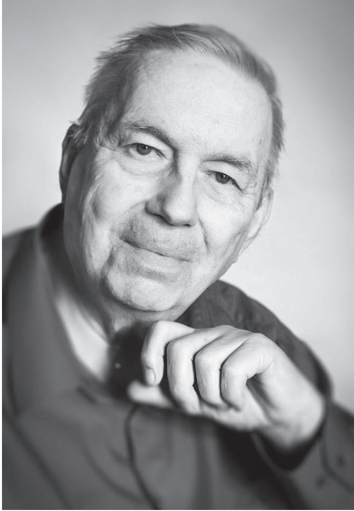
In Memoriam

PROFESSOR JERZY MIKUŁOWSKI POMORSKI (1937–2020)



Expressing in merely a few words who Professor Jerzy Mikułowski Pomorski was, not only for the Polish but also the international science world, is a downright unfeasible task. The Professor was both a pre-eminent scientist and an expert as well as a distinguished persona in the science world esteemed domestically and internationally. Nonetheless, for his alumni he was primarily a guide, a mentor, a Master whilst, what is found to be most rare, a spiritual friend.

Born in Katowice, he located his scientific activity in Silesia and Lesser Poland. Graduating from law (1958) and sociology (1963) in Cracow, he continued his scientific work to reach far beyond both disciplinary and territorial frameworks. His career started in 1956 when joining the emerging, at the time, Press Research Center team in Cracow. In 1962 he joined the Academy of Economics (which later was transformed into the University of Economics). He obtained his Ph.D. in 1969, gained a post-doctoral degree in 1977 and became a full professor in 1990. On 27 June 2017 he was awarded an honorary doctorate degree by Senate of the University of Silesia. Previously, in 1993, he was awarded the same title by the Grand Valley State University in Allendale (in humanities) and in 1996 by the University of Teesside (in law).

In 1975, Professor Mikułowski Pomorski became head of the Department of International Economy Organizations and deputy-director of the Institute of International Socio-Economic Relations at the University of Economics in Cracow. There, between 1990 and 1996, he also held the position of rector, and in 1991 he founded, a first in Poland, the Chair of European Studies headed by him until 2007. One of his unquestionable merits was developing social communication and media at the University of Silesia, where he worked almost 30 years, 1984–2012. It was a place where Professor founded new media studies, concurrently raising – literally – a generation of outstanding Polish researchers in media and communication. Also, it's worth remembering, that he knew the media not only from the theoretical but also the practical side – he cooperated with such renowned journals as *Przekrój*, *Życie Literackie* and *Tygodnik Powszechny*.

Looking at the Professor's international work activity, it is important to mention his collaboration with such prestigious institutions as the Institute of Communication in London, the European Studies Institute at the University of Salford, the International Council of Museums, the University Council of Education Management Transfer in Stockholm and the Network of International Business & Economic Schools. In Poland, the Professor headed the Press Commission of the Department of Polish Academy of Sciences, was a member of not only the Polish Academy of Learning, but also sat on the Committee on European Affairs, the Culture and Media Committee, and Committee of Economics, and was also an honorary member of Polish Communication Association. He participated in the expert work of the Citizens' Center for Legislative Initiative which was in process of preparing legal reform in Poland. In his beloved city of Cracow, he was vice-president of the City Development Committee, was a member of the Social Monument Restoration Committee and was a member of the Programme Committee at the International Cultural Centre.

On behalf of UNESCO, the Professor was an expert in the field of international information order and the Right To Communicate (RTC), which by the way was seen by him as downright philosophical. Whilst working on RTC, he observed difficulties in grasping the real concept of it, particularly in new technology and the new communication tools driven society. And especially so its relations with politics and economics. The questions he posed in his scientific research enabled him to explore more and more areas of studies as well as to weave them together in theories and concepts which have served successive generations, not only those of Polish but also international researchers. Each of his collection of over 20 monographs and nearly 300 research papers integrates studies of communications, sociology, issues of identity and intercultural dialogue, as well as international relations. The Professor insightfully explored processes related to the fragmentation of societies and the environment. Human and human rights were ever his key interests. Inalienable human rights.

