Media, Power and Empowerment

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Tereza Pavlíčková and Irena Reifová

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PREFACE

The CEECOM (Central and Eastern European Communication) conference "Media, Power and Empowerment" that took place in Prague in April 2012 brought together media and communication researchers from all over the CEE (Central and Eastern Europe) region, as well as those from other European countries and beyond who are interested in this region and its past, present and future that are inseparable from its political and hence media transformation. This volume of proceedings consisting of 71 conference papers on a broad range of topics that were presented at the conference aspires to outline the areas and interests that arise within the CEE media and communication research, to map the topics and research questions that are well established as well as those that are emerging within this region, precisely due to the political transformation and societal changes. The history of media and communication research in CEE does not reach beyond the turning point of the political transformations of 1989. As such it still represents a novel discipline whose assets and outputs should not be taken for granted. Consequently, there are not many publications mapping out the CEE media research across the entire region and providing insight into the broad span of topics relevant herein. Indeed, the research carried out within and about CEE countries and their media landscape is much broader than the picture presented through this collection, yet it allows us to show that the scene of media and communication research within the CEE region is well populated, posing many interesting questions that are crucial for the particular geopolitical, historical and social context, but at the same time offering answers that might be inspiring for the research carried out in what is still perceived as the West. By voicing the specific questions relevant to the CEE countries, well established theories and methodologies can be employed and in various cases revisited and scrutinised within alternative contextual circumstances. The collection of those diverse papers also allows us to see that the countries of the region have indeed a lot in common–historically, politically, socially; and yet there are many differences among them–the multiple political particularities within the unifying label "the East", or variations in the transformation process and its consequences for the societies and their media scenes (systems and well as uses), as well as the actual individual lived experiences of the people of the CEE countries.

The region has been going through a major political transformation over the past 25 years, more or less successfully in different countries that adopted various degrees of liberal politics and which now face geopolitical as well as societal challenges. The academic landscape does not differ from other spheres of the societies, that is to say, the academia has had to transform itself too, to further face its past and to find ways to address this past while not neglecting the present. This is hence reflected in the questions being asked here–those revisiting the (media) past of the region as well as those concerned with the role that the media play in the current political establishments.

Media, indeed, play one of the key roles in negotiating the new national identities and self-representations, being one of the key instruments in the dissemination of new political ideas as well as creating a space for public deliberation. In various forms they are part of the everyday of the majority of the population in CEE countries. The papers presented at the conference and included in this volume form seven sections, roughly encompassing the main areas of interest in the field of CEE media studies.

Firstly, the papers in section one, *Echoes of Transformation*, address issues and questions of media transformation within the media industries, organisations and systems in CEE. The section *Quo Vadis, Media?* is concerned with the issues, challenges and promises posed to society, both practical and theoretical, by the changing media landscape of the Web 2.0 environment. The papers in the third section *Political Logics, Media Logics* primarily focus on the present mediated political communication in the era of post-democracy in CEE countries. The transformation as well as diversification of media audiences and users and the varied questions related to media uses are addressed in the fourth section called *Audiences' Revolutions*, which is followed by the section *Citizenship in and through Media* that presents papers dealing with the notions of citizenship and the public sphere in the post-socialist countries and their realisation though media. The common interest of the papers in section six, *Mediated Identities*, is on issues of identity as the title suggests; the papers here are often concerned with the issue of the discursive articulation of us and others within those new post-socialist societies. Last but not least is the section *Beyond Nostalgia*, that brings together papers concerned with history, and primarily that of the socialist past.

The list of topics is not exclusive, and simultaneously there are papers that could have been included in more than one section. We have attempted to distribute the papers as evenly as possible, whilst respecting the conference programme, as well as trying to keep papers presented

within individual panels together if possible. The papers in the volume are short, and they do not allow their authors to expand their research results too much; rather they aim to serve as an invitation to the CEE research.

These 71 papers written and co-written by 83 authors from twenty countries raise many interesting questions, offer original research results and invite you to a further debate on the CEE media and communication research. Please do contact the individual authors if you wish to discuss their findings or issues raised further, as this volume aims to initiate a conversation rather than to conclude it.

We hope you will find the collection inspiring.

