

## **PART TWO: NORMATIVE AND POLICY APPROACHES TO MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY**



# HOW MEDIA AND POLITICS SHAPE EACH OTHER IN THE NEW EUROPE

*Alina Mungiu-Pippidi*

## **Line of inquiry**

How well do media theories from the developed West fit post-communist Europe? Surely since the late eighties of the twentieth century to nowadays the evolution of the media in Eastern Europe (EE) was spectacular and often unpredictable for media theorists. In their classic *Four Theories of the Press*, authors Siebert, Peterson and Schramm<sup>1</sup> famously claimed that 'the press has always taken on the form and coloration of the social and political structures within which it operates. Especially, it reflects the system of social control whereby the relations of individuals and institutions are adjusted'. How does this fit the role that media seems to play in prompting revolutions, insurrections and other forms of rapid political change, a role so obvious in Eastern Europe that it shaped the budgets of democracy promoters and donors everywhere for the last two decades? The ascension of Al-Jazeera, ignored for many years by the American government, also opened the door to fresh reflection on the influence of the media. Some believe that we have entered an age where electronic transnational media can be more influential than any government. It can mobilize or discourage government action, but can also play a role towards other politically influential groups: political oppositions, subversion movements and civil society. In American military academies media studies re-experience the flourishing of the Vietnam War days, the previous war lost by the US in newsrooms prior to being settled on the battlefield. Media researchers side either with classical theory, which denies much political influence to the media, or new, post-CNN theory, which credits them with great influence. It is only fair to say that history moved faster than theory and there is considerable catching up to do by scholars in this field.

The history of the media in post-communist Europe in the last two decades could find an equivalent in a history of the French media between 1788, with the invitation by the King to citizens to address pamphlets to the General States, and 1800, when Bonaparte's law re-established control. In between, one can find moments of triumph and moments of agony, journalists rising to be heads of legislatures as well as journalists sentenced by revolutionary

tribunals. One needs a broad historical framework to examine the relationship between media and politics before, during and after times of upheaval, or, depending on the point on the time curve a study focuses (ascending-revolutionary or descending counter-revolutionary), results may seriously distort the general picture. Alexis de Tocqueville famously said that the Revolution which began in 1848 was not another one, but another chapter of the one which had started in 1789. This sheds some light on what could be a good time frame to study revolutionary times.

The new era of media influence we entered with the 1989 revolutions is certainly related to technological progress. The main newspaper of the Ukrainian Orange Revolution, *Ukrayinska Pravda*, was an Internet-based publication which had 1.5 million hits a day during the 2004 elections. When Serb authorities cracked down on Belgrade B92 radio station it could move to the Internet and continue to broadcast. Denying the huge influence of 'new' media over politics in our times would be foolish: and since politicians are no fools, the development of the new media seems to be accompanied by the development of new strategies to control media contents and influence. While it remains undeniable that the social control patterns of a given society have a considerable influence over how the media system is shaped, I believe that globalization has opened the door to outside influences on a scale undreamed at the times of *Four Theories of the Press*. Classic media consumption may depend on the national context:<sup>2</sup> however, it is the 'new' media which has a growing public, and the exchanges between the new and the old, as well as directly between new media and politics, allow a media system presently to develop more independently from the local circumstances. This gives the media higher potential for playing an influential role and makes it harder to control by traditional means.

To understand the relation between media and politics in post-communist Eastern Europe this paper builds on scholarship that presumes a two-way relationship<sup>3</sup> and discusses a circular model. It also looks at a broad time frame, to cover revolutionary aftermaths as well as revolutions themselves. I attempt initially to propose a historical explanation for the birth of free media in post-communist Europe, and the different paths that national media systems travel from a moment on, as well as the causes of this divergence and of change more generally. Once this framework is established, I discuss the direct influence of media over politics looking at two different periods. For revolutionary times, and the influence of media on changing governments, I review briefly the role of the media in the recent 'coloured' Revolutions in non-European Union accession countries Georgia and Ukraine. For aftermaths, and the role of media in 'normal' policy-making, I use a survey of cabinet members in ten (post-communist) new EU member countries.

### **Divergent Development Paths**

The fall of communism triggered intense processes of change across Eastern Europe, especially the part geographically closer to the West and subjected to greater western influence. The transitions that followed were supposed to accomplish transformations from command economies to market economies and from authoritarian/totalitarian regimes to liberal democratic ones. In fact, even more complicated processes were initiated in order to accomplish these goals. These can be defined as nation-building (agreeing who belongs to the political community), state-building (moving from despotic to infrastructural power) and, last but not least, society-building. Out of the social standardization imposed by communism, new social categories were needed to emerge during transition, in order to build capitalism and

democracy, the entrepreneurs, the politicians, the journalists. Politicians and journalists are, therefore, equally newcomers on the public scene of Eastern Europe, at least in the democratic framework, and both the political system and the media system had to be created from scratch.

To what end? Following the fall of communism, nearly all East European countries embarked on the building of a new, free media. Countries that have made the most rapid progress with the reforms did also privatize the state media, took it off the budgets of the national and regional authorities and pursued economic and regulatory policies aimed at creating an environment in

**Table 1:** Freedom House scores of media freedom in EE

Country	Status 1994	Score 1994	Status 1999	Score 1999	Status 2006	Score 2006
Albania	PF	53	PF	56	PF	50
Armenia	PF	52	PF	56	NF	64
Azerbaijan	NF	70	NF	73	NF	73
Belarus	NF	66	NF	80	NF	88
Bosnia & Herzegovina	NF	70	PF	56	PF	45
Bulgaria	PF	43	PF	39	PF	34
Croatia	PF	56	NF	63	PF	39
Czech Republic	F	20	F	20	F	20
Czechoslovakia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Estonia	F	28	F	20	F	16
Georgia	NF	73	PF	57	PF	57
Hungary	F	30	F	28	F	21
Kazakhstan	PF	60	NF	68	NF	75
Kyrgyzstan	PF	49	NF	64	NF	64
Latvia	F	29	F	21	F	19
Lithuania	F	30	F	18	F	18
Macedonia	N/A	N/A	PF	42	PF	49
Poland	F	30	F	25	F	21
Republic of Moldova	PF	41	PF	56	NF	65
Romania	PF	55	PF	44	PF	44
Russian Federation	PF	40	PF	59	NF	72
Serbia & Montenegro	NF	86	NF	81	PF	40
Slovakia	PF	47	F	30	F	20
Slovenia	PF	40	F	27	F	20
Tajikistan	NF	93	NF	94	NF	76
Turkmenistan	NF	89	NF	85	NF	96
Ukraine	PF	44	PF	50	PF	53
USSR	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Uzbekistan	NF	85	NF	79	NF	90
Yugoslavia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Freedom House 2004, [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org)

Legend: Greater scores mean less freedom.

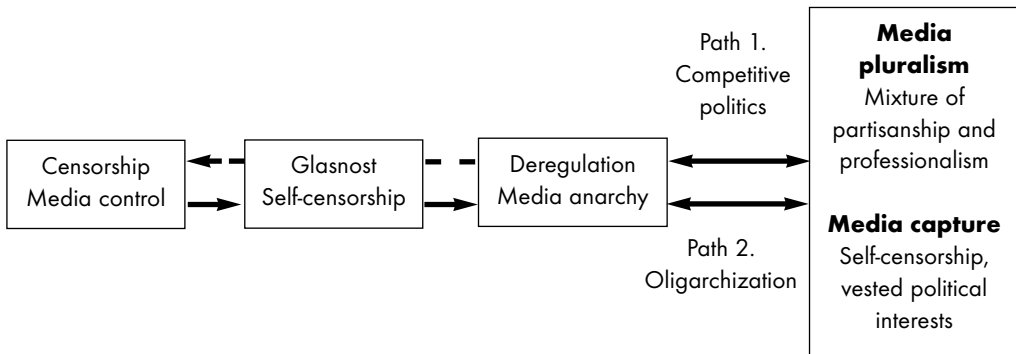
which the media business could take hold. As in Western Europe, there was one great exception to this – state broadcasting. In the same time, an alternative, unauthorized and unregulated media erupted in many of these countries soon after the fall of the Wall, sometimes preceding the privatization of state media.

By 2006, the Freedom of the Press survey captured a mixed picture of post-communist Eastern Europe. Less than half of the former communist countries are free (EU new members plus a few Balkan countries), with the rest stranded between partly free and not free. If we look back in time, we find Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic evolving from not free to free in the space of only two years (1989–1991), with a year of ‘partly free’ in between. This is ‘revolution’. Countries that seceded from federal USSR (the Baltics especially) or Yugoslavia also record the greatest evolution for the media during the political upheaval. But later the trends become more mixed and even revert in some cases. Countries like Romania, Bulgaria, Belarus, Ukraine have known alternate periods of progress and regress. So trends do not only vary across countries, but also over time for some of them.

By and large, we can identify two first phases common to all the countries, liberalization, or the passage from total control to limited pluralism, with censorship and repression replaced by self-censorship and partial control. The second phase is of deregulation, mixing planned and spontaneous elements. From here on, national paths travel in different directions. The explanation of these divergent paths far exceeds the role of the media and falls within more general democratization theory. The trajectory of a country is greatly influenced by its proximity to the West and all that derives from it (western interest, influence of FDI), and of its own social pluralism (development of civil society, itself influenced by a range of other factors). However, it is fair to say, as Way does,<sup>4</sup> that a phase of *pluralism by default* of the early 90s (due mostly to *the inability of incumbents to enforce authoritarian rule*) is followed by a divergence of paths, post-communist countries becoming either more democratic or, indeed, more autocratic. I do not discuss more distant traditions here, as none of East European countries, with the exception of the Czech Republic, had a serious democratic tradition. And yet, the European Union and Freedom House now consider many of them to be accomplished democracies. Whatever it is at the source of path divergence in Eastern Europe, it is not *pre-communist* tradition.

Communist tradition seems to matter more, and, indeed, different types of communism operated in Eastern Europe. Censorship in Soviet Union, Romania and Albania was far harsher than in Poland or Yugoslavia, and this impacted on the formation of a class of real journalists with aspirations to be more than just propagandists for the Party. Otherwise, censorship was a general rule, broken only by Gorbachev’s decision to replace outdated apparatchik-censors with professional editors with the task to urge self-censorship from journalists themselves.

The first two phases, from full control to partial control during glasnost, and then next to deregulation, either partial or total, were common to most post-communist societies, excepting some Central Asian countries. The fall of the Berlin Wall brought fast deregulation and anarchy, with underground newspapers surfacing without licence, pirate radio stations and a strong western pressure to liberalize the media. The state media is first de-monopolized, and then liberalization follows as state frequencies are offered for the bidding of the private sector. The deregulation went faster and deeper in Central Europe than in former Soviet Union, except for the Baltic States, where freedom of the media was inseparable from the nation-building process. In any event, more decisive steps were taken to protect the new nascent free media in countries where anti-communists won the first round of free and fair elections. As shown in figure 1, from deregulation following the demise of communism, three different paths were available, so as



**Figure 1:** Divergent paths from communist media control

national political systems traveled different journeys so did the respective media systems. In some countries, politics became more and more competitive, and the media more and more pluralistic, although it has remained a complex mixture of professional with partisan media. In others, control of the media returned, as the media was captured again, either directly by governments or by vested interests networked with politics.

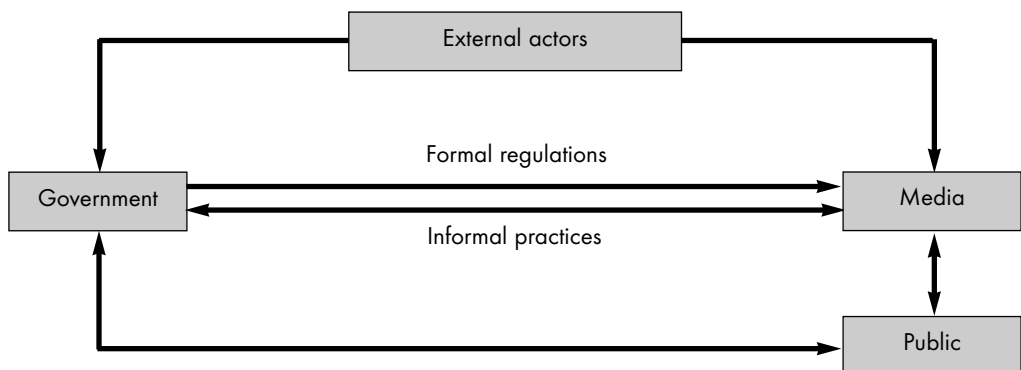
At the extreme end of path 2, in some FSU countries, the media, even after a promising beginning, ended up captured. On the other end, in countries with very competitive politics, the media landscape has become gradually more plural and mostly free, with considerable partisanship and only limited capture. The freedom of the media score computed by Freedom House and presented in table 1 correlates strongly with the corruption scores of post-communist countries also given by Freedom House within its *Nations in Transit* project.<sup>5</sup> This means that in an environment of systemic corruption we are likely to find a captured media alongside a captured state. By media capture, I mean a situation in which the media has not succeeded in becoming autonomous to manifest a will of its own and to exercise its main function, notably of informing people, but has persisted in an intermediate state, whereas various groups, not just the government, use it for other purposes. State capture in a post-communist context designates the situation in which the post-communist state has not succeeded in becoming an autonomous actor towards interest groups or vested interests. Media capture in post-communist Europe is, therefore, not necessarily captured by the state. As the groups which capture the media either have already captured the state or seek to do so, capture of the media (either public or private) should be seen as a companion of state capture, a complementary phenomenon. Among the features that make the landscape of media capture we can count concentrated, non-transparent ownership of media outlets, with important political actors controlling the media, a strong linkage between media and political elites, and important infiltration of the media by secret services. Indicators of media capture can give us important information on the trend the media is on, towards more freedom or more capture. We can find precise indicators to measure capture, although indirectly. For instance, a large sector of non-viable media living on covert sponsorship<sup>6</sup> indicates a captured, not an autonomous media. Media cannot operate in a democratic country if they are not economically viable.

Capture distorts the main role of the media: captured media outlets exist to trade influence and manipulate information rather than to inform the public, a phenomenon hard to fit into the

classic government-perpetrator and media-victim paradigm. This also indicates that media influence does exist, although it could not be further from the influence of professional journalism, be it more or less framed, measured in laboratories of western universities. When media practices ranges from sheer disinformation to blackmail it can be remarkably influential in politics. An influential media mogul in Romania created a small party and, despite its never passing the electoral threshold, he managed to participate in both Left and Right government coalitions. He has even managed to prevent the first nominated Romanian politician to become an EU commissioner, claiming – without any foundation – that he was an informer of communist secret police. Disinformation wars raged in ‘transitional’ Russia and are frequent in other countries as well.

The extent of media capture varies across the spectrum of countries taking path 2. Scandals have surfaced even in the most advanced democracies in the region, bringing evidence to document ‘capture’ attempts. In the Polish Rywingate scandal, editor of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Adam Michnik, who needed a change in legislation, so to buy TV network Polsat, was offered an informal ‘deal’ by a government intermediary. Such deals are actually carried out in other countries and nothing more is heard of them. Path 2 and Path 3 (simple regression to censorship) can go separately or can coexist, for instance, the private media takes path 2 and the public one returns to path 3. Ukraine and Russia are countries where the system has been ‘mixed’ during most of the transition. Prior to the 2004 Orange Revolution, the Ukrainian government had fallen back to ‘temnyky’, written guidance for the media on how to cover and interpret the news. In the leaked transcripts of the 2000–2004 Romanian government meetings, two major government characters compared the two types of control: capture (indirect control) and open censorship (direct), to find the latter much more effective. In their words: ‘I keep wondering why do we continue to support the media with the old tax breaks, with sponsoring and advertising, while what we get in return is just some vague, individual reprieve’.<sup>7</sup>

Governments unable or unwilling to resort to direct media control contribute to media capture either directly or indirectly. State subsidies, bailouts in case of debt, preferential distribution of state advertising and tax breaks for media owners are traded in exchange for favorable treatment of the media. In the case of public broadcasting, anti-communists and post-communists alike showed remarkably firm beliefs in direct media effects.<sup>8</sup> Inheriting a system in which public broadcasting was legally and financially dependent upon government, they have slowly



**Figure 2:** Context of the interaction media-government interaction

reformed it so to make it dependent of the political majority in Parliament, practically legalizing political control, a model also found in some EU countries. The tenure of top executives, for instance, general managers and news director was less than a year during transition, except for the Baltic States, and legislation has often been revised to provide fresh opportunities to dismiss executives who were not obedient enough.<sup>9</sup>

By and large, a model summarizing the complex relationship between press and government in transition accession countries is approximated in figure 2. The government regulates media through formal regulations, but as those are influenced strongly by international actors, it also uses less overt means to control the media. External influence of various types varies greatly across the countries. Unlike for other regions of the world, however, western influence mattered enormously in post-communist Europe. First, for providing an accessible cultural model to be followed by journalists and politicians alike; second, for the conditionality related to Council of Europe, NATO and EU accessions; third, through the permanent channels of communication between professions, contributing to the re-socialization of Easterners according to western standards. This third influence is mostly exercised directly on the media, through training and assistance programmes.