The Professor was undoubtedly of the scientific elite. His scientific and community work have been honored with numerous distinctions and awards by the hands of scientific and creative communities and authorities of various levels. Awarded for his outstanding achievements with the Cross of Polonia Restituta and the Gold Cross of Merit, and for his contribution to communicology and media studies with honorary membership by the Polish Communication Association, he was also awarded distinctions by the journalistic environment and cultural institutions. Nonetheless, it was not the numerous titles and decorations that proved the uniqueness of the Professor, they were but the specific crowning of his proactive, comprehensive activity.

Professor Mikułowski Pomorski was a rare example of a scientist whose work had no limitations, as evidenced by his exceptional almost hyperactivity – he never

came to retire from his professional career, he was always eager to capitalize on all new available tools too, by himself, embodied the concept of formerly mentioned Right to Communicate and to inform. He was an open-minded and kind man; always keen to listen what we, his alumni, had to say to him, and as an astute observer he loved to share what he considered significant, worth contemplating and, most importantly, what could activate inspiring discussions. This was the core of his teaching. This is what drove him as a supervisor. This is how he educated, or in fact shaped multiple future media researchers who have proceeded to continue his work and concepts on the grounds of science, culture, didactics and social activity. He skillfully spread the love for unceasing (re)search and exploration, he stimulated and inspired. He showcased what scientific wisdom is.

We will miss Our Professor.

Dariusz Baran
ANDRZEJ FRYCZ MODRZEWSKI KRAKOW UNIVERSITY, POLAND

CENTRAL EUROPEAN JOURNAL OF COMMUNICATION (ISSN 1899-5101)
WWW.CEJC.PTKS.PL

Central European Journal of Communication is an Open Access journal which welcomes online submissions. The website www.cejc.ptks.pl offers information about Publication Ethics and Submission Guidelines for authors, editors and reviewers.

Central European Journal of Communication is published by the Polish Communication Association. It is financed by the Polish Communication Association and the following supporting institutions:

- Faculty of Management and Social Communication, Institute of Journalism, Media and Social Communication, Jagiellonian University, Cracow, Poland;
- Faculty of Philology, University of Wrocław, Poland;
- Faculty of Theology, Institute of Media Education and Journalism, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University, Warsaw, Poland;
- Faculty of Journalism, Information, and Book Studies, University of Warsaw, Poland;
- Institute of Media, Journalism, and Social Communication, University of Gdańsk, Poland;
- Institute of Social Communication and Media, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University, Lublin, Poland;
- Jan Kochanowski University, Kielce, Poland;
- The Pontifical University of John Paul II, Kraków, Poland;
- University of Warmia and Mazury, Olsztyn, Poland.

Central European Journal of Communication is indexed in the following databases: ARIANTA, BazHum, CEEOL, CEJSH, ERIH PLUS, EBSCO, SCImago Journal & Country Rank, SCOPUS (CiteScore, SJR, SNIP) and Web of Science Core Collection (Emerging Sources Citation Index), as well as scored on the list of scientific journals of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in Poland.

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Central European Journal of Communication

www.cejc.ptks.pl

Central European Journal of Communication is published twice a year (in Spring and Fall) by the Polish Communication Association. It engages in critical discussions on communications and media in Central and Eastern Europe and beyond. CEJC welcomes submissions of both theoretical and empirical research from a wide range of disciplinary approaches. We also publish papers on methods and concepts, book reviews, conference reports, interviews with scholars and media practitioners (policy-makers, media managers and journalists). The journal is indexed in several scientific databases, including SCOPUS, Web of Science Core Collection, Central and Eastern European Online Library, Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities and on the list of scientific journals of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education in Poland.

ISSN 1899-5101