The Editors
TEREZA PAVLÍČKOVÁ AND IRENA REIFOVÁ

FOREWORD

MEETING THE NEEDS OF ESTABLISHED AND YOUNG SCHOLARS OF MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: THE AIMS, VISIONS, AND IDEALS OF THE CEE NETWORK

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It is more than two decades since the collapse of the iron curtain between so called "Western Europe" and "Eastern Europe". It is more than twenty years since the contagious effect of revolution spread through East Germany and Poland to other parts of Central and Eastern Europe, and led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the separation of the former Yugoslav countries. As we may witness in contemporary Central Europe, those twenty years, the era of one generation, were not long enough to end all divisions between the former West and East. As social change usually takes longer than decades, and establishing new norms and social values takes longer than one generation, Central and Eastern Europe is in certain terms still in the process of transition. This is true not only for the societies as a whole, but also for the societal institutions strongly based on the principles of continuity–political institutions, courts, the science and educational system.

There is still a division between "Western" educational and research institutions and "Eastern" ones within the social sciences and humanities. The divide is based on gaps in the intensity of publishing on the international level, quantity of the conferences and specialised workshops

organsed, and in the scale of research funding and the ability to attract international and EU funding resources.

European media and communication studies still take place in two spheres, divided by the former geopolitical frontier initiated by the Yalta conference at the end of World War II. European media and communication studies science tends to be published in impacted and peer-reviewed English language periodicals, which are for the most part published in Great Britain, Germany, and to a lesser extent in Scandinavian countries. Those with access to their editorial boards and reviewing systems traditionally tend to be representative of the institutions of these countries. When analysing publishing flows and the flows of production and consumption of scientific texts between the West and East, the idea of "scientific imperialism" comes to mind, recalling Schiller's (1973) theory of "cultural imperialism". From this perspective, scholars and researchers from Central and Eastern Europe are still disadvantaged in the competition for "impact" with their western counterparts, according to the contemporary craze of quantification of scientific outcome. Altogether, the key disadvantages faced by Central and Eastern European scholars could be summarised as follows:

- the often miserable and not well organised structure of their home institutions;
- those institutions misleading scholars from research and publishing, by means of administrative and teaching overload;
- scarce number of sources for financing research, and absence of resources for support work that is an important part of research (gathering the data, research of the literature, coding of the data etc.);
- less access to networking with other research and education institutions within the East, or between East and West caused by poor funding for travel expenses;
- weaker access to Western scientific periodicals, partly because the potential agenda that is of interest for Western publishers is narrower than one which would be fully inclusive of Eastern perspectives and interests;
- smaller representation within editorial boards and therefore the smaller possibility to shape and to influence their policy.

The disadvantages mentioned above are interconnected and reinforce each other. Therefore, for example, poor access to the renowned periodicals leads to a poorer publishing record, as evaluated according to

the impact factors (ranking) of those publications, which leads to diminishing opportunities to gain proper resources via research funding applications, and therefore to a shortage of material that would be of interest to publishers, and so on.

During its short history within the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA), the CEE Network has tried to address at least some of these shortages within the CEE space. Some of its activities were motivated by the aim of stimulating the networking of scholars, including doctoral students, of CEE institutions. Therefore the CEE Network organised its first panel focused on the problems of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the year 2010 in Prague. Members of the CEE Network management and their affiliates brought new blood to the traditional annual Polish–Czech–Slovak conference, and established the CEECOM (Central and Eastern Communication and Media conference) committee for taking care of the future of the conference, opening it to Baltic and other Eastern European countries, and making plans to organize CEECOM in the year 2013 in Kaunas (Latvia) and in the year 2014 in Budapest (Hungary). The vice chair of the CEE Network, Auksė Balčytienė, launched a new platform for communication, and exchanges of information and experiences, on Facebook. In spite of all the activities of the CEE Network of ECREA, the key aims of the CEE Network are still relevant. Those aims are to:

- provide a platform for the networking of CEE scholars on national and international levels, via:
  - specialised workshops and conferences
  - doctoral research networks and international research
  - establishing communication platforms (Facebook etc.)
- cooperate within the CEE space in terms of common publishing and seeking funding
- influence home institutions for more effective organisation of the work and division of the administrative and research workload, in accordance with the skill level qualifications of the workers
- regulate the amount of teaching that scholars must do, to fit with good publishing strategies on the institutional level
- cooperate internationally in the field of doctoral studies by running summer schools for doctoral students, and promote circulation of tutors within CEE countries

As we have witnessed in the last few years, there is tremendous potential within Central and Eastern Europe in the field of media and

communication studies. New generations of scholars are coming with new enthusiasm for research and often without the psychological burden of the iron curtain in their minds, with a different understanding of the frontiers and a different concept of Europe. Perhaps our contemporary activities will build a more equalitarian position within European academia for them.