A mix of incentives and penalties, as well as conditionality, played the most direct and impressive role. President Francois Mitterand famously called Romania's President Ion Iliescu in the summer of 1990, when opposition newspapers were closed to argue for a softer handling of political opposition and the media. International influence turned Ion Iliescu into an EU-accession promoter and this conversion eventually changed the path of the country. No such call on record exists for Alexander Lukashenko, the Belarusian president, already elected four times (Mr Iliescu stepped down after a third mandate). International conditionality seems to be powered only by strong incentives, such as a prospect of EU accession, which converts captors into more or less convincing pro-Europeans. Most of the behaviour described here under 'media capture' falls in the realm of 'informal practices'. Practices can complement formal regulations, but can also be competitive or substitutive in others, where formal freedom (as enshrined in the Constitution) is effectively sabotaged by capture or direct control.

The public has an important feedback, to the media via audience and circulation, to the government through elections or opinion polls. The question is why should governments care about media, if they can buy or bully it at their will? The model suggests two important answers to this question. The first is on the role of the international community. As EU accession progresses or non-EU countries ask for foreign assistance (such as grants from Millennium Corporation) the cost of repressing the media grows and becomes unaffordable for any government but an isolated one, which either does not care for the opinion of the international community or is able to buy a good one by resources (such as oil or gas). Capture develops as a substitute, but Freedom House Nations in Transit or IREX Sustainability Index developed precisely in order to be able to look at media freedom more qualitatively. The second explanation refers to the direct feedback of the public to the government, as presented in the model. In electoral democracies or in times when revolutions occur as 'waves', only be popular governments can afford to defy the media. Some governments, such as Putin's or Lukashenko's, had enough resources to subsidize household energy and come up with a variety of perks for the public. These governments will not be brought down by the media, as they are genuinely popular. The largest share of the budget of the city of Rostov, in Southern Russian Federation, is used to cover utilities bills from private households: the majority of inhabitants are beneficiaries. A comparable city, Bucharest in Romania dedicates less than 3 per cent to the

same purpose, at a comparable purchasing parity power of the population. But most countries cannot afford such strategies, as they do not have the natural resources. In those countries the voters' feedback is likely to work and the media can be very influential.

The three paths of the relations between media and government in figure 1 thus amount to three government strategies: 1. direct control through repression 2. indirect control through capture 3. accommodation. The third strategy might be inspired by genuine concern on how to sell policy acts to the media or incorporate the views of public opinion into policy, as well as by rational calculations of how to 'look good' to the media.

### 3. Media Strikes Back

The overriding concern of the first years, both in Eastern Europe itself and the West, was on securing media freedom in post-communist Europe and establishing it on a firm legal and economic basis. But even prior to setting up media as an autonomous actor – a process completed only partly in some countries – media had been at the center of political change in Eastern Europe, right from the very beginning. Starting with the 1989 Romanian Revolution, public television became not just a mouthpiece of government or the victim of abuse, but also a crucial actor. In 1989 Romania, public television extended what could have arguably been a manageable revolt in Bucharest only, into a national scale collapse of communism, by broadcasting the news that Ceausescu had fled. One year later in Bulgaria, a shift in the attitude of journalists working in public television led directly to the fall of communist PM Petr Mladenov and opened the door to radical political change. Seen as the main reason why the Milosevic regime was still popular in rural areas, Serb national TV was bombed by NATO in 1998, on charges of...disinformation.

Two more recent examples illustrate how media can help prompt decisively a breakthrough for radical political change. The Ukrainian Orange Revolution had its origins in the president of the country losing his patience with a journalist. A tape alleging that the president was involved in the killing of investigative journalist Georgy Gongadze, recorded by a former presidential bodyguard was posted on the site of his newspaper, *Ukrayinska Pravda*, turning this small Internet publication into number-one rated Ukrainian media website. This also made the support for the regime an 'immoral' option. During the electoral campaign the number of Internet users tripled in Ukraine, as official censorship pushed voters to Internet cafes in search of real news. Only three days before the first round of elections 40 journalists, representing five TV channels, publicly declared that they would not work under "temnyky". Later, representatives of another eighteen TV channels and media companies joined the petition. The breaking point was 25 November, when the system of censorship and capture collapsed like a house of cards, in the words of a journalist.<sup>10</sup> On the day when official results were to be reported by the central election commission, the sign interpreter, Natalia Dmytruk, ignored the text of the main presenter about the outcome of the election. Instead, she gestured to her deaf viewers: "The official results by Central Election Committee are falsified. Do not trust them. Yushchenko is our president. I'm really sorry that I had to translate the lies before. I will not do this again. Not sure if I will see you then." Her statement triggered others as well.

Georgia's Rose Revolution was another bet won by donors who believed in the power of the media. The key actor was a provincial TV, Rustavi-2, founded in 1994 in the town of Rustavi, not far from Tbilisi. It was initially a tiny, private local TV station. Its main founder, with help and advice from the US media assistance organization Internews (USAID-backed), built it into a professionally sound media company, both in economic and journalistic terms. In the space of

a mere two years, Rustavi-2 moved into Tbilisi, survived two attempts of the regime to close it, was made stronger by the assassination of one of its journalists and became a national model where other stations and journalists looked for inspiration. Current President Michael Saakashvili, then the challenger, later said that ‘Most of the students who came out on the streets were brought out by Rustavi’.<sup>11</sup> Its role became crucial on election day, as it ran a scrawl at the bottom of the screen 24 hours a day showing the official results compared to a credible NGO exit polling and parallel vote count.

The assembled evidence that democracy promotion of this kind can be more effective than embargos or military interventions has, by now, persuaded the donor community and endowed it with a strong argument when facing policy-makers.<sup>12</sup> In the ten years leading up to the Georgian revolution, the US government spent just over \$154 million on democracy assistance projects in Georgia, most of it under the Freedom Support Act of 1992.<sup>13</sup> In Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union as a whole, \$350 million has been spent since 1991, specifically to develop independent media.<sup>14</sup> Some critical reservations were made that following the victory of opposition in electoral revolutions, media again did not show much autonomy, but instead became more partisan. This is in all likelihood true, and the concern is justified. Good media is autonomous media. Partisanship, however, is an indication that pluralism exists, and pluralism is superior to autocracy. There is another evolutionary cycle to go from pluralism to substantive democracy.

What about ‘normal’, non-revolutionary times, for instance, during and after EU accession? Does the media still matter? Seeing the public trust in media (television especially) and government, the likelihood is that media has a good position. It enjoys far more public trust than the government does. Around their accession date in 2004, even EE governments with a good record on EU accession were facing major popularity problems; after accession, a period of

**Table 2:** Trust in media and the government

Country	Print press (%)	Radio (%)	Television (%)	Trust in national government (%)
Bulgaria	35	51	70	19
Czech Republic	59	67	65	25
Estonia	52	75	75	45
Hungary	27	42	44	31
Latvia	52	67	68	28
Lithuania	55	65	68	31
Poland	50	59	54	7
Romania	57	69	73	36
Slovakia	57	71	68	17
Slovenia	54	64	62	27
ECE-10 (average)	50	63	65	27
EU-15 (average)	46	63	53	30

Source: Eurobarometer – Public Opinion in the Acceding and Candidate Countries, February–March 2004

political instability followed in Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary. Television has more than double the popularity of government in most countries, three or four times in some. Television is a strong actor, and TV owners a force to be reckoned with.

Influence on policy-making is, of course, much harder to prove than influence on revolutions. The study of the media's direct effects on politics generally looks at how media might influence who makes political decisions through the selection of political personnel; how media affects political styles and procedures, therefore, how it influences political actors behaviour; how media might co-determine about what decisions are taken due to their agenda-setting role; and, finally, how media might affect the actual content of political decisions, via their directional coverage or framing through bias or partisanship. *The role of the media in elevating issues to the systemic agenda and increasing their chances of receiving consideration on policy agendas is subject of considerable controversy nowadays, after being nearly orthodoxy in the 70s.*<sup>15</sup> In their influential overview of agenda-setting research, Dearing & Rogers state that "The mass media often have a direct influence on the policy agenda-setting process".<sup>16</sup> Reviewing a large body of research, Walgrave and Nuytemans<sup>17</sup> found that the media's impact on agenda setting depends on place, issues, political agendas, media agendas and time.

What does evidence from Eastern Europe tell us? In 2003 and 2004, I participated in the organization of a survey in the ten East European EU accession countries asking cabinet members on the role of media on policy-making. Ministers were asked to provide their subjective views on the amount of media influence during their tenure, specifically in reference to topics of cabinet discussions, amount of time given to media in cabinet discussions, presentation of decisions and, finally, substance of cabinet decisions. These questions should be judged together to get a complete picture of media's weight. If the media influence government topics and prompt discussion in the cabinet, this means it influences agenda-setting. The third question on presentation or wrapping up of cabinet decisions is more ambiguous, referring both to the communication skills of the government as well as to the media's influence.

**Table 3:** Media influence as acknowledged by cabinet ministers

Country	Topics	Time	Presentation	Substance	Specific newspaper/ TV channel
Bulgaria	44	24	44	44	16/16
Czech Republic	10	10	43	5	10/0
Estonia	56	53	66	33	33/33
Hungary	40	35	43	45	10/10
Latvia	53	48	48	43	25/23
Lithuania	70	59	65	56	41/27
Poland	56	53	56	27	22/7
Romania	49	73	27	24	46/33
Slovakia	23	64	9	14	0/0
Slovenia	33	57	24	19	38/24
ECE	47	49	45	33	25/18

Source: Project database. See note

The fourth question, on influence over substance of decisions, which should provide the clearest cut evidence of impact, depends strongly of awareness of politicians of being influenced and their readiness to admit this publicly. While politicians love to present themselves as oversensitive to media's policy warnings, they do not want to give the impression that they are ruled by the media.

The results of the survey suggest that media in east-central European countries influence both agenda-setting and substance of policy decisions. From our pooled sample of ministers, 47 per cent acknowledge influence over topics, 49 per cent over discussion time and 33 per cent over content of decisions. Variation is minimal across political ideology and type of cabinet and is significant by country only. The great exception seems to be the Czech Republic, whose ministers steadily denied influence of media, to the extent that none of them named an influential TV programme. The countries where ministers acknowledged that media influences the substance of decision to a greater extent are Bulgaria, Hungary and the Baltic States. Lithuanian ministers come on top with the greatest contribution of the media to their agenda, and Romanian ministers seem to lose considerable time discussing in cabinet meetings what they saw on TV the evening before.

Answers show some inconsistency of respondents. Slovak ministers allow discussing topics raised by media a lot in the cabinet, but claim their choice of topics and decisions are their own. This makes us suspect that ministers are reluctant to admit that they are influenced by public opinion as expressed through media. The Czech and Slovak ministers did not indicate any specific programmes and newspapers as more influential than others, although it is hard to believe that those do not exist. In other countries, with Romania on top, ministers acknowledge the particular influence of some newspapers or TV programmes. Some governments seem more professional in conveying their message to the media, especially the Czech and the Baltic ones. Countries which do better on freedom of the press seem also to be more careful in dealing with the media, while a great difference between the time allocated to discussing media (73, 64, respectively) as in Romania and Slovakia and the relative carelessness towards communicating to media (24, 14, respectively) might be because other informal means of handling the media are preferred. The survey of East European ministers seems to confirm what Robert Dahl wrote in his classic, *Who governs?*: 'The more uncertain a politician is about the state of public opinion or the more firmly believes in the "power of the press" the more reluctant he would be to throw down the gage to a newspaper publisher'.<sup>18</sup> *In other words, power of the media in normal times depends on the extent that decision-makers believe in it*, and this might explain the wide variation of media effects studies, as this belief varies greatly across national media environments, and from one moment in time to another.

## Conclusion

Research often ends up in more questions. Rather than asking ourselves if the media is influential,<sup>19</sup> and if investment in freedom of the media by the international community can bear fruit – it clearly is, and it clearly does – I suggest we focus on the circumstances that empower the media. This means that a comparative politics research design across a broad interval of time, rather than generalizations from the cross-sectional study of one country might provide better answers as to what specific set of circumstances makes a politically influential media. I also suggest that informal aspects of media control and media behaviour should not be neglected in favor of classic ones, and that corruption of the media is an underrated and understudied phenomenon.

Does the history end if a country reaches the relatively happy phase of accommodation, and we witness far less interaction between media and politics, as in liberal democracies? By and large, judging by the EE experience, I would say it does, but actors in the field might not agree. The media in most of the countries discussed here differ sharply in style from the rest of continental Europe. The violent critical tone and the poignancy of the investigative journalists in Eastern Europe (as well as their inaccuracy) are hard to accept in some Western European countries, such as France or Switzerland, with their mild media, and are closer to the British press only from 'old Europe'. One would be tempted to say that such governments deserve the media that they get, and the other way around. It would be an easy way out, though. East European governments rule through exceptional times, when the constitutional and economic order is daily overhauled to push transition further towards what their citizens black-humouredly call 'the light at the end of the tunnel'. Politicians are often amateur policy-makers trying to acquire some skill during office. Publishers and journalists often picture themselves as better at the job of government and give strong indications what policy decisions should be taken. Some may even get a position in the next government. Until the process of consolidation of new professional elites make such shifts between professions the exception rather than the norm, governing in Eastern Europe would remain a sort of athletic game in which spectators are allowed to throw in various objects and even descend from the amphitheatre into the playing field, while the results of the game are established by their open vote. It would sound anarchic and unprofessional, indeed, if the mere word 'democracy' was not actually born precisely in such amphitheatres.

## Notes

1. Siebert, and Peterson and Wilbur, *Four Theories of the Press*. 1–2.
2. Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems. Three Models of Media and Politics*.
3. Robinson, *Theorizing the Influence of Media on World Politics. Models on Media Influence on World Policy*. *European Journal of Communication*, vol 16 (4) 523–544.
4. Lucan A. Way, 'Authoritarian State Building and Transitions in Western Eurasia'. A paper prepared for the workshop on "Transitions from Communist Rule in Comparative Perspective", Encina Hall, Institute for International Studies, Stanford University, CA. USA, 15–16 November.
5. Correlation between Nations in Transit Corruption Score for 26 post-communist states (scores range from one to seven, with seven the most corruption) and the FH Freedom of the Press scores (scores ranged from 17 for Estonia and Latvia, as the most free, to 96 for Turkmenistan and 86 for Belarus), where the greatest infringements of media freedom were found. The correlation was highly significant with a Pearson index of 0.81. The two scores are both 'subjective', but as they are computed through two different methodologies they can be correlated.
6. Belin, L. (2001). "Verdict against TV-6 is Latest Warning to Opposition Media", in *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty: Russian Political Weekly*. 1: 25.
7. *The Standing Committee of PSD, Oct 20th 2003*. *Stenogramale PSD*. Editura Ziuva, 3 volumes, Bucurefti: 2004. The leaked transcripts of the Romanian Social Democrat (post-communist) Party, in power at the time, were under investigation by the national anticorruption prosecutor beginning 2005. Former Affairs Minister Mircea Geoana was quoted by BBC World Service acknowledging the transcripts are genuine. Several others PSD members made similar statements to the Romanian press. The Prime Minister Adrian Nastase (after January 2005 chair of the Chamber of Deputies) denied their authenticity. See the review of transcripts in *Romanian Journal of Political Science*, Fall 2004, pp. 54–56, [www.sar.org.ro/polsci/](http://www.sar.org.ro/polsci/).

8. Sükösd and Bajomi-Lázár, *Reinventing Media. Media Policy Reform in East Central Europe*: 11 and Hall, Richard A. and O'Neil, Patrick "Institutions, Transitions, and the Media: A Comparison of Hungary and Romania", in *Communicating Democracy: The Media and Political Transitions*: 143.
9. Mungiu-Pippidi, 'State into Public: the Failed Reform of State TV in East Central Europe', <http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/presspol/publications/pdfs/alina.PDF>.
10. Based on Olena Prytula, *Journalism at the Heart of the Orange Revolution*, an address to Knight Fellowships Reunion and Conference.
11. Anable, 'The Role of Georgia's Media - and Western Aid - in the Rose Revolution'.
12. Idem note 11.
13. Office of the Coordinator of U.S. Assistance to Europe and Eurasia, U.S. Dept. of State.
14. O'Connor and Hoffman, *International Herald Tribune*, "Media in Iraq: The Fallacy of psy-ops".
15. Cobb and Elder, "The politics of agenda-building: an alternative perspective for modern democratic theory". *Journal of Politics* 33: 892-915. Also, Kingdon, J. W. *Agendas, alternatives and public policies*.
16. Dearing and Rogers, *Communication Concepts 6: Agenda-setting*. Thousand Oaks, CA, Sage: 74.
17. Walgrave and Nuytemns, "Specifying the media's political agenda-setting power. *Media, civil society, parliament and government in a small consociational democracy*".
18. Robert Dahl, *Who Governs?*: 259.
19. Novak, 'Effects no more?' in U. Carlsson (ed.) *Beyond Media Uses and Effects*, 31-40.

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# **FINDING THE RIGHT PLACE ON THE MAP: PROSPECTS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING IN POST-COMMUNIST COUNTRIES**

*Karol Jakubowicz*

Central and Eastern European students of post-Communist media change universally express disappointment – as we seek to show below – when it comes to assessing progress in the introduction of public service broadcasting in their countries. There is no question that the process has been part of what may be called “mimetic” or “imitative” transformation (see Jakubowicz 2007; Splichal 2000, 2001). It was clear from the start that transplantation of the legal and institutional frameworks of PSB would have to be followed by a long period of development of the kind of political and journalistic culture required for PSB to be able to flourish. The initial assumption was that as democratization proceeded, and as the new democratic political system matured, the required conditions for PSB to operate successfully would gradually be created. Accordingly, there was recognition of the fact that in this field, at least, new broadcasting laws proclaiming the need for PSB to be independent, and seeking to create a legal and institutional framework for this independence, were defining a long-term goal to be achieved gradually, over time, rather than immediately.

How long is “long”, however? And are we seeing “an enabling environment” for PSB emerging, as we thought we would? And, if not, perhaps we are being too impatient and should be prepared to wait some more?

It is, thus, time we asked ourselves: could more have been achieved since 1989? In other words, is disappointment with progress achieved in developing PSB in the context of post-communist transformation fully justified?

Since the most disappointing feature of PSB performance in post-communist countries is the perceived lack of independence of these broadcasting organizations, especially from political forces and the power establishment, we will – in seeking answers to these questions –

concentrate primarily on that aspect. Our purpose here is to see whether some answers can be found by conducting a comparative analysis of political and media systems in different countries and regions. If a degree of similarity with conditions prevailing in other countries and regions can be established, perhaps an understanding of the process unfolding there can inform our examination of developments in Central and Eastern European countries.

One possible framework for such a comparative analysis is provided by Hallin and Mancini's (2004) analysis of media systems. It shows that media systems display a high degree of what we may broadly call "systemic parallelism", i.e., reflect the systemic features of the society within which they operate. We will seek to apply it here in order to see whether it can indeed offer an insight into the process of media system evolution. We will do so on the assumption that if the systemic features of the socio-political situation in post-communist countries are found to correspond, at least to some extent, to those defining one of Hallin and Mancini's systems, then there should be a degree of correspondence between their PSB systems as well. This would then provide a framework of assessment of progress achieved in the process of developing public service broadcasting after the collapse of communism.

However, how should we reconcile this approach with the warning sounded by Sükösd and Bajomi-Lázár (2003: 15) that "it would be a mistake to suggest that East Central European media systems are 'half way' to some final media state of reform, an end point of the Western institutional pattern. In our view, such a final destination does not exist and democratization of the media remains an open-ended, normatively oriented project". Also Mungiu-Pippidi (2003: 33) argues, along with many other scholars, that a clear model for the transformation of public service broadcasting is missing in Europe and that the "idealized Western European model" has either vanished or become inaccessible.

The answer to this quandary is that while it is true that post-communist transformation and democratization of the media are open-ended processes, Hallin and Mancini's analysis suggests that the range of options is not limitless. Historical experience shows that specific clusters of macro-structural circumstances tend to result in the emergence of specific media systems. The purpose here, therefore, is not to measure the situation in post-communist countries against some supposed western ideal. Rather, we agree with Sükösd and Bajomi-Lázár (2003) that some of the problems presently found in post-communist countries are shared by many democratic media systems, including those in countries with sustained, or at least significantly longer, democratic institutions and traditions. Accordingly, the goal here is to understand those similarities and the reasons for them, using Hallin and Mancini's typology as a framework of comparative analysis.

In doing so, we will also seek to view the Hallin-Mancini framework against a broader historical context. We will therefore begin with an attempt to correlate what we believe were the three main models of PSB introduction in various countries and historical contexts with Huntington's three waves of democratization, as well as with three models of "media and political system" identified by Hallin and Mancini (2004).

### **Introduction of PSB in Different Social and Historical Contexts**

We may identify three main models of the creation of public service broadcasting, or of the transformation of state broadcasting into public service broadcasting:

- Paternalistic – as in the UK, where PSB was originally born in 1926 in the form of the BBC, an independent public corporation with a public-service remit, understood in part as

promoting public enlightenment, playing a clearly normative role in the country's cultural, moral and political life, and as promoting "the development of the majority in ways thought desirable by the minority" (Williams 1968: 117);

- Democratic and emancipatory – as in some other Western European countries, where erstwhile state broadcasting organisations began to be transformed into public service broadcasters in the 1960s and 1970s, a time when state (government) control of the then monopoly broadcasters could no longer be justified or claim legitimacy, and a way was sought to associate them more closely with the civil society and turn them into autonomous PSB organizations.
- Systemic – as in West Germany after World War II; Spain, Portugal and Greece in the 1970s; and in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989, when change of the broadcasting system was part and parcel of broader political change, typically transition to democracy after an authoritarian or totalitarian system.

As we will seek to show, more than one model may, over time, operate in one country. One example of that is the evolution of PSB systems in response to broader change in society, leading, e.g., to democratic and emancipatory change in an existing paternalistic (or state-dominated and politicized) PSB system.

In the group of countries representing the systemic model of PSB introduction, we may additionally distinguish cases where the system of public service broadcasting has been imposed by outside forces. This includes Germany as well as, to some extent, Japan (Kato 1999; por. Shimizu b.d.w.).

The United States and New Zealand offer another special case of PSB being created (or, as in the latter case, recreated; see e.g., Comrie, Fountaine 2006) for reasons other than the progress of democratization (as in the democratic and emancipatory model) or loss of legitimacy of state media (as in the democratic and emancipatory or systemic models). Here, we have to do with a clinical case of the market failure rationale for PSB: a conviction that commercial broadcasting alone is not enough, as it fails to meet all the needs of society.

The three main models of PSB introduction obviously emerged in different socio-political circumstances, arising out of the history of political development of particular countries. There is clear interdependence between this process and the level of democratic consolidation in a particular society. Accordingly, this might perhaps suggest a strong correlation between particular models and the three "waves of democratization" identified by Huntington (1995; see also Balcerowicz 1995; Eckstein 2001):

- The years 1828–1926 which saw the democratization of Australia, Canada, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden, the United States, Switzerland, Great Britain, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Norway (as well as others, which, however, reverted to non-democratic rule);
- The years 1943–1964, when Allied occupation helped impose democracy on some countries (Germany, Japan, Italy, Austria, South Korea); when other countries (Greece, Turkey, Brazil, Argentina, Peru, Ecuador, Venezuela and Columbia) advanced to democracy; and when the beginnings of decolonization also promoted the process;
- The years after 1974, when the fall of the Soviet Union and the final phase of decolonization were the prime movers of the process.

And yet, despite some chronological parallels, Huntington's three "waves of democratization" are not a sufficient guide to prospects for PSB emergence and development. This is because Huntington accepts the Schumpeterian formal and procedural definition of democracy and that, as we will try to show below, is not in itself enough to create propitious conditions for PSB independence. Moreover, not even consolidation of democracy is enough for PSB properly so called flourish. After all, Linz and Stepan (1996) regard Southern European democracies as consolidated, and yet – as we will see – PSB has had immense difficulties in those countries. What is needed is a stable, mature liberal democracy. However, given that the United States is such a democracy and yet has a very weak system of PSB, even that in itself is not enough. What is also required is a tradition of concern for the public interest and of a strong State role in meeting the society's needs. McQuail (2005: 239-241) has identified three phases of media policy development in Europe, including a public service phase, lasting from the 1920s to the 1970s and – not coincidentally – largely overlapping with a long period of social democratic rule in many of those countries. That was the period when PSB emerged and developed. The triumph of neoliberalism in the 1980s, again not coincidentally overlapping with a new phase of the evolution of media policy, has shaken PSB and raised doubts as to its future.

In Huntington's first-wave countries, PSB was introduced in line with the paternalistic model. Later, however, there were no clear-cut chronological or societal parallels. The democratic and emancipatory model emerged primarily in first-wave countries, but before and during of the third wave of democratization. Those countries were already displaying all the characteristics of procedural democracy, but without the requisite socio-political conditions allowing PSB either to have already been introduced at all, or to be really independent and engage in impartial journalism. In some countries, the democratic and emancipatory phase followed the much earlier introduction of PSB in line with the paternalistic model, due to progress of democratic consolidation.

The systemic model has been most conspicuous in third-wave countries (which is not to say that PSB is now present in all those countries), but was equally evident in other countries, where – as in Germany, for example – democratization was followed by reversion to totalitarian/authoritarian rule and only its subsequent collapse paved the way to transforming State into public service media. Depending on the strength of democratic tradition in a particular country, or on the pace of democratic consolidation, while it typically produced a polarized pluralist model, it did also, in some cases (e.g., Germany), lead to the democratic-corporatist model.

Simple correlations are equally elusive in the case of waves of democratization and media systems as classified by Hallin and Mancini (2004). True, the liberal system is to be found exclusively in the first-wave countries (the United States, the UK, Canada and Ireland). However, other first-wave countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland etc.) developed the democratic-corporatist system. The obvious reason for this is that their socio-political systems, traditions, cultural and religious divisions required the accommodation of various group interests.

In turn, third-wave countries have so far, as a rule, developed "Mediterranean systems" (polarized pluralism). In Hallin and Mancini's analysis they are Greece, Spain and Portugal, but in addition, also, France and Italy.

All this confirms the assumption that the media display "systemic parallelism" in the sense that they are shaped by the socio-political and cultural features of the countries in which they operate, including notably the level of actual or potential societal conflict and the degree of democratic consolidation.

Table 1 provides a schematic and simplified depiction of the interrelationships we discussed above.

**Table 1:** “Systemic parallelism” and public service media

Waves of democratization	Models of PSB introduction	Media systems
First	Paternalistic or Democratic-emancipatory	Liberal; democratic-corporatist
Second	Systemic (possibly followed by democratic-emancipatory)	
Third		Polarized pluralist

Incidentally, the concept of “systemic parallelism” would suggest that a future wave of democratization should bring about the emergence of PSB organizations in new countries. This could perhaps be the logical conclusion, especially as concerns countries and regions oriented to imitating European models, though we need to note that while some authors do look forward to a “fourth wave” (Diamond 1997), others expect only a “fourth trickle” (Bunce 2002), and still others are saying that the next wave is already happening and is producing “illiberal democracies” (Zakaria 1997). Illiberal democracies are certainly not a natural habitat for PSB.

### **Liberal, democratic-corporatist, “polarized pluralist” systems: Vive les (petites) différences**

To gain a better understanding of the interrelationships discussed above, but primarily to establish whether Hallin and Mancini’s typology can serve as a framework of comparative analysis of post-communist media change, let us recall the main features of the three systems they analyse (see table 2).

The fact that polarized-pluralist and democratic corporatist media systems often operate in the context of consensual (consociational) systems of government is a manifestation of the “systemic parallelism” we mentioned above. Consociationalism is essentially a strategy for conflict management and the choice of a majoritarian or consociational form of government is predicated primarily on the level of actual or potential conflict within society (due, e.g., to divisions of various nature within society) or on political tradition (e.g., most former British dependencies have adopted the Westminster, or “Westminster adapted” models; Lijphart n.d.). Where there is a high level of actual or potential conflict, PSB organizations will be affected by the political and institutional solutions designed to cope with it, inter alia, involving politicized and pluralistic governing bodies of PSB (“politics-in-broadcasting”), serving as an arena for the negotiation and resolution of such conflicts.

Incidentally, as Marletti and Roncaloro (2000) point out, Italy has evolved from a consensual, quasi-consociational system of government to a majoritarian one under Berlusconi, so change from one system to another in the same country is, of course, not impossible.

Marletti and Roncaloro (2000) note that consociational and majoritarian politics differ significantly with regard to the relationship between politics and the media. Under multiparty systems and especially consociationalism, direct appeals to public opinion occur relatively infrequently, and their political impact is seldom decisive. Multiparty systems develop their own

**Table 2:** The Three Models: Main Political and Media System Characteristics

	<b>Polarized pluralist model</b>	<b>Democratic-Corporatist model</b>	<b>Liberal model</b>
<b>Political system</b>			
Political history: conflict vs consensus	Late democratization, polarized pluralism	Early democratization, moderate pluralism,	Early democratization, moderate pluralism
Consensus or majoritarian govt.	Both	Predominantly consensus	Predominantly majoritarian
Individual vs. organized pluralism	Organized pluralism	Organized, democratic corporatism	Individual representation
Role of State	Dirigisme	Strong welfare state	Liberalism
Rational Legal Authority	Weak, clientelism	Strong	Strong
<b>Media system</b>			
Political parallelism	High Politics-over-broadcasting	External pluralism, politics-in-broadcasting with substantial autonomy	Internal pluralism (external in the UK), professional broadcast governance, formally autonomous system
Professionalization	Weak	Strong	Strong
Role of State in Media	Strong	Strong, but freedom of media protected	Market-dominated (but strong PSB in UK and Ireland)

*Adapted from Hallin and Mancini, 2004: 67–68*

internal mechanisms, some formal and some informal, for accommodating economic and social interests and resolving controversial issues. Moreover, the parties commonly prefer these conflict management mechanisms to those offered by the media because they do not entail the same risk of loss of control that is associated with going public.

In “Mediterranean” majoritarian systems, by contrast, direct appeals to public opinion as a means of resolving controversial partisan issues are common and accepted as normal arenas

for the articulation of conflict. Broadcast media are one instrument of pursuing this practice, resulting in elite control of them.

In liberal systems, on the other hand, majoritarian systems of government operate without direct, hands-on control of the media exercised by politicians.

Linz and Stepan's (1996) concept of consolidated democracy helps portray the systemic interdependencies between the five arenas of democracy (political, civil and economic societies, state administration and the rule of law) needed for (representative) democracy both to operate properly, and to create propitious conditions for media freedom and autonomy.

As a minimum, these conditions must include:

- Sufficient separation of all these arenas (which is not to deny their interdependence) so that proper separation of powers is achieved, all the countervailing forces operate properly, and the economy (and PSB) is outside direct political control;
- The existence of a strong civil society which, as Linz and Stepan put it, "helps monitor the state apparatus and economic society", resisting the expansionist tendencies of political society and state apparatus which always, when given a chance, seek to control more and more of social and public life. If this condition is met, an independent public sphere outside the control of politicians and/or state apparatus may emerge as the social space where independent media, operating as emanations of civil society, rather than political society, may develop;
- The effective operation of the economy and economic society and markets, so that the media can be sustained by the market and financially successful, as a prerequisite of their independence and development;
- Effective rule of law, so that the legal framework designed to protect media autonomy and proper performance is respected, both by the media as well as political society and state apparatus.

While this is all true, we must be conscious of the fact that these conditions can never be met fully. The experience of Western European countries and of the United States suggests that "clinical" separation of political and civil society, or political and economic society, can hardly be expected. It would be no exaggeration to say that precisely because these conditions can never be met fully, the importance of a strong, aware and engaged civil society is all the greater, as the only countervailing force capable of bringing influence to bear on the other arenas of democracy so as to prevent takeover of the democratic process.