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PART I:

ECHOES OF TRANSFORMATION: MEDIA INDUSTRIES, ORGANISATION AND SYSTEMS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

CHAPTER ONE

PROMOTING CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION SCHOLARSHIP

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Abstract
Developing a Central and Eastern European media and communication research environment, marked by 50 years of Soviet stewardship has been as problematic as integrating Central and Eastern European scholars into international networks and debates. This paper explores generic solutions to these problems, emphasising the importance of acquiring international visibility, not only by joining international projects but also by publishing in national languages as well as academia's *lingua franca*–English.

Keywords
Central and Eastern Europe, media and communication, scholarship, integration

Introduction: from the darkness to the daylight

In media and communications research, Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries are seen as "peripheral regions of the field" (Vroons 2005), where communication science started to develop only in the late 1950s–early 1960s (Splichal 1989; Vihalemm 2001). In the CEE countries under Soviet political predominance, political interference hampered the development of all social sciences, as they were ideologised and largely used for legitimising the communist regimes. Splichal (1989) describes the typical features of the media and communication research environment as: the absence of actual intellectual competition and dialogue; a focus on empirical research without a stable theoretical core; unavailability of any

literature in foreign languages; a lack of professional scientific journals and subordination to the political interests of the ruling elites. Research results were predominantly published in national languages, "rather than in the major languages used by international scientific periodicals" (ibid., 338). Conditions for social sciences research within the borders of the Soviet Union were even more severe: research institutions operated under the strict control of the Central Committee of the Communist Party; the results of empirical studies, especially those such as audience surveys, could not be published at all, as they were considered to be "for official use only" (Vihalemm 2001, 8), i.e. available only for the authorities.

For social scientists in CEE countries the possibility to access intellectual centres and participate in international academic debates occurred only after the fall of the Berlin Wall. The two ensuing decades of political and economic independence and democratic transformation boosted national social science communities and increased their ability to "relate to other communities on an equal, reciprocal basis" (Loubser 1988, 179 cited in Splichal 1989, 339). The first ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association) conference held in Amsterdam in 2005 called for discussing the effects of the 50 years of geopolitical divisions in Europe in relation to academic research and scholarship. The CEE scholars were invited to review and present their work within media and communication studies. The need for a larger presence and participation of CEE scholars in the field was also articulated.

Progressing and acquiring international visibility

During the first decade of societal and media transformation, several studies in media and communication research were published, which attempted to conceptualise and theorise media changes, and also compared developments in different countries (e.g. Splichal 1994; Downing 1996; Sparks and Reading 1998). Initially, the best scholarly discussion of the most crucial issues (such as new ownership patterns, formation of public service media, new technologies etc.) followed the lines of Western European and American conceptualisations, which sometimes led to a certain discrepancy between Western conceptualisations and Eastern realities. Although the "inflow of knowledge from the centre" (Splichal 1989, 338) definitely advances the development of disciplines on the periphery, the need for finding new approaches and concepts and de-Westernising communications research has been steadily growing.

In shifting the direction of the research perspective, a European collaborative network in 2005–2009, COST A30 ("East of West: Setting a New Central and Eastern European Media Research Agenda") played a significant role. This, possibly, was the first network that brought together media and political communication researchers from nearly all CEE countries, and boosted the development of their scholarship.

The first Polish-Czech-Slovak Forum on Political and Communication Sciences in Poland in 2008 gave proof that the community of researchers had acquired the critical mass necessary to advance CEE scholarship on key issues, and the trends in CEE societies and their media. The consequent four CEE international forums (CEECOM conferences in Brno and Telč 2009, Bratislava 2010, Krakow 2011 and Prague 2012) bear clear evidence of the sustainability of CEE media and communication scholarship. In Prague, an international CEECOM consortium was founded, which would bear responsibility for the co-ordination of activities on media and communication research. The consortium also organises annual CEECOM conferences and promotes studies, education and collaboration between media researchers, media professionals and students in CEE countries (IFCA Newsletter 2012).

The expansion of the geographical scope and broadening of research issues of the past five CEECOM conferences clearly reflect the advancement of media and communication research in Central and Eastern Europe, and demonstrate the scholars' growing sense of forming an integral part of the wider European academia. For this integration, increasing presence of CEE scholars in international projects and publications, conferences and structures of regional and global scholarly associations is vital.