As far as the prerequisites for PSB independence are concerned, let us note that in 1979 the following conclusion emerged out of an analysis of the relationship of politics and television in six Western European countries: "What happens in practice is often very different from constitutional theory and political intention. The way in which television presents politics and the ways in which politicians influence television have to be explained in terms of the political and journalistic culture of the societies concerned" (Smith 1979: ix).

More than a quarter of a century later, a Danish report on PSB governance in the UK, Norway, Sweden and Finland (liberal system) and the Netherlands, Austria and Germany (democratic-corporatist system) produced similar conclusions regarding the relationship between PSB and the political class:

- "Political influence and control of public service broadcasting is in reality taken for granted in all the countries studied;

- The responsibility of the politicians in this respect is to ensure that the political influence in/on public service broadcasting does not take on the character of any political party;
- Assuming that it is unbiased, political influence on public service broadcasting is harmless, and can be an advantage because public service broadcasters operate in a political environment” (Mediesekretariatet 2005: 2).

If the concept of “unbiased political influence” strikes one as odd, an explanation is offered by Hallin and Mancini (2004: 52) who point out that often the same institutional arrangements for broadcast governance produce different political results in consensus and majoritarian systems. Thus, they say, a governing board appointed by parliament according to proportional representation will result in power sharing in a consensus system, such as Italy, or government control in majoritarian system, such as Spain. More to the point, we could add, is that while the appointment of the director general of RTVE by the Spanish government (the system has now changed, as we will see below) served precisely the goal of direct government control, that of the director general of RUV by the minister of culture in Iceland most likely does not.

It is equally obvious that, depending on other circumstances, institutional arrangements may produce different political results, regardless of the intended purpose for which they were created. In Poland, in order to prevent capture of PSB by the government of the day, the supervisory board (which then appoints the board of management) of a public service broadcaster is appointed by the broadcasting regulatory authority (itself appointed by the two houses of parliament and the president). Yet, because of informal mechanisms and political clientelism (as well as executive dominance over the legislature – a feature not only of majoritarian, but also of unconsolidated democracies), the Polish government finds it easier to control PSB than the UK government which, to all intents and purposes, appoints the BBC Trust (which appoints the director-general).

As a general principle, “systemic parallelism” means that a country’s system of government is translated into a corresponding system of PSB governance (“politics-over-broadcasting”, “politics-in-broadcasting” etc.). Whether or not the particular set of institutional arrangements for PSB governance will lead to the organization’s subordination to, or independence from, politicians, depends on the degree of consolidation of democracy and even more so on the concomitant political culture.

So, the decisive element is not the fact of involvement by politicians, e.g., in the appointment of the governing bodies of PSB organizations, or in other relations with them (as this is very common in all systems), but the quality of that involvement or relations. This is where political culture comes in.

According to Paletz and Lipinski (1994), political culture consists of widely shared, fundamental beliefs that have political consequences. Political culture shapes how individuals and the society act and react politically. It is political culture, to a great extent, that determines whether the society is able to maintain and operate a viable and enduring constitutional democratic system of government, or whether the society must choose between authoritarianism and domestic disorder.

Political culture sets the framework, the intellectual environment, within which government and politics take place. Among other things, it should constrain the actions of politicians and public officials: even if inclined otherwise, they usually refrain from taking positions or from implementing policies that blatantly violate the elements of the political culture. This underscores

the need for a strong civil society, capable of contributing to the development of a political culture and of imposing limits on political behaviour. Without such a countervailing force, political society will be less constrained in its actions and policies.

However, acceptance by politicians and office-holders of restraints on their power is also very clearly a function of advanced consolidation of democracy, as explained by Diamond (1997: 4):

Consolidation [of democracy – K.J.] involves not just agreement on the rules for competing for power but fundamental and self-enforcing restraints on the exercise of power. This, in turn, requires a mutual commitment among elites, through the “coordinating” mechanism of a constitution, related political institutions, and often an elite pact or settlement as well, to enforce limits on state authority, no matter which party or faction may control the state at any given time. Only when this commitment to “policing” state behavior is powerfully credible, because it is broadly shared among key alternative power groups, does a ruling party, president, or ‘sovereign’ develop a clear *self-interest* in adhering to the rules of the game, which then makes those constitutional rules “self-enforcing” ...This in turn involves not just tactical calculations of long-term benefit in a repeated game but, again, a normative shift as well (emphases added – K.J.)

Restraints on the exercise of power are hardly likely to be accepted, unless there is long-term stability of a polity and the satisfactory resolution of fundamental societal issues. A recurrence of conflicts or the reappearance of profound divisions within society may potentially lead to rejection of these restraints. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that elite acceptance of restraints on the exercise of power and of limits on state and political authority is indispensable for the successful introduction and operation of PSB as an independent broadcaster. Otherwise, as shown by countless examples, a nominal PSB organization will become, in one way or another, an extension of the state or of the power establishment.

From our point of view, acceptance of restraints on the exercise of power over or on attempts to influence the media, in general, and PSB, in particular, are a necessary part of political culture as a prerequisite of media independence.

To conclude this line of thought, then, differences between political and media systems analysed by Hallin and Mancini range between macro-structural features on the one hand, and, on the other, nuances of political culture which may give an entirely different meaning and practical effect to identical institutional solutions applied in the organization of PSB. It is especially this second aspect which requires a long period of gestation. Politicians, civil society and media practitioners need time – measured in decades – to institutionalize the values and standards of consolidated democracy and to use transplanted patterns of public service broadcasting in the proper way.

### **Comparing Southern European and Post-Communist Political Development**

The foregoing general analysis of some salient elements of Hallin and Mancini’s media systems in the context of political systems is our point of departure for a comparative analysis of the situation in Central and Eastern Europe and southern Europe. In line with the “systemic parallelism” concept, this needs to begin with a brief look at political development in the two regions.

Sitter (2005) discusses two approaches to comparative analysis of political systems in Western and Eastern Europe. One consists in looking at “similarities with earlier developments

in Western Europe. Perhaps the most obvious comparison was to the Mediterranean transitions to democracy in the 1970s, or even post-war democratisation in Germany and Italy, but others look to Lipset & Rokkan's classic analysis of the development of party systems in Western Europe". The other concentrates on "East European exceptionalism", a view based on the conviction that post-communist developments are so different from previous episodes of democratization, let alone the dynamics of party political competition in Western Europe, that comparative analysis may well be misleading.

Sitter's own view, based on the study of competitive politics in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe, is that developments over the last decade and a half have been less "exceptional" than is sometimes argued. Also Dryzek and Holmes (2002: 256) argue – rightly, we believe – that "differences between at least the more democratized CEE states and the West look to be of degree rather than kind".

In short, then, valid comparisons should be possible, even given all the differences between the two regions. Let us, therefore, proceed from the suggestion that what is happening in Central and Eastern Europe can most obviously be compared to Mediterranean transitions to democracy and their results. If we can establish some parallels between the Mediterranean variety of democracy and the resultant media system of polarized pluralism and those of post-communist countries, we will have a framework of assessment of PSB development in the latter. Of course, we cannot go here beyond unavoidably cursory and general remarks on this subject.

To begin with southern Europe (for an extensive analysis of the process of democratic consolidation in the region, see Linz and Stepan 1996: 87–150), Statham (1996) says that Italy is a case of an unfinished process of modernization. Marletti and Roncaloro (2000) add that in Italy the elite-led nation- and state-building process has not succeeded in bringing about a unitary civic culture, but rather has created a gap between the political cultures of the masses and the elites, accentuated by the centralism of the state. Italy remains a fragmented and pluralistic country, with various territorial identities and political subcultures, in which state centralism is only a heavy superstructure. The First Republic (the period which goes up to the *Tangentopoli* scandals and the disappearance of the traditional party structures at the beginning of the 1990s) was characterized by a sort of *panpoliticismo*, i.e., a situation when politics pervades and influences many social systems, the economy, the judicial system and so on (see also Mancini 2000).

Papatheodorou and Machin (2003) point to similarities in historical experience, level of economic development and political culture between Spain, Greece, Portugal and, occasionally, Italy. Greece and Spain, they say, were – due to delayed and uneven economic development – sites of intense social conflict and upheaval during a large part of the twentieth century. Social and ideological divisions culminated in civil strife. After several decades of authoritarian rule, stable democratic institutions were only established in the last quarter of the twentieth century.

In these circumstances, it is no surprise that, as – Papatheodorou and Machin (2003) put it – the political elite and the media are joined by a "umbilical cord" that remained in place (as in Portugal, Spain and Greece) even after the overthrow of dictatorship and subsequent political change. Despite efforts towards political and economic modernization, patronage channels have remained. Even after the downfall of dictatorial governments, and despite the extensive renovation of political personnel, the persistence of social incoherence and of traditional political practices imposed limitations on the establishment of mass political parties

in the West European fashion. As a result political parties in government have always relied heavily on the resources of the state in order to consolidate their power. Patronage has thus remained a crucial means for mobilizing and maintaining political support.

Papatheodorou and Machin conclude that the central role of the state in south European societies, the organizational weakness of political parties and the insecurity caused by the fluidity of their electoral base are a key to understanding both the pattern of development of media institutions and their place within the overall configuration of power.

Southern European countries display features of "state paternalism" (Papatheodorou, Machin 2003) or, indeed, "political clientelism" (as in Latin America), defined as "a pattern of social organization in which access to resources is controlled by patrons and delivered to clients in exchange for deference and various kinds of support. It is a particularistic and asymmetric form of social organization, and is typically contrasted with forms of citizenship in which access to resources is based on universalistic criteria and formal equality before the law" (Hallin, Papathanassopoulos 2002: 184-185). Cases of clientelism can be found anywhere, but in some countries – and this applies to southern Europe – it is described as the dominant feature of the social order.

Hallin and Papathanassopoulos (2002) associate certain features of the media system with political clientelism:

- A tradition of advocacy reporting (see also Mancini 2000);
- Instrumentalization of privately owned media;
- Politicization of public broadcasting and broadcast regulation;
- And limited development of journalism as an autonomous profession.

As for post-communist countries, they share some of the features of southern European countries: late democratization, insufficient economic development, weak rational-legal authority combined with a *dirigiste* state. Their modernization is also incomplete or (in some cases) little advanced.

The pace of democratization in Central and Eastern Europe has been very uneven. In fact, according to Carothers (2002: 6) "Many countries that policy makers and aid practitioners persist in calling 'transitional' are not in transition to democracy". Instead of "transitioning" to democracy, many countries so described, says Carothers, have entered "a political gray zone", encompassing two main broad syndromes:

- "feckless pluralism", where democracy remains shallow and troubled (Carothers lists Moldova, Bosnia, Albania and Ukraine as belonging to this category, with Romania and Bulgaria teetering on its edge).
- and "dominant-power politics", where one political grouping dominates the system in such a way that there is little prospect of alternation of power in the foreseeable future, and the line between the state and the ruling political forces is blurred, with the state's main assets in the direct service of the ruling party (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan).

And then, there are the out-and-out authoritarian systems, including the other Central Asian republics and Belarus.

The "colour revolutions" have changed the picture as far as some of these countries are concerned (see McFaul 2005), as has the EU accession process for some of these countries, but

there is no doubt that democratization is stalled in many post-communist countries. According to Krastev (2006), countries like Russia are not democracies, but “democracy’s doubles” – regimes that claim to be democratic and may look like democracies, but which rule like autocracies.

Still, there are also examples of relatively successful post-communist democratization. Indeed, Sükösd (2000) argues that Hungary’s democracy can be regarded as consolidated in each of the dimensions listed by Linz and Stepan (1996). Other assessments are less optimistic. One argues that “no doubt, prospects for successful consolidation can be found in the countries which were admitted to the EU in 2004, and those that are to join in 2007, i.e. Romania and Bulgaria. As for the others, we can rather speak of the beginnings of democratic transformation (Ukraine, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro), or of attempts to consolidate some hybrid forms (Russia, Albania), or of an authoritarian system (Belarus)” (Cichosz 2006: 66; see also Antoszewski, Herbut 2004).

Cichosz goes on to say that most post-communist countries have developed hybrid forms of democracy:

- Formal democracy – no counter-elites to oppose those in power, low level of political competition (Russia, Ukraine before 2004; Serbia before 2000);
- Elite democracy – competing oligarchies with low political participation of the citizens (Romania before 1996; Albania, Bulgaria);
- Partitocrazia – monopolization of public life by political parties which exclude other social actors from decision-making processes; rule by political oligarchs often connected to economic pressure groups. This amounts to political party capture of the state, corruption and low legitimacy of the system (just about everywhere in post-communist countries);
- Tyrannical majority – forces returned to power disregard the political views and interests of other political or social forces; display no willingness to compromise and accept no restraints on their power. This type of hybrid democracy is promoted by “leaders convinced of their ‘historic and moral mission’, consisting in imposing a direction of the country’s development on the rest of society” (Cichosz 2006: 64). Examples include Hungary in 1990 to 1994; Slovakia under Meciar; Croatia under Tudjman; Slovenia after 2004; Poland after 2005).

This last tendency and its very recent upsurge in some of the “leader” or “trailblazer” countries, such as Poland, may indicate regression, rather than progress. In 2005–2007, Poland was certainly been the scene of the “etatization of democracy”, delegitimization of civil society and all opposing political and intellectual elites as democratic actors and far-reaching concentration of power, including that over the public media. This amounts to de-consolidation of democracy, rather than anything else. According to some commentators, Poland may have been turning then from a prospective liberal democracy into an illiberal one.

It is in this context that media policy has been formulated and implemented in post-communist countries. First, they had to settle on a model of the media system, with underlying normative media theory(ies) and concepts of the role of the media and journalism in society (see Jakubowicz 2007). They had a choice mainly of three media policy orientations:

- Idealistic (a radical vision of direct, participatory communicative democracy);
- Mimetic (straight transplantation of the generalized western media system with a free press and a dual broadcasting system), and
- Atavistic (the unwillingness of new power elites to give up all control of, or ability to influence, the media).

In the circumstances described above, it is not surprising that the atavistic orientation proved very popular. As already noted, post-communist countries break down into several groups in terms of their democratic development. Vachudova (2005) simplifies this by distinguishing liberal and illiberal democracies.

In the liberal ones, partitocratic systems, together with the politicization of all spheres of public life (the post-communist version of *panpoliticismo*) and the political culture of post-communism favoured control of the media by political elites. In the illiberal democracies, autocratic systems of government, involving the power of state administration or the oligarchs over the media and an underdeveloped civil society, largely undermined prospects for media freedom, turning them into the voice either of the state or of political or other vested interests.

As a result, the media model characteristic of the present stage of transformation is a combination of the mimetic and "atavistic" media policy orientations. It is hard to describe precisely which elements of which model shape the media most in particular countries, but as a general rule liberal democracies countries have acquired more features of the mimetic model, while the illiberal democracies retain more of the atavistic model. Meanwhile, the authoritarian states represent a straight and unadulterated atavistic orientation, allowing the media little, or no, freedom and independence at all.

### **PSB in Southern Europe**

We may now take a look at the development of public service broadcasting in southern Europe, bearing in mind the political context briefly described above.

With regard to Spain, Gunther, Montero and Wert (2000: 47) make the point that media liberalization after the end of the franquist period "did not include a reform of the structural relationship between the government and TVE". Also Bustamante (1989) has pointed out that the formal democratization of state television showed a curious delay in relation to other institutions in the country, with TVE remaining the centre and basic arena of political struggle. The "heavy legacy of Franco's television model" continued to exert its influence long after the demise of Franco's system of government, despite repeated (but perhaps only half-hearted) attempts to introduce institutional arrangements guaranteeing greater independence for TVE (all the while, however, the director general of RTVE was still appointed directly by government).

Thus, Bustamante (1989) concluded, the transition to democracy partially, and belatedly, reformed that model without breaking from the traditional concepts of broadcasting, generically identified with authoritarianism. But, above all, he said, Spanish television joined the wave of commercialization, but without having previously consolidated a public service stage.

Students of public service broadcasting in post-communist countries may find it instructive that it was only in 2004, nearly 30 years after the collapse of the authoritarian regime and the "systemic" model of PSB introduction, that "democratic and emancipatory" changes were launched in Spain by the new Zapatero government, designed to promote the "degovernmentalization of RTVE" (Caffarel, de Castro 2006).

This may confirm Eckstein's (2001) view that "a plan to democratize fully should probably cover some twenty-five years - more or less, depending on local conditions". After a period of about fifteen years of democratization, Eckstein continues, just about anything is still about equally likely to occur, from quick demise of democracy to something approaching permanence. After that, however, persistence becomes more likely as time from the start increases. This seems to have been the case in Spain.

A “Report on the reform of the publicly owned media”, commissioned by the Zapatero government, confirmed that the appointment of the upper management by the government not only implied distortions in the programming or suspicions concerning the independence of the news, but also resulted in an inefficient power structure. Its chronic instability (twelve directors in little more than twenty years, a new one every two years) has been, moreover, incompatible with a rational management of a public company permanently destined to increase its level of debt. And in the same way, the composition and functions of an Administrative Council made up of political supporters with no more competence than the ability to permanently reiterate their political views, has substantially aggravated the situation.

As Caffarel and de Castro put it, the main purpose of the reform is to put an end to the political control within the public broadcaster, respond to the public demands for truthfulness, plurality and transparency, and endow it with internal practices that will bring back the confidence of its professions, guaranteeing them respect for their rights and duties. To this end, a new RTVE corporation has been formed, autonomous with regard to its management, acting independently of the government and under the control of Parliament and the new State Council for Audiovisual Media, with a new Administrative Council formed by highly qualified professionals, appointed by Parliament for six years (longer, therefore, than the life of a legislature). A key aspect is participation of the citizens, with the new law calling for the creation of an Advisory Council made up of thirteen members appointed by social organizations, the Social Economic Council, consumer and user organizations and associations of various types, professional and civic. Finally, with regard to control over the management of public resources by the state, a framework mandate for a duration of nine years is proposed, operated under a programme agreement with the state in which the objectives, the management and administration of the public service and the relevant economic arrangements would be specified.

A strikingly similar situation can be found in Portugal. Writing in 1996, Sousa had this to say about Portugal’s public service broadcasters:

RTP has never had a balanced and impartial political output, it has been financed mainly (and now almost totally) by advertising revenue; thus, it has never had a high degree of financial and political independence. Finally, its statutory requirement to educate, inform and entertain has not been taken seriously. In general terms, the Portuguese PSB has been controlled by the government and operates like the other commercial channel.

She went on to say that both RDP and RTP had been under the control of successive governments, with the result that between 1974 and 1986 the eleven seats on the board of governors and the twenty directors posts at RTP and RDP has been held by 80 and 130 different people respectively, whose qualifications for the job were considered less important than their party membership cards.

As in Spain, it took nearly 30 years for serious attempts to reform the situation to be launched. In 2002, the Portuguese government accepted a report drawn up by a panel of independent experts on the restructuring of public service broadcasting and redefinition of its remit. A sign of the new approach is that one of the two national public service television channels will from now on include partnerships with civil institutions such as universities, foundations, museums and associations, for the cession of their archives or copyrights, sponsoring and other forms of contributing for the production of programmes.

The 2003 Television Broadcasting Act has a special section on access to airtime on public television, guaranteeing political parties, the government, trade unions, professional organizations and those representing economic activities and environmental and consumer protection associations the right to broadcast time on the public television service, in accordance with strictly calculated quotas. Moreover, a variety of the now-defunct American Fairness Doctrine was introduced, with opposition parliamentary parties enjoying the right to refute, in the same programme service, to the political declarations made by the government on the public television service which affected them directly. Another new departure is the fact that the law calls for the appointment of “the Listener Ombudsman” and “the Viewer Ombudsman” who are to represent the public, its complaints and grievances vis-à-vis the management of public radio and public television. Their annual reports are to be considered by the regulatory authority.

By contrast, Italy is still waiting for its “democratic and emancipatory” process of change in RAI, the public service broadcaster. The story so far is well known. After decades of Christian Democratic Party hold on society and RAI, an attempt to democratize public service broadcasting and free it from government control led in the 1970s to the introduction of the *lottizzazione*, turning a system of “party domination” into one of “party partition” (Cavazza 1979), a paragon of “political parallelism”. After the collapse of the Christian Democrats and the Socialists (two of the three parties which had held RAI in its grip) in the *Tangentopoli* scandal in 1992, the old *lottizzazione* system was replaced by “individual *lottizzazione*” (Hibberd 2001), with political appointees placed in the management of RAI to promote party interests. The many years of Berlusconi rule in reality meant the return of “party domination” over RAI: “Berlusconi and his coalition allies...adopted majoritarian, winner-take-all policies in appointing directors and overseers of the RAI broadcasting empire” (Marletti, Roncarolo 2000:197).

Under the pressure of the Italian president, the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, all concerned with insufficient pluralism in the Italian broadcast media, the Italian Parliament adopted the Gasparri Law, ostensibly designed to improve the situation. However, the European Commission for Democracy through Law of the Council of Europe had this comment to make:

In conclusion, the Commission notes that change at RAI will allow for government control over the Public Broadcaster for an unforeseeable period of time. For as long as the present government stays in office, this will mean that, in addition to being in control of its own three national television channels, the Prime Minister will have some control on the three public national television channels. The Commission expresses concern over the risk that this atypical situation may even strengthen the threat of monopolisation, which might constitute, in terms of the case-law of the European Court of Human Rights, an unjustified interference with freedom of expression (Venice Commission 2005)

In June 2006, the Prodi government announced it would undo Berlusconi’s media reforms, but it was not clear whether that would lead to enhancing PSB independence. In January 2007 it was reported that according to government plans, RAI would be controlled by a Foundation “in order to avoid direct control by the Italian government” (Pekic 2007). The Foundation is to guarantee autonomy of government, represent the citizens-viewers, defend the company’s independence, define the statutes of RAI and nominate the top management. It is proposed that the Foundation’s Board of Directors be composed of seven members, with candidates screened

by Parliament. The Board will have a six-year mandate, a third being renewed every two years. Another idea is that the Board will be appointed by other institutions as well, such as regions, universities and trade unions: in that case the number of members would be bigger. Following a public consultation, a government bill providing for these changes was to be submitted to Parliament.

It remains to be seen whether this will mean a democratic-emancipatory turn in Italy's policies vis-à-vis PSB, reducing what is now full political control of the broadcasting organization.

### PSB in Post-Communist Countries

Despite the strong impact of the "atavistic" orientation, the mimetic orientation, combined with considerable pressure (or "leverage", as Vachudova 2005, prefers to call it) exerted on particular governments by the European Union, the Council of Europe and other international organizations, has – as shown in table 3 – produced a significant result in terms of the legal and institutional introduction of what is described as PSB in the region.

The World Bank (2002) assigned particular countries to one of the categories on the basis of the situation in 1999. Some countries have evolved since then and have moved or are moving towards other categories. Introduction of PSB could be an indicator of this change of status. The table does not include Mongolia, where PSB has also been introduced.

The precarious situation of PSB in post-communist countries is illustrated by the situation in Armenia, where "although in 2001 the state TV was transformed into *Channel H1*, the first public-service broadcaster in the CIS region, the channel still has yet to play its role as a public-service broadcaster...It is problematic that all five members of its board are appointed by President Kocharyan. The lack of political independence of the Board is seen as one of the main causes for the lack of objectivity and diversity in the news coverage of the public-service broadcaster, as confirmed by recent civil-society monitoring endeavours" (Haraszti 2006). In Azerbaijan, the Parliament first adopted a law on PSB which did not indicate that PSB would in reality be established. Then, in 2004, a presidential decree provided for transformation of one channel of

**Table 3:** Presence of PSB (\*) in Post-Communist Countries

<b>Competitive democracies</b>	<b>Concentrated political regimes</b>	<b>War-torn regimes</b>	<b>Noncompetitive political regimes</b>
Czech Republic*	Slovak Republic*	Armenia*	Kazakhstan
Slovenia*	Bulgaria*	Albania*	Uzbekistan
Hungary*	Romania*	Georgia	Belarus
Poland*	Ukraine	Macedonia, FYR*	Turkmenistan
Lithuania*	Russia	Azerbaijan*	
Estonia*	Croatia*	Tajikistan	
Latvia*	Moldova*	Bosnia-Herzegovina*	
	Kyrgyz Republic		

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state television into a PSB organization, alongside state television. Its independence is seriously in question. In Kyrgyzstan, Parliament adopted a law on public service broadcasting on 8 June 2006, but it was not sure the president would sign it (see also Richter, Golovanov 2006).

It is clear that where modernization and consolidation of democracy are incomplete, only a hybrid political system can emerge. As a consequence, also PSB stations in the more advanced post-communist democracies are in reality hybrid constructs, combining disparate (public service; political elite mouthpiece; political battlefield; commercial) elements within one organization. That is not a feature of post-communist countries alone: many PSB organizations in older democracies are also hybrid constructs, combining these and other elements in various degrees.

In general, public service broadcasting – where it exists – is, so far, generally seen as failing to deliver on its promise of independence and political impartiality, as well as of serving as a mainstay of the public sphere, and of delivering diverse and pluralistic content of high quality. Many of the stations are heavily in debt and their audience share is falling, especially in countries where national commercial radio and television stations have been licensed. Many are facing enormous challenges caused by, among other things:

- Traditional and badly designed organizational and management structures, involving many collective bodies divided along party lines, incapable of fast decision-making and mainly concentrating on blocking each other's actions;
- Heavy political control, resulting both from the politicization of the process of appointing top governing authorities, turning former state radio and television into “parliamentary” rather than public broadcasters, or indeed amounting to its “re-nationalization”;
- Frequent management and leadership crises and changes of top management, resulting from political interference;
- Lack of funds and programming know-how required to compete with commercial broadcasters, sometimes coupled with exaggerated insistence on non-commercialism which additionally weakens those stations' ability to hold their own in the face of aggressive competition by commercial broadcasters;
- Self-censorship of journalists and programme-makers who can expect little protection from their superiors when they run afoul of politicians or some influential organization.

These outward manifestations of crisis are accompanied by problems of a far more fundamental nature: lack of social embeddedness of the idea of public service broadcasting and lack of a social constituency willing and able to support public service broadcasters and buttress its autonomy and independence. Transplanted into post-communist countries in the process of “transformation by imitation”, they have not, generally speaking, been able to win support and a constituency in civil society. All this is well documented (see, e.g., Galik 2003; Hrvatin 2002; Jakubowicz 1995, 2003, 2007; Mungiu-Pippidi 2003; Ociepka 2003).

Hallin and Mancini (2004: 73) identify the following features of the “Mediterranean” media system:

- An elite-oriented press with relatively small circulation and a corresponding centrality of electronic media;
- High political parallelism, with the press marked by a strong focus on political life and a tradition of advocacy journalism, and with public service broadcasting tending to follow government or parliamentary models;

- Low development of the professionalization of journalists, with journalism not very distinct from political activism;
- Strong role of the state in the media as an owner, regulator and funder of the media.

Of these four features, items 2 through 4 can be said to relate directly to the situation in PSB. And indeed, PSB systems in post-communist countries display very much the same features as those in Southern European countries.

Thus, we may have found a place on the map for post-communist media systems. Contrary to what an encyclopaedia may tell you, post-communist countries appear to be located – figuratively at least – around the Mediterranean, and on both its sides, too, as some of them are politically closer to North African regimes than to any southern European country. After all, it is not by accident that Splichal (1994) has coined “Italianization of the media” as a phrase to describe the process of media change in those countries (even if he later decided that the comparison was too facile; see Splichal 2004).

### **Prospects for PSB in Post-Communist Countries**

We noted above that according to Eckstein democratization should, in favourable conditions, be more or less complete after a quarter of a century. Given that hypothetical “benchmark” what, one may ask, are the prospects that around 2015–2020 (i.e., around 25–30 years after 1989), we may see a wave of democratic-emancipatory changes in the PSB systems of post-communist countries, replicating those in some southern European countries? This would reduce political pressure on, and interference in PSB. If it were to be accompanied by evolution of polarized into moderate political pluralism, it could, metaphorically speaking, send post-communist media systems, including public service broadcasting, “northwards”, towards the democratic-corporatist system of moderate pluralism. If so, how far could they go, and how long would it take them to get there?

Of course, this is not to posit a unilinear view of media system evolution. Still, given the framework we have adopted, this is one possible option.

In any case, one should also remember that according to Dahrendorf (1991, p. 86), transformation in post-communist Europe towards the goal of creating a liberal democracy and market economy would be complete when “social foundations” have been laid “which transform the constitution and the economy from fair-weather into all-weather institutions which can withstand the storms generated within and without” – and that can take the better part of 60 years.

One of the theories of democratization is known as the discontinuity-hypothesis (Eckstein 2001). This says that highly discontinuous social change (rapid change, broad in scale) generally has pathological consequences. Also, that certain crucial political issues lead to especially intense conflicts. They include issues of national identity, the relations of church and state, regime-structure and popular participation, and redistributive social policies. These involve deep and broad questions of the boundaries, nature, and purpose of the polity, and of legitimacy.

It is difficult to imagine a more discontinuous and conflict-generating process of social change than the triple transition of post-communist countries – encompassing, according to Offe (1999) issues of nationality and territoriality; constitutional issues; and of economic order, or, as Ekiert (1999) puts it, simultaneous transformation of political, economic and social structures. Kuzio (2002a) says that there are two kinds of transition in post-communist countries: post-

authoritarian and post-colonial, in the latter case involving quadruple transformation: democratization, marketization, state institution-building and civic nation-building. This has produced even more tension and conflicts (for an overview, see Hann 2002). According to Eckstein, no one should be surprised if anomic pathologies in behaviour follow such discontinuous change – as, indeed, they have in the region under discussion. It is clear that the media, and PSB in particular, have no hope of independence and impartiality at such a time.

In Eckstein's view, democratization should proceed gradually, incrementally, and by the use of syncretic devices, i.e., adapting the old to the new and vice versa.

Earlier waves of democratization have shown that viable democracy requires an appropriate political and general culture, and this, in turn, a social structure appropriate for such a culture, and that, therefore, the speed with which democratization can be carried out successfully varies directly with the extent to which pre-existing culture and social structure are conducive to it.

It is a well-established tenet of transition studies that the lack of a pre-communist corporate or national identity is a major barrier to successful change, as Kuzio (2002b) shows clearly by comparing Ukraine with Belarus, where "an ethno-cultural identity never developed prior to its incorporation into the USSR".

However, Eckstein's (2001) understanding of the cultural and structural prerequisites of successful democratization is broader. These include:

- The democratic culture is a mixed culture, in which disparate, perhaps even contrary, elements are balanced. Liberal and participant elements always play a vital role in it, but they require balancing by other norms and practices;
- Democratic political culture coexists, and probably is based on, a more general culture, in which major themes are (a) high social trust and (b) what might be called "civicness": the tendency to act "horizontally", viz., cooperatively, with others rather than "vertically" through hierarchical relations, such as patron-client relationships;
- Democratic culture and structure are constituted by substantially congruent segments, in which the norms and practices of smaller entities substantially resemble those of national governance, especially those smaller entities that play important roles in political socialization and the recruitment of politicians and leaders. Society in this way can be a school for learning democratic citizenship and governance. From this it follows that political democratization should be accompanied by a good deal of social democratization - the democratization of social life in a more general sense.
- Democratic political culture is based on a highly developed associational life in society, the hallmark of what is now generally called "civil society".

It would be foolish to try to predict timelines for the full emergence of these cultural and structural prerequisites of democratization, but it is clear that the process will not be fast. In Poland, for example, transformation has turned the country into a "loving mother" for some and into a "wicked stepmother" for many others:

Some Poles have found their feet in the post-communist Polish realities and others have got bogged down. Some have found their feet quickly and easily, others slowly and with great difficulty.... Today we are in the best condition we have ever been in, since the very beginning of transformation. The pitiful condition of the state itself is another matter. However, in theory at least, the state is easier to fundamentally reform than society as a whole. But only in theory,

because instead of a public-oriented society, we have seen the rise of what we might call a self-oriented society. This self-orientation, or resourcefulness, of Poles too often allows them to improve their own situation at the expense of the state...If the divorce of citizens from their state is just passively observed, this could lead to an even more dangerous consequence, namely that the chance of a sustainable development is missed (Czapiński 2004: 288).

It will thus be considerable time before the cultural and structural prerequisites listed by Eckstein fully develop in many post-communist countries.