To this end, the CEE Network was established at the ECREA conference in Hamburg in 2010. The main task of the Network is to serve as a means of promoting CEE scholarship and to develop contacts and co-operation both among CEE scholars and institutions, and their colleagues in other European countries. Since better-promoted West European research and academic institutions have been far more successful in applying for grants from European funds, the Network's ambition is to contribute to the visibility of CEE scholarship in international and global conferences and events. The first special CEE panel was arranged at the ECREA conference in Hamburg in 2010, and the second at the annual congress of the Polish, Czech and Slovak communication associations in May 2011. The latest two have been held during 2012 at the CEECOM conference in Prague and ECREA's conference in Istanbul. The Network has recruited country representatives in 10 CEE countries (Estonia, Latvia,

Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia) and has an active profile on Facebook.

A part of the Network's activities focuses on monitoring research conditions and CEE scientific performance, which includes research projects, co-operation, publishing and networking. Indeed, the possibilities for each scholar to participate in international networks and projects depend on the resources that are in their possession in their home countries and institutions. On the other hand, various international networks and projects exist that operate on their own financing (from European and other sources) and do not require direct financial input, but rather the knowledge and skills of their participants. The COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) framework offers one such form of co-operation.

The aforementioned COST A30 network, co-ordinated by the Centre for Media and Communication Research of Central European University in Budapest, involved 24 countries, 13 of which were from Central and Eastern Europe. COST A30 largely focused on theoretical perspectives of the media research in CEE countries, and succeeded in providing deep and competent analyses of various developments relating to the media in transition. The project was a good example of the integration of Eastern and Western perspectives in media and communication research, moving away from the West-centred approach, and theoretically and methodologically utilising the research done by CEE scholars. One of the objectives of this project was to involve a new generation of media researchers from Central and Eastern Europe. The participation of young researchers and doctoral students in the meetings, publications and research projects of COST A30 was significant throughout the project. The project produced five books and a special issue of the Croatian journal *Medijska Istrazivanja* (Media Research Journal).

Currently, another four year long COST Action (IS0906): Transforming Audiences, Transforming Societies is being carried out, involving 10 CEE countries among the 31 participating (2010–2014).

These examples should encourage scholars to apply for a Central and Eastern Europe focused COST Action in the near future. I would suggest looking for fresh ideas in the fields of social media and data-journalism.

An attractive global research project is also open for the participation of scholars from CEE countries–the "Worlds of Journalism Study"[i]. Launched in 2007, it currently involves 83 countries all over the world, including 15 former Communist bloc countries from CEE and the Balkans. The project focuses on comparing changes in the professional orientations of journalists worldwide, as well as the social functions of journalism in a

changing world. The project has no central funding, but advises each country to apply for national funding. Co-operation in searching for funds is also encouraged and supported.

This project follows an important practice that should be implemented much more in social scientific research–the policy of collective publishing. Co-authored or collective publishing is worthy of being used much more than previously in the social sciences field.

In the context of publishing, existing possibilities for CEE scholars to present their work to larger international audiences should be explored, as none of the CEE languages are sufficiently widespread to serve as the academic *lingua franca* for any region. The main option is to publish in English. On the other hand, scholarly discourse at the national level will not develop without publications in national languages. In the recent decades, a number of new communication and media research journals have been established in CEE countries. Bilingual publishing seems to be a rather popular practice, simultaneously serving both purposes: enabling international visibility and developing national scientific discourse. Among existing CEE-based media and communications journals only a few (e.g. *Javnost/The Public, Medijska Istraživanja–Media Research: Croatian Journal for Journalism and the Media, Media Transformations*) are included in high rank international indexes and databases.

Several countries still do not have any national media and communication research journals that would meet international standards, and others like Estonia and Latvia have none at all. While it is extremely difficult to get published in such high rank journals like *European Journal of Communication* or *Media, Culture & Society*, CEE media scholars should take greater advantage of the journals in their own region.

Conclusions

The advancement of media and communications scholarship since 1991 has demonstrated the viability and growing potential of the field in CEE countries. Developing, on the one hand, as a distinct Central and Eastern European scholarship, it also increasingly forms a part of the global research agenda. National research communities are getting involved in European and global networks and international co-operation, and in the longer perspective will most likely be able to catch up with advanced intellectual centres.

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Notes

i. http://worldsofjournalism.org/index.htm

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CHAPTER TWO

TRANSFORMATIONAL CHALLENGES, MEDIA POLICIES AND MEDIA SYSTEMS IN HUNGARY

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Abstract
After the collapse of the communist regime, the Hungarian media system transitioned through hybrid models. Firstly, a democratic corporatist media system was adopted in Hungary. However, by the end of the 1990s when the pluralist system became polarised following the implementation of institutions of control and regulation of the Hungarian media system, it started to show characteristics of a post-democratic system with the institutions in place, yet deprived of its democratic role. The lack of political, as well as democratic journalistic, culture led to a transition of the media system in the 2010s that is characterised by "dominant-power" and the crisis of the democratic media and political system.