One of the versions of “Eastern European exceptionalism” focuses on the destruction of civil society under communism, and the effect of weak or absent civil society. Leaving the question of “exceptionalism” aside, it is true that civil society cannot provide a counterweight to the dominant role of the State and “political society”. As noted by Pleines (2005), the number of civil society groups relevant to policy-making is comparatively small in post-communist countries. Their possibilities of exerting influence are, with a few exceptions, limited to a consultative role, i.e., a cooperation strategy. Exceptions are above all those cases where lobbying structures existed already in the socialist system, in concrete terms the agriculture lobby, coal mining and the Polish trade unions. Due to their weak state of development, Pleines concludes, non-state actors can pit little against unified state actors. Moreover, as shown by an overview of civil society development in Central and Eastern Europe (Solarz 2006), the state and civil society organizations, where they exist, often operate alongside each other, with the state unwilling to recognize them as partners and with citizens displaying little interest in civic engagement. Civic activities focus primarily on areas of importance to the financial well-being of individuals. Moreover, the low credibility of elected authorities combined with a high level of corruption lead to low societal identification with democratic processes and procedures.

If so, then acceptance of restraints on the exercise of power – and, thus, the emergence of cultural prerequisites of full PSB development – will be long in coming.

## **Conclusion**

On the strength of this comparative analysis we could say that disappointment with PSB performance in post-communist countries is one more reflection of the great, but also to some extent unrealistic expectations created by the process of post-communist transformation, especially as concerns the pace of change and the success of transformation.

Given that the creation of PSB is one of the hardest tests of the success of the general process of political and media change, it is doubtful whether, realistically, more could have been achieved since 1989.

There is a price to be paid for disappointed expectations, however. Much of the mimetic strategy of transformation was based on a hope that, with time, the cultural and axiological underpinnings of transplanted institutions could be added to enable those institutions to operate as intended. As we saw on the example of Spain or Portugal, change in media, especially public service media, may lag behind a more general process of democratization. So, this soon becomes a race against quickly growing disillusionment with the way the institution operates. Such disillusionment may prove dangerous, as public opinion may not be prepared to accept the existence of a flawed institution, failing to bring the expected benefits.

Frustration with the unending controversies surrounding PSB, combined with the lack of a clear answer as to what can be done to remedy the situation, may prove destructive. Assuming the original legal and institutional framework created by legislation is appropriate, the question

then becomes whether it is possible to maintain this framework for long enough (i.e., several decades) for it to bear fruit. More likely, however, that framework will be changed because of the atavistic tendencies on the part of successive governments wishing to gain greater control of PSB, usually with little resistance from civil society (though one has to mention the 2005 battle in Slovenia against changes in the broadcasting law, leading to greater parliamentary control of PSB, ending with a nationwide referendum that was narrowly won by the government). That may deepen the frustration on the part of civil society and cynicism about the concept of public service broadcasting.

Spain, Portugal, Italy and France have been the scene of this vicious circle for many years. It can be broken through. It can also persevere. Eventually, we will know whether PSB has taken root in post-communist countries.

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# **DANCES WITH WOLVES: A MEDITATION ON THE MEDIA AND POLITICAL SYSTEM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ROMANIA<sup>1</sup>**

*Peter Gross*

Romania's media – their independence, nature, role(s), professionalism and the laws that pertained to them – have had a rollercoaster ride since December 1989, when they and the society they are supposed to serve were freed from communism. They showed promise one day, only to regress the next day and then raise hopes again before once more disappointing expectations. Their short history in a period of tentative, timid democratization defies easy conclusions or facile classifications and typecasting.

This paper briefly focuses on the problems related to the general status of the media, their nature, independence, professionalism and role in society in 2005 and 2006 and just as briefly on developments in the media sphere since January 2007; it then turns its attention to how Hallin and Mancini's (2004) three models of media and politics may relate to the Romanian media. In that context, it endeavours to provide the most succinct, preliminary answers to the question, why is the Romanian media system the way it is, operates in the fashion and plays the role(s) it does and is burdened by laws, regulations and handling by its owners that are inimical to independence, a democratic role and professionalism.

Romania is one of two countries to join the EU in January 2007 and has had a difficult candidacy. It continues to have a media whose nature, system and legal supports put into question the nature of the country's democracy and of the political class' understanding of and commitment to it.<sup>2</sup> Romania had a protracted courtship and a relatively short engagement with the EU; during both periods the country was pushed and cajoled to meet certain standards in the economic, legal, political, social and other realms. Freedom of the press, in question for a number of years, was one of the core issues in the negotiations for Romania's membership in the EU.<sup>3</sup>

After first attempting to Potemkinize the realization of these standards, Romania embarked on small, tentative changes in 2004 after Traian Basescu's election as the nation's third post-

communist president.<sup>4</sup> No degree of perfection in any of these standards was achieved but the real efforts that were made, together with political considerations specific to the EU, led to the consummation of the arranged marriage between the EU and Romania. For Romania it was a triumph; for the EU the new member may prove to be a continuing problem. It took only weeks after Romania's official entry into the EU for Romania's political elite to signal that the *status quo ante* that dominated the pre-engagement period was to be restored, including how issues of freedom of the press and other media-related matters are being handled.

### **1. Media, politics, freedom of the press and the (instant) end of the EU-Romania honeymoon**

As Romania prepared in 2005 and 2006 to join the EU, a laundry list of issues continued to plague Romania's journalists, journalism and media outlets, and the laws that apply to journalists and, by extension, society. According to studies of Romanian media (Coman 2004, 2003, 1998; Gross 1996, 1999a, 1999b; Marinescu 2002; Stanomir 2003; Zarojanu 2001) and a report released by the Agentia de Monitorizare a Presei (May 2007), in 2006 the important developments and continuations of sixteen-year-long trends included,

- The overt increase in attacks against press freedom by some state institutions
- A relatively high number of attacks and threats against journalists
- Changes in the media marketplace; the appearance of new media/media owners and the consolidation of the media concentration phenomenon<sup>5</sup>
- Attempts at political control over the National Audiovisual Council
- The lack of political will to modify the law addressing the functioning of public radio and television in ways that would assure their true independence
- The initiation of a legislative project by the Ministry of Justice that would legalize the access of public prosecutors to data in computers systems without a court ruling (OUG nr. 131/2006)
- The press being increasingly perceived as an instrument for obtaining certain political and economic advantages;
- The persistent continuation of politicization of news coverage and the dominance of opinion rather than fact-based journalism, practiced in the name of partisan interests, continued as did the tabloidization trend begun in the 1990s;
- The manipulation of media; sometime censorship by owners and editors/director of and self-censorship in the media;
- The lack of protection for and anonymity of news sources;
- Either bad relationships between politicians and the media or relationships in which media are subordinate to politicians;
- The absence of bona fide ethical codes, the means and willingness to enforce them;
- The lack of real solidarity and organization among journalists;
- Poor pay for journalists, particularly when compared to the exorbitantly high pay for editors, directors and other media elites.

These and other problems have made the overall professionalism of Romanian journalism and the independence of media and their journalists doubtful; concrete examples of professionalism and independence are indeed few and far between.

A study of television news from the perspective of the public interest and journalistic practices, for example, conducted from November 2006 to January 2007 (Codreanu and Dobre 2007), presents a mixed picture of broadcast journalism, if we are to believe the data. Analyzing the evening news coverage of the most significant television outlets, Antena 1, Antena 3, Prima TV, Pro TV, Realitatea TV and TVR 1, the study concludes that

- sensationalizing stories is highest at Antena 1 (21% of stories and lowest at Antena 3 (1% of stories);
- respect for the value of presumption of innocence in crime stories is highest at Antena 3 (100% of stories) and lowest at Antena 1 (54% of stories);
- respect for privacy is highest at Realitatea TV and TVR 1 (100% of stories) and lowest at Pro TV (50% of stories);
- respect for the principles of non-discrimination/the out-of-context mentioning of ethnicity or disabilities of a story's protagonists is highest at Pro TV (50% of stories) and lowest at Antena 1, Prima TV, Realitatea TV and TVR 1 (100 % of stories); and
- presenting opposing points of views is highest at TVR 1 (75% of stories) and lowest at Antena 3 (48% of stories).

Some progress was also discernible in 2005 and 2006, however, in regard to overall media issues:

- Improvement in the access to information law and the relatively better access to information, particularly government information; the transparency in domestic affairs, judiciary and the prime minister's office;
- The government resolved the issue of government loans and subsidies to media enterprises by working out a new set of regulations "with representative of media institutions and media NGOS", and made distribution of public advertising "more transparent", and set "criteria for its distribution" (Media Monitoring Agency 2006);<sup>6</sup>
- The Romanian Parliament, after considerable efforts by the reform-minded Romanian Justice Minister Monica Macovei, decriminalized defamation and insults;<sup>7</sup>
- Romanian Public Television was to some degree set free from the clutches of the governing party/parties for the first time since its brief, two to three weeks of certifiable independence in December 1989–January 1990;
- Increased debates about internal media problems, spurred on by blogs that analyze media (Codreanu and Dobre May 2007);
- The continuation of the now decade-old debates within professional organizations regarding the definition of instruments for self-regulation and the mechanism of applying them (Codreanu and Dobre May 2007).

Unfortunately, as Romanian's post-communist history has repeatedly shown, whenever progress is registered, so is some regression or a relapse to old ways. Thus, in January 2005, it was discovered that Romania's intelligence service tapped the phones of two Romanian journalists working for foreign media outlets, in "violation of the right not to reveal journalistic sources", as noted by Reporters Without Borders (28 January 2005), which called on the government to comply with European standards in the matter. And during summer 2006, a website created by two foreign desk reporters of the daily *Ziua*, parodying the website of the Ministry of Foreign

Affairs, was shut down by the privately owned Internet service provider CHL at the request of the Ministry. To make matters worse, CHL violated the law protecting personal data by handing over information about the journalists; no action was taken against CHL. In response to these developments, Reporters Without Borders (21 July 2006) said: "It is astonishing that Romania, a future European Union member, has not respected free expression and the confidentiality of personal information in this case, although these rights are guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and Romania's own Law 677-2001."

Thus, the fundamental issues related to a meaningful, positive transformation in the media field remained unresolved: the values, attitudes, mentalities and behaviour of media owners, editors and directors, politicians and political parties, parliamentarians and others who have an influence in defining the media system, its nature, role(s) and operations, the integrity of the judicial system and that of the private business sector. Media owners, for instance, by and large agree that the "theory of independent media is a chimera", as the president of the Conservative Party and one of a handful of media moguls, Dan Voiculescu, said. Voiculescu, who serves in the Romanian Parliament, says, that in Romania "there are many newspapers that are politically partisan [belonging] to certain groups" and that there is no press outlet that is independent (Agentia de Monitorizare a Presei Oct./Dec. 2007, p. 14).

Stating the obvious, Voiculescu fails to recognize his own role in creating the reality that he so accurately describes. As the head of a parliamentary group that sought to impeach President Basescu in spring 2007, Voiculescu uses his media empire with alacrity and vigor in pursuing his and his political party's political goals.<sup>8</sup> A former agent of the notorious Securitate, Romania's version of the KGB, he is not alone to use his media outlets for political purposes, while claiming to be the victim of a system he is innocent of creating; Sorin Ovidiu Vantu, Dinu Patriciu, Valentin Paunescu, Viorel and Ioan Micula, Liviu Luca, Verestoy Attila, Sorin Marin and Adrian Sarbu own major media enterprises and are also leaders of political parties, parliamentarians or businessmen with strong political interests, ties or ambitions.<sup>9</sup> Without any understanding of, or care for, social responsibility, they wield their media outlets like broadswords in the interest of politics and profit.

The excessive mediatization of politics in spring 2007 has decreased television audiences and Ioana Avadani, head of the Independent Journalism Center in Bucharest, points out that the public is supersaturated with political messages by an "editorial machinery" that is a veritable "noise machine" whose product is "crude, superficial and more aggressive than explanatory" (Iancu 14 May 2007).

Together with a small group of politicians and businessmen, President Basescu is somewhat of an anomaly among the country's political elite for his pursuit of real, meaningful democratization and his battles against the corrosive corruption that is at the core of the nation's many ills. In a speech to the Romanian Parliament (14 February 2007), he told parliamentarians and the country,

I should also mention the close ties between some businessmen and some politicians, ...through which the transfer of political power from politicians to these businessmen was accomplished. These are the same businessmen that we find in continuous power through the influence they have obtained on top politicians. In addition, these businessmen are the same ones that can start or stop press campaigns. From this point of view, it is essential that politicians de-couple themselves from this tag team and work for the general interest and not for the interests of these clients.

President Basescu's understanding of the relationship between businessmen and politicians is an accurate one; this relationship, however, goes well beyond a symbiotic one. Individuals who wear two hats, those of media owner and politician, now control major news media outlets.<sup>10</sup>

The growth and accentuation of political control over media enterprises increased after 2000 and so did the pursuit of economic windfalls. Consequently, it is not only the political power of news media outlets that is being protected and perpetuated by the overwhelming control exercised by media owners but also "The mafia-like structures within the advertising industry and influential media outlets are operational and effective" (International Research and Exchanges Board 2006).

There is also general agreement among politicians, media moguls and the leadership of their media enterprises – editors, directors and managers – that the Romanian media are the country's "public opinion". The public is clearly not part of public opinion or its formation. This is a perpetuation of the pre-communist and communist mentalities that disregarded the will and opinions of the people and considered the elites as the makers and embodiment of public opinion.

The foreign media enterprises that own outlets in Romania or have major media investments have brought little change to how the role(s) and nature of media are defined, how the media system functions, and how journalism is practiced. They have, in fact, conducted themselves in a very Romanian fashion since their injection into the Romanian media market in the very late 1990s, much later than in most other post-communist countries in the region. They are now a significant presence at the local and national level; most own specialized magazines and weeklies play little or no role in the political arena.<sup>11</sup>

The Romanian media have not established themselves as an institution in its own right, a necessity in any democracy. The assessment of the state of the media in Romania by the head of the Romanian Cultural Institute and a respected public intellectual, Horia-Roman Patapievi (15 Feb. 2007), is on target: "the source of legitimacy for politics has come to be only the press, and the press' [legitimacy] only politics, society having stopped being the objective of the press and the subject for politics." It is hardly a surprise that – despite showing promise more than once since 1989 that they might evolve as bona fide platforms for news, information and varied opinions – most news media outlets persist being organs of dis-information, misinformation, intimidation, trivialization, rumours, advocacy and propaganda on all so-called controversial issues, i.e., the political and economic interests of the elites.

Consequently, we cannot talk about the media having influence on the political class, whose direct and indirect influence over the media has grown since 2003 and 2004, a short period during which it appeared to be waning. Writes Tapalaga (10 November 2006):

[Media] owners, managers, involve themselves in an impermissible way in editorial matters, deciding what appears and does not appear in a newspaper. They order positive or negative article about the potentates of the day, as a function of their own interests. Most of them write copy for the newspaper with one hand and sign advertising contracts with the other hand. For years [politicians and their minions] in the press did not do more than obey on command, unleashing press campaigns according to their own political or economic interests.

The news media are a "sophisticated propaganda machine", according to Alexandru Lazescu (5 March 2007). There is less parallelism between media and political parties and politicians than there was in the 1990s and more a form of political press that belongs to politician-

businessmen who use it for their own purposes; a situation in which in the culture of the media owners, the political and media functions overlap rather than proceed in parallel to one another. In April 2007, in the wake of Parliament's month-long suspension of President Basescu,<sup>12</sup> the head of the foreign department of the daily *Evenimentul Zilei*, Victor Roncea, claimed that the director of the newspaper told him of a secret understanding among the media oligarchs to eliminate all supporters of the president from their media enterprises (Scanteia 24 April 2007). Roncea was not the only journalists to make that claim.

And the television stations owned by politician-businessmen are fully engaged in the battle between the major political parties, the Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the National Liberal Party (PNL) and President Basescu.<sup>13</sup> Rodica Culcer (11–17 May 2007), the former head of TVR 1 news programmes, writes in the weekly 22 that the political battles are being carried out in the media, particularly on television stations such as Realitatea TV and Antena 3 but also

On the Internet and wherever [they can] find a microphone, PSD and PNL politicians carry out a ferociously negative campaign, attempting to create Traian Basescu's image as sick with power, with an errant mind, possessed of a desire to rule a slave people...They are counting on an electorate that is less informed, less active and uninvolved.

Journalists see the involvement of politics and economic issues as the biggest problem that the Romanian media face; two-thirds view journalism as a dangerous profession, one that does not pay well, but one that is relatively objective, an ironic claim given their complaint of political manipulation and influence. The same journalists say, if we take them at their word, that they feel an affinity with liberalism (21 per cent), social democracy (8 per cent), the ecological movement (4 per cent), Christian-democracy (4 per cent), nationalism (2 per cent), communism (1 per cent), populism (1 per cent), conservatives (1 per cent), and almost half say they have no political preferences (49 per cent) (Lazaroiu 16 Oct. 2006).

By joining the EU, an expectation of progress in all aspects of the media was present both inside and outside the country and proved to be misplaced. By 18 January 2007, only days after Romania became an official EU member, the country's Constitutional Court re-criminalized defamation and insults, overturning the hard-won progress made on this issue in June 2006. "This ruling is a significant step backwards, coming just a few weeks after Romania joined the European Union and after big improvements last year...Reinstating press offences in the criminal code will bring serious threats to bear on the work of journalists", rightly opined Reporters Without Borders (2 February 2007). Romania's supreme court cited rulings made by the European Court of Human Rights in support of its decision and also similar laws in France, Germany and Italy to justify its position, highlighting the need for the "decriminalization of press offences throughout Europe", which are "more necessary than ever" (Reporters Without Borders 2 February 2007).

In March 2007, the Romanian Parliament lifted the accreditation of the intellectual weekly 22, which has been a consistent critic of Romania's new political elites and the system that has evolved since December 1989. It was yet another sign that Romanian parliamentarians have little understanding of the nature of a free press or sympathy for it, its duty to cover the workings of state and government institutions and, even more overwhelmingly, of the need for these institutions to establish transparency.

Also in March 2007, Rodica Culcer, since August 2005 the head of the news department of the Romanian Television (RTV), formally speaking, a public service broadcaster, was fired.

RTV, which was for almost its entire post-communist life controlled by the government of the day, lags in ratings behind most of the major private television stations and thus has eroded its political relevance and value to the ruling parties in the last two to three years.<sup>14</sup> RTV resurfaced as a political football in spring 2007, precisely because it is one of the few national media outlets that are no longer entirely controlled by politicians and it was an easy political target for the opponents of President Basescu. Spearheading the attack on RTV were Voiculescu's newspaper, *Jurnalul National*; the parliamentarian/media mogul is siding with Prime Minister Tariceanu against President Basescu in an escalating political battle that caught RTV firmly in its jaws and made Rodica Culcer its first victim (and, even more dishearteningly, reformist Minister of Justice Monica Macovei its second and most important victim in April 2007).

Romanian audiences profess confidence in the media, ranking it just below the Church and the Army as trustworthy institutions. Yet, the media are in a veritable identity crisis, as are their journalists, a reality that can only be explained by the intersection of several developments, including the re-politicization of journalism in the last sixteen years (Coman and Gross 2006, pp. 110–120 and p. 54):

- (a) The journalists' inability to offer a convincing concept of their mission or their achievements in defending the public interest,
- (b) The tabloidization of the media and of journalistic styles, leading to the admixture of journalism and entertainment, and
- (c) Widespread corruption.

Romanian audiences, therefore, have few credible means of informing themselves, reliable platforms to express their views and champions for their concerns and welfare, not to mention the welfare of the democratization process. Journalism in Romania may not be too free – the Freedom House report (2006) places Romania's media in the "Partly Free" rubric – but neither does it exercise much social responsibility.

## 2. Hallin and Mancini in Romania

Why are Romania's media system, the nature, role of media in society and journalism as they are today? Is biased, politicized, advocacy journalism an outgrowth of the political system and politics or a historical-cultural artefact adjusted to the needs of a new Romanian reality? Explanations invariably are offered by pointing to politics and the political system and/or by focusing on the ownership of media outlets and their dependence on the market.

The latest such approach is Hallin and Mancini's (2007) major scholarly contribution, a brilliant, nuanced work. However, it has two shortcomings from my perspective: (1) it excludes the Eastern European nations from its considerations, and (2) it fails to consider culture as a key element of the political systems and politics, of institutions such as the media, and of other aspects of society. For Eastern Europe, post-communist culture with its still undigested experiences, the battle to purge itself of non-democratic and illiberal mentalities, attitudes, habits, values and behaviour has only begun emerging, and the new political systems, politics and institutions are in large measure still driven by *unchanged* institutional, professional, political and general societal cultures.<sup>15</sup> The notion that the fall of communism left a *tabula rasa* upon which one can build "democracy from scratch" (Fish 1995) all of its institutions and more importantly the way they function, interpret and apply the new rules and exigencies, and react and act in the new, non-communist reality, is unfounded.

I argue, therefore, that Hallin and Mancini's models are incomplete and insufficiently universalizable to allow them to describe and explain Eastern European media systems and their journalism. What I offer here is but the *beginning of a process* of assessing the applicability (or otherwise) of Hallin and Mancini's work in Eastern Europe and in Romania, specifically. I leave to another time the more in-depth analysis of their models vis-à-vis the Eastern European media and, equally as important, their testing on the nature and practices of journalism in the region that is also addressed in their work.

At first glance, Romania's media appear to fit Hallin and Mancini's (2007, pp. 73–75, pp. 89–250) Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model (MPPM) but almost instantly anomalies appear, as the two authors indeed recognize is possible in systems that are not stagnant.<sup>16</sup> More importantly, however, what quickly surfaces is a disconnect between the Romanian reality and the MPPM model. In Romania, the media system has changed over time – from the appearance of the first newspapers and the formal end of feudalism in the nineteenth century to the introduction of radio in the early twentieth century and the timid flirtation with democracy that ultimately led to fascism, then royal dictatorship and ultimately communism. But the quasi-feudal, undemocratic mentalities, values, attitudes and behaviours have simply been adapted to the changes in political systems and politics and, thus, to all societal institutions.<sup>17</sup>

Hallin and Mancini's main points that describe the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist media model find little congruence with the Romanian reality and this is instructive both for signaling the differences between the Romanian media and the Hallin/Mancini model and the reasons or explanations that may buttress those differences (see table 1):

1. As in the MPPM, Romania's press was elite-oriented before World War II but not so during the communist era and even less so in the post-communist one. Having said that, I hasten to add that the institutional, professional and general cultures that drive the news as opposed to the entertainment media have not entirely shaken their feudal, kleptocratic and undemocratic parentage (Gross 1996; Coman and Gross 2006). And journalism has not distanced itself too much from that practiced in the nineteenth century when it was, according one of Romania's literary and journalistic giants, Mihai Eminescu, "too vehement in tone, disproportionate personal attacks, excessive forms of political versions...hyperbolicism which resembles at once that of the great prophets of the Old Testament and that of the un-matched Dante" (as quoted in Cretia 1990, p. 4).

The electronic media have unquestionably become central in Romania's media world, and now the Internet is slowly but surely making inroads with effects that are yet unclear for the varied endeavours in public life.

2. Freedom of the press did indeed come late in Romania's history with the 1923 Constitutions guaranteeing the widest latitude to press freedom and forbidding censorship; the press laws were altered in 1922, 1923 and 1925 to the benefit of press freedom "but the promise these changes held never fully materialized and were not institutionalized" (Coman and Gross 2007, p. 15).

One can argue that in 2007 freedom of the press is to some extent still stuck at the (shaky) level of the 1920s and has yet to be institutionalized in juridical, institutional and cultural terms. Freedom of the press in Romania has always been defined in a culture in which the notion of

social responsibility was lacking; the interests of the few were paramount and largely accepted by a fatalistic populace.<sup>18</sup>

3. Commercial media was introduced at the beginning of the twentieth century but this commercialization was not allowed to fully develop anymore than the process of democratization and attendant cultural changes that might have been possible after World War II, had the communists not taken over the country (Gross 1996); Romania's commercial media constitutes a bifurcated system: the entertainment and general consumption media are strictly commercial, and the news media are predominantly political in nature and often keep functioning even if they are not economically viable on their own;
4. Unlike in the MPPM, the state does not really have a strong role. The state provides some subsidies, mostly to ethnic media, and has an economic presence in the broadcast field thanks to state advertising and even more significantly in subsidizing public radio and television; its strongest role is in the application of law. The extant culture does not permit the real separation between the legislative, executive and judiciary, despite its codification in the constitution, and this is why the state could still play a potentially negative role;
5. The notion that newspapers in the MPPM have often been economically marginal and in need of subsidies was/is a generalization with many exceptions in pre and post-communist Romania. In the 1990s, many newspapers were quite profitable, while others required financial assistance, which they received mostly from political parties; the print media's market share declined by the turn of century (Coman and Gross 2007, pp. 63–69). The important point, however, is that the economic viability of many newspapers may be a function of too many newspapers per number of available readers, rather than any other reason.
6. Political parallelism was, indeed, high in the pre-communist period, as well as in the post-communist 1990s. The period of parallelism that dominated the 1990s, however, has mutated in the twenty-first century to a form of party press or party-media overlap, in this case a media that are controlled by businessmen/politicians for their own political and economic ambitions. This, too, may be an expression of that marriage of political, general, institutional and professional cultures that have not had an opportunity to change sufficiently to have an influence on how the media system is constituted, what its nature, role(s) and workings are.
7. Not all of the Romanian press is marked by a strong focus on political life, external pluralism and a tradition of commentary-oriented or advocacy journalism, as in Hallin and Mancini's MPPM. There is a great deal of focus on political life and external pluralism, but an approximately equal amount of tabloidization and, yes, a very strong commentary-oriented or advocacy journalism legacy that remains at the core of Romanian journalism. It has always been that way even during the communist era (with the exception of external pluralism, of course) and is culturally ingrained and, therefore, perpetuated.
8. The government has had limited and uneven success in its attempt to instrumentalize the media, and the political parties lost the party press in the mid-1990s. Other institutions such as non-governmental and civic groups have also instrumentalized the media, but have been far less successful. Here, again, one can argue that the kleptocracy has always been a part of the fabric of society and, therefore, one of many cultural artefacts that remain unchanged regardless of systemic and institutional changes and with deleterious affects on the media.

It looks like the instrumentalization of the media by government, by political parties and by industrialists with political ties in common, as found in the MPPM, is only partially true in Romania.

9. Romania's public broadcasting does indeed fit into the MPPM by following the government or parliamentary models and there is little change in sight because, one can clearly argue, the culture of the political elites cannot and does not allow a change.<sup>19</sup>
10. Professionalization in journalism is not as strongly developed in the MPPM, as in other models, journalism is not as strongly differentiated from political activism and the autonomy of journalists is often limited (in this model there are explicit conflicts over the autonomy of journalists – power and authority within news organizations has been more openly contested in the Polarized Pluralist systems). Indeed, this is true in Romania, but attempts at professionalization are ongoing and we have also seen the contestation of power and authority within news organizations in the last few years, when we consider the overall turmoil in the profession, the resignations from a number of media outlet, the turmoil at RTV and, to a lesser extent, the three major press scandals involving *Romania Libera*, *Evenimentul Zilei* and *Adevarul* (Gross 1996, pp. 73–80).
11. The state does *not* play a large role as an owner and founder of media, and its capacity to regulate effectively is often limited in Romania, a radical departure from the MPPM.
12. The MPPM model suggests a rapid and uncontrolled transition from state controlled to commercial broadcasting. This is most certainly a unique feature of a transition from no mere authoritarianism but from a Romanianized Stalinism, i.e., a very specific socio-political and economic culture.
13. In the MPPMs there is a high degree of ideological diversity and conflict and this is both true and false in Romania, because on the one hand ideological diversity is only superficial and a clear understanding and articulation of ideological differences is yet to be achieved, although there is a clear distinction between the proto-communist inclinations of some and the democratic inclinations of others. Conflicts are due more to personal and party ambitions and interests than to pure ideological differences.<sup>20</sup>
14. There is delayed development of liberal institutions related to the strong role of the state in society (often in an authoritarian form), a strong role of political parties, a continuing importance of clientelism and a weaker development of rational-legal authority in the MPPM. In Romania, there is ample evidence that the lack of success in developing liberal institutions, including the media institution, has little to do with a strong role of the state, whereas the negative role in this respect on the part of political parties and the economic and political elites is certainly true. I should also mention the less than helpful role of a civil society that has not yet garnered enough power to be effective. Does this not contribute to proof that institutional changes can occur without the kind of liberalization that would make democracy truly workable? Does this not point to the illiberal culture stifling the evolution of “democratic” institutions?

On the other hand, while there are elements of the MPPM that may be discernible in Romania, there is nothing in that country's media system or journalism that might fit the North Atlantic or Liberal Model either. There are some elements that are similar to what Hallin and Mancini see as exemplifications of the Northern European or Democratic Corporatist Model, albeit in a wholly different historical and cultural milieu:

**Table 1:** Presence of PSB (\*) in Post-Communist Countries

<b>In Mediterranean/Political Pluralist Model</b>	<b>In the Romanian Media World</b>
Media are elite-oriented & the electronic media have become central	News media are elite-oriented; the entertainment media are not; electronic media are central to the non-elites
Freedom of the press came late in the country's history	Press freedom remains at pre-communist/dictatorship/ fascist levels & is not institutionalized in juridical, institutional & cultural terms
Commercial media industries also came late	Commercial media was introduced in the early 1900s, eliminated by communism in 1947 & resurrected in 1989
The role of the state is strong	Not really
Newspapers have often been economically marginal & in need of subsidies	That is a generalization with many exceptions
Political parallelism tends to be high	The period of parallelism dominated the 1990s & has mutated in the twenty-first century
The press is marked by a strong focus on political life, external pluralism & a tradition of commentary-oriented or advocacy journalism	There is much focus on political life & external pluralism, an equal amount of tabloidization & a very strong commentary-oriented & advocacy journalism
Instrumentalization of the media by government, by political parties & by industrialists with political ties in common	Government attempts to instrumentalize the media had little success; political parties lost the party press in mid-1990. Non-governmental, civic groups et al. have also instrumentalized the media
Public broadcasting tends to follow the government or parliamentary models	True & there is little change in sight because the culture of the political elites cannot allow a change
Professionalization is not well developed; little separates journalism from political activism; journalists' autonomy is often limited but there are explicit conflicts over it; power & authority in news media are openly contested	True
The state plays a large role as an owner, regulator & founder of media, though its capacity to regulate effectively is often limited	Not at all true, with the exception that the state has & does regulate the public broadcast media
Rapid and uncontrolled transition from state-controlled to commercial broadcasting	A particularly unique feature of a transition from a Romanialized Stalinism
High degree of ideological diversity and conflict	Yes and no
Delayed development of liberal institutions related to strong role of state in society (often in authoritarian form), strong role of political parties, continuing importance of clientelism, weak development of rational-legal authority	The lack of success in developing liberal institutions, including the media institution, has little to do with a strong role of the state; the strong role of political parties etc. has delayed the development of liberal institutions

1. A history of strong party newspapers (before and during communism) and other media connected to organized social groups,
2. A political press that coexisted with the commercial press, that is, until the communist era; today the political and commercial press are one and the same,
3. Political parallelism is historically high but, as pointed out above, it has muted to overlapping; there is a moderate degree of external pluralism, and commentary-oriented journalism persists but in Romania it is not “mixed with a growing emphasis on neutral professionalism and information-oriented journalism”, except, perhaps, on issues that do not in one way or another touch on politics and the corruption in the political, economic, governmental, state and judicial systems,
4. Journalism is not subject to either institutionalized or non-institutionalized self-regulation.

None of these seeming similarities, however, make the Hallin/Mancini models relevant to the Romanian media. In short, the model that must be constructed to explain and exemplify the Romanian media, and I would argue the media in the post-communist world of Eastern Europe, should be specific to the historical and cultural patrimony upon which the media system, its values, nature and workings are based. These are the elements that explain how the media institution in this post-communist era, now constructed similarly to those in western democracies, relate to the state, government, political parties, politicians, media owners, journalists and their sources and audiences.<sup>21</sup> In turn, these relationships explain the nature of journalism.

Hallin and Mancini’s work, as worthwhile as it is, continues the long-standing trend of ignoring the cultural element in constructing a model of media systems and explaining why they may be as they are and journalism is being practiced as it is. Vladimir Tismaneanu (1998, p. 5), one of the world’s most astute students of Eastern Europe and, specifically, of Romania, points out that “The avalanche of studies and reports about the emergence of markets and Western-style institutions have tended to dismiss the role of political traditions, memories, and deeply entrenched attitudes – in one word, the role of political culture.”