Keywords
media systems, transition, post-democracy, dominant-power

Introduction

This paper is based on an interpretation of the connections between democracy, political journalism and media systems. My goal is to offer an analysis of how the media has been transformed in Hungary in the past 25 years. I take Hallin and Mancini's (2004) analysis of the Western European media systems, the normative theories of the media (Christians et al. 2009), and Crouch's (2004) essay about "post-democracy" as my starting point. Crouch researched whether the existing Western European democratic regimes are really democracies or so-called "post-democracies". He wrote:

> "Democracy thrives when there are major opportunities for the mass of ordinary people actively to participate, through discussion and autonomous organizations, in shaping the agenda of public life, and when they are actively using these opportunities. […] It is an ideal model, which can almost never be fully achieved, but, like all impossible ideals, it sets a marker" (Crouch 2004, 2–3).

In contrast, Crouch (2004) argues that in post-democracy "[a]ll the institutions of democracy remain", but they work in a new way and become empty. So it is a new political system with the "old" institutions of democracy.

I argue that the post-democratic paradigm can be used to understand the Hungarian situation. It is in opposition to the transition paradigm, which is partly teleological, because it is based on the belief in the possibility of transition from a non-democratic position to "full-democracy".

However as Carothers (2010) emphasised, the transition paradigm does not work, because there is not a straight line from dictatorship or a totalitarian regime to democracy in any situation and for any country, and there are also "grey zone" countries where the citizens are excluded from the "dominant-power politics" of the elite (presidentialism for example in Russia).

I suggest that the two paradigms: post-democracy and transition (yet, without the aspect of teleology) should be combined. In that case, the term "post-transition" allows us to acknowledge that the system can transition into either a "full-democracy", "post-democracy", or "dominant-power" system. Moreover, the "post-democracy" can be the final stage preceding a "dominant-power" system. I argue that this is the Hungarian way of transition, due to the conjunction of the long duration ("longue durée") transformation of Western media and democracy, and rapid changes in Hungary.

Firstly, in Western European countries, the functioning of political media has changed in recent decades (to mention some: appearance of neo-television, the tabloidisation of news (Esser 1999) and the tabloidisation of tabloids (Uribe and Gunter 2004), or the marketisation of public discourse), however in contrast to Hungary, these changes happened on a base of democratic political routines (cf. Crouch 2004).

Secondly, in Hungary the media system has experienced many transformations in the last 25 years, and because of the lack of a democratic political culture and the lack of a routine of democratic journalism, the political media could not play their main democratic roles. This situation worsened with the adoption of a post-democratic system.

The concepts of democratic journalism and the post-democratic media can be defined in relation to each other, by which I mean the post-democratic media is (1) the opposite of the democratic media system and (2) it is characterised by the lack of the values of democratic journalism (see Christians et al. (2009, 116) for three basic tasks of journalism in a democracy). Writing about the ethics of the so called new journalism, Phillips (2012) emphasises the connection between the role of journalism in a democracy and ethical standards (neutrality, accuracy, sincerity etc.):

> "In a modern democracy, journalism derives authority from its claim to provide an essential contribution to democratic functioning. That authority in turn rests upon an expectation that journalists will behave according to a certain set of ethical standards, in relation to truth telling, fairness and the duty to inform citizens on events that matter" (Phillips 2012, 135).

Hybrid media systems in Hungary

Although there was no democratic journalism in Hungary before 1989, many journalists tried to work in the manner of a free press, and adopted the professional practices from the West. Democratic journalism only appeared in the spring of 1989, when the power of the communist party disappeared at a stroke. But the peaceful period for studying democratic journalism in Hungary was short, because of the political struggle over the control of media since 1991. As a consequence of that, the radio and television channels that were thus far state-owned did not transform into public service broadcasting channels (unlike in other post-socialist countries), but became political instruments that served the interests of the right-wing government which was elected in 1990.

In 1996 new media institutions were established: the media policy leaders rearranged the public broadcasting system and counterfeited the German institutional solutions of the democratic corporatist media system. This change meant the beginning of a new period in Hungarian media history.

At this point it needs to be emphasised that Hungarian political culture is rather different from the German one. In Hungary, political parties built up a high level of political parallelism in the new media institutions. For example, two public television broadcasters, the public service radio and the national news agency were each controlled by councils of public service whose members were party appointees and the appointees of civil society organisations which were the satellites of the same parties. The members of the National Radio and Television Board were appointed by all the political parties which had a parliamentary group. However, in the