Hallin and Mancini construct their three models of media on the basis of differing types of democracy, specifically Lijphart’s (1968, 1971, 1977, 1999) distinction between consensus and majoritarian democracy, which they say is “probably of considerable use in understanding relations between the political and media system.” True, but only if we first understand the relations between history and culture and the political system and politics. First and foremost, the classic definitions of majoritarian and consensus politics are not easily discernible in Romania, where elements of both may hold sway.<sup>22</sup> For instance, majoritarian politics appears to dominate, yet it is not a purely two-party system and elements of consensus politics – such as power-sharing, in the context of coalition politics, and a multiparty system – are present. Romania is a semi-presidential republic.<sup>23</sup> It also has a relatively weak welfare state, another legacy of communism and, perhaps, the result of the “wild capitalism” (might this also be explained in cultural and historical terms?) installed after 1989, and more akin to what is found in the North Atlantic or Liberal Model than in the other two posited by Hallin and Mancini.

In other words, Romanian politics is a hybrid or, more accurately, a system still in the making and suffering from its communist past, one that is a social organism in gestation and not just a legacy (Wyrda 2007). Wyrda points to the fact that democratization is not solely a matter of institutional re-design; it is more importantly a matter of consciousness and leadership, which means that we need to focus on culture to understand how the new non-communist society is working and how its institutions function. And echoing Tismaneanu (see above), Wyrda (2007,

p. 279) writes, “any substantial analysis of the chances for democracy and market capitalism in Eastern Europe” must grasp “the cultural, political, and economic ‘inheritance’ of forty years of Leninist rule.” Culture, of course, is not an inheritance apart from the political and economic ones, it is part and parcel of these and of other societal endeavours.

The mere study of politics and the political systems of nations, therefore, does not well serve as an explanation for the nature of the media system or of the journalism that it is practiced. Politics and political systems – and, more importantly, how they are carried out and function, respectively – are an expression of attitudes, beliefs, habits, behaviours and values. The great Italian intellectual Umberto Eco (22 June 1995, p. 12) made that point all too well when he wrote: “even though political regimes can be overthrown, and ideologies can be criticized and disowned, behind a regime and its ideology there is always a way of thinking and feeling, a group of cultural habits, of obscure instincts and unfathomable drives.” Perhaps this explains the crisis in values that has dominated Romania’s post-communist years and the resulting simulated democratization that some like Tismaneanu, among many others, judge to be the post-communist reality. Furthermore, it explains, in my view, the crisis of values and identity in the Romanian media and journalism, elements that are insufficiently reflected in the media models in general and in Hallin and Mancini’s models in particular.

Thus, the cultural inheritance of both the pre-communist era and even more certainly the communist or Leninist one, as Ken Jowett (1992) points out, must be taken into consideration when judging the nature of Romania’s new political system and politics. Only then can one better understand the nature and ways of the new non-communist media, their system, nature, role(s), functioning, influencers and influence. In short, institutional cultures combine with professional cultures, political culture and the general societal culture to establish how systems are organized, how they function, who and what affects them, and the effects they may have on their constituencies. A country’s political system and its politics are directly shaped by this admixture of cultures and, in turn, the media as an institution and platforms for mass communication are the children of these cultures almost no matter how the system is organized and how many institutional changes are made. Daniel Etounga-Manguelle (2000, p. 75) states emphatically that “culture is the mother; institutions are the children.”

Yet, the centrality of institutions to the transition and transformation from communism is touted by a number of institutional determinists – and Hallin & Mancini approach to the media institution suggest a similar outlook – who argue that the state and the new post-communist institutions can create new habits, customs, values and behaviours, i.e., new cultures (Fukuyama 1992; Balcerowicz 1995; Fish 1996; Agh 1998; Elster, Offe and Preuss 1999). I have now long argued that despite the reconfigured make-up of the post-communist Eastern European media and the new rules under which they function, they have not shaped a new media and journalistic cultures by creating a new reality and new incentives, nor have they changed the way the new rules are applied. For the institutional deterministic position to prove itself, one must presuppose “that institutional change also renews the opportunities political actors have, in turn changing their behavior. Of course, this presupposition in turn assumes a positive, democratic-oriented change in behavior, something that could happen only if the institutions are liberal” (Gross 2002, pp. 6–7).

But how are liberal democratic institutions to be created when their systemic make-up is dependent on the cultures that do not allow them to function in a democratic, liberal way? Crawford and Lijphart (July 1995) stress that “liberal institutions can structure preferences and constrain choices in ways that create new political and economic cultures.” Perhaps, yet what

else needs to occur and over how much time is required to make the institutions “liberal” before they have the Crawford/Lijphart imprimatur? It is clear that in Romania these institutions are not liberal, because the absence of cultural changes impede them from being so and, therefore, they are actually preventing or at least slowing down the cultural changes required for democratization and claimed to “structure preferences and constrain choices”. At the very least, there must be a reciprocally promoting relationship between democratic institutions and democratic or democracy-fostering culture.

If we are to understand Romania’s media as a system, its nature, role(s), how and why it works the way it does, with what affects it and what the effect of all that is, the starting point cannot be the study of politics and the political system or the media as an institution. Rather, the starting point has to be history and the extant cultures that underline the nature, role and workings of institutions, i.e., values, attitudes, behaviours, modes of thinking and so forth. In this regard, Huntington’s (1997, p.158) notion that “Europe ends where Western Christianity ends and Islam and Orthodoxy begins” may be a good (if, perhaps, exaggerated) starting point.

A peoples’ or nation’s fundamental culture is established over a long period of time in the crucible of historical experiences and circumstances, geography, religion and so on. Thus, the “history recorded is the history of peoples and nations, but the patterns that emerge are patterns of cultures” that, in turn, enable us to understand how these patterns “in general affect the economic and social advancement of the human race” (Sowell 1994, p. 7 and p. 1). History shapes culture (values, attitudes, behaviour etc.), which configures not only the nature of politics and political and economic systems but the way elites and non-elites behave; in turn, both the nature of these systems and the behaviour of elites contribute to the establishment of the institutional cultures that ultimately define the professional cultures functional in a society. There are outside influences that affect fundamental cultures to be sure, but the latter have a way of adapting these more than adopting them.

In short, the study of a media system such as Romania’s must begin with the study of Romanian history and the cultural patterns that were established and which affect the political and economic systems and the political and economic cultures. Only then can we begin to understand the overall institutional culture that exists, how it shapes the media and other institutions and the media culture, both contributing mightily to defining the professional culture (see table II).

**Table 2**

Political culture ⇒ politics & political system ↓↓	
	↑↑ Institutional cultures ⇒ institutions ⇒ ↓↓
History/culture ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ } ⇒ }	Media culture ⇒ media ⇒ ↓↓
	↓↓ Professional culture ⇒ journalism
Economic culture ⇒ economic system ↑↑	

Cultures (institutional, political, professional etc.) are difficult to measure; this is partly why most scholars shy away from using them as indices for measuring changes and evolutions. The study of cultures often succumbs to the “cultures are relative” and “cultures are equal” schools of thought, partly because it is politically incorrect to suggest that one culture may be superior or inferior to another. Yet without identifying and understanding the dominant values, attitudes, behaviours and mentalities that fuel the functioning of politics, political, economic and social systems and institutions, we cannot possibly construct a credible model of post-communist media.

## Conclusion

That Romania and its media have still a long way to go before they can claim to have completed a transformation to a true democracy, and to a media and journalism capable of exemplifying and supporting it, is true and an often repeated sentiment. We will not be able to understand why and how that transformation may proceed unless we inject the study of culture in the examination of the Romanian media and their journalism. Nor for that matter will we be able to construct a theoretical model that allows for a more in-depth, nuanced, sophisticated and accurate description and explanation of media systems and journalism unless we begin their study with an examination of the history and culture that gave them birth, and now nurtures and defines them.

## Notes

1. This paper is based on a presentation made at the “Hour of Romania” conference organized by the Russian and East European Institute at Indiana University, Bloomington, 22–24 March 2007.
2. Bulgaria is the other. Romania applied for EU membership in 1995 and at the end of 2004 completed the negotiations started in 2000. Many in the EU expressed misgivings about Romania’s preparedness for membership and a cabinet reshuffle by the Romanian government in August 2005 was meant to speed up EU reforms.
3. A Reporters Without Borders report authored by Blatmann and Julliard (April 2004) proclaimed: “Press freedom does not yet occupy the position it deserves between the old habits inherited from the dictatorial period and the strides actually made toward implementing European standards.”
4. Ion Iliescu served two and a half terms; Emil Constantinescu served one term.
5. It should be noted that the media market is still fragmented and, despite the trend of media concentration, one cannot speak of a media oligopoly. The relatively few individuals who owned most major and minor media outlets are politicians or businessmen, who have direct ties to politicians and political parties.
6. The Public Procurement Law was modified in May 2005 and there is a new website dedicated to public advertising, and a Guide to Good Practices, which addresses public institutions or companies that expend public funds on advertising.
7. See Law 278/2006.
8. A referendum on the impeachment was scheduled to be held on 20 May 2007.
9. Politicians at the local level are also in the media business; see Coman and Gross, p. 66.
10. For a recent description of the media system, its economic and other aspects, see Coman and Gross (2006).
11. The foreign media owners include the Dogan Group (Turkey), Ringier (Switzerland), Burda (Germany), Hachette (France), Springer (Germany), Sonoma-Hearst (US), Gruner & Jahr (Austria), Playboy (US), Hustler (US), Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung (Germany), and News Corporation Europe (US).

12. Romania's supreme court made it clear there are no constitutional reasons for President Basescu's suspension, yet the parliament proceeded to suspend him.
13. The main objections to President Basescu is that he (1) continued to fight against corruption, which will implicate many members of Parliament, (2) requested that the files of the Securitate be made public and (3) made a declaration condemning the former communist regime and acknowledged its faults.
14. See Badicioiu and Lazar (17 April 2007) for an analysis of TVR's report of its activities in 2006 to the Romanian Parliament.
15. When it comes to the media and their journalism, these may include the inclination to control, manipulate, politicize, be intolerant, proselytize and editorialize (instead of inform), dis-inform, mis-inform, propagandize and so on.
16. The obvious should be noted: the trajectory of media and journalism evolutions after World War II in countries that were not under the communist yoke is quite different from those only recently having the opportunity to construct societies and institutions that also require a change in cultures in order to make them viable, as in and for a working democracy.
17. For the most update and complete report on Romanian media developments, see Coman and Gross 2006.
18. For an interesting and informative explication of press freedom in Romania, see Petcu, ed. (2005). "A free people will be showing that they are so, by their freedom of speech", remarked Trenchard and Gordon (1995, vol. 1, p. 74) speaking as Cato. And when people demand a voice in their own governance, it means there is a need for a free press. Romanians are not quite as demanding of a voice in their own government as they should be, but they do enjoy freedom of speech, while lacking the independent media that can serve as (a) platforms for such a freedom and (b) as suppliers of information to fuel public opinion formation and the ability for self-governance.
19. Culture is not an independent variable and there are development-resistant cultures that, among other things, shape the behaviour of elites, who in turn have a profound effect on how societies evolve. See Grondona (2000).
20. Besides, it is not the degree of ideological diversity that counts, at least not if we define ideologies as Tismaneanu (1998, p. 28) does; a description with which I wholeheartedly agree: "Ideologies are all-embracing and all-explanatory: they refuse dialogue, questioning, doubt. In this respect liberalism is an ideology only in name: with its incrementalism and skepticism regarding any ultimate solutions to human problems, it lacks the soteriological, apocalyptic power of radical visions of change."
21. Ronald Inglehart (1997) has long argued, for example, that there is strong connection between cultural values and performance in a nation's political and economic realms. See also Inglehart (2000) and Landes (1999).
22. In their analysis, Hallin and Mancini acknowledge the existence of hybrid systems.
23. Vladimir Tismaneanu, Professor in the Department of Politics and Government at the University of Maryland and the most astute observer of the Romanian scene, told me that "[President] Basescu has tried to move it toward a two-party system, which would stabilize the political situation and make it more predictable and transparent, but he has encountered the opposition of all the networks of interest. Therefore his solitude these days. He has become the president of civil society (which is great), but he [deals with] the challenges of a corrupt and cynical political society. Articulating the two, without giving up principles, is difficult. Compromise between government and opposition is not very clearly delineated. There is no winning party: the Alliance 'D.A.

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# **DEMOCRATIZING MEDIA, WELCOMING BIG BROTHER: MEDIA IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA<sup>1</sup>**

*Aida A. Hozic*

Ever since the end of the Cold War, the United States of America and the European Union have been actively (some would say aggressively) engaged in democracy promotion and assistance around the world. Often diverging in their means, and just as often in their interpretations of democracy, Europe and the United States have poured billions of dollars and euros into political and economic reforms all over the globe; dispatched thousands of experts and consultants on matters from law to healthcare to environment into Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas; deployed military forces, waged wars, and hired the best public relations firms to sell those wars at home and abroad – all, ostensibly, in order to ensure that the third wave of democratization continues unabated.

In such a world, framed by violence, on the one hand, and benevolence, on the other, Bosnia and Herzegovina occupies a special place. The most touted case of peacemaking and democracy promotion during the Clinton administration (Talbot 1996), Bosnia is, in the words of Ambassador Douglas Davidson, appointed in 2004 as head of OSCE Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, “a kind of a laboratory for how to rehabilitate and even reconstruct a state after a conflict.” (Davidson 2006) Governed by the UN and EU-appointed Office of High Representative, ethnically and institutionally divided, economically and politically paralyzed, Bosnia has nonetheless held a series of democratic elections since 1995, which have passed without any major incidents. Thus, although “the experiment underway in the laboratory that is Bosnia and Herzegovina is not quite complete”, (Davidson 2006) the lack of violence and the attainment of minimum democratic standards seem sufficiently well grafted to ponder a graceful exit of the international community from Bosnia and, thus, end its quasi-protectorate status, by June of 2008.

One of the most contradictory aspects of democratization efforts in Bosnia and Herzegovina, at least since 1997, has been media reform. On the one hand, Bosnia is consistently moving up on the scale of the Worldwide Press Freedom Index, annually updated by Reporters Without Borders. In 2006 Bosnia and Herzegovina shared the 19th spot with Denmark, New Zealand, Trinidad and Tobago and was well ahead of France, Italy, UK, USA or its neighbours Croatia and Serbia. Bosnia's regulatory framework is now considered exemplary in the region, and its well-respected Communications Regulatory Agency is one of the few institutions that have successfully transitioned from international to local governance. Bosnia boasts one of the most diverse and plural media environments in Europe (Basic Hrvatin et al. 2004) – 43 public and private television stations, 142 radio stations, 7 daily newspapers, a plethora of political and entertainment magazines.

On the other hand, both Bosnian and international media experts question the economic sustainability of such a colourful and plural media landscape (Brunner 2003; Udovicic R. 2005; Henderson et al. 2003). Reform of the public broadcasting system is still one of the three outstanding issues (the other two being police reform and cooperation with the Hague Tribunal), blocking Bosnia's Stabilization and Association Agreement with the European Union. Representatives of the international community in Sarajevo and many local journalists privately assess the state of Bosnian media as abysmal. Lack of professionalism, poor quality of investigative reporting, even outright media illiteracy, low salaries and lack of social protection for most journalists are all often cited as signs that Bosnian media have simply turned from bad to worse since the outbreak of the war. Asked to discuss the current state of media in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one of the former directors of Bosnian television shrugged his shoulders and said, "What is there to discuss?" Said off the record, a high-ranking American representative, "We have poured a billion dollars into this place, and look at what we've got". "We are exactly where we were when the war started fifteen years ago", complained one of the editors of BHRT, Bosnian public service broadcaster. As if to confirm such perceptions, in January of 2007, Milorad Dodik, Prime Minister of Republika Srpska (one of the ethnically defined entities in the country), instructed the members of his government to boycott BHRT because of its alleged discriminatory treatment of RS on joint public airwaves, and forced the resignation of BHRT's general manager, Mr Drago Maric.

Has media reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina really been such a failure? Or is it, perhaps, that the difficulties in assessing the state of Bosnian media stem from inherent difficulties of establishing standards of media performance (Sükösd and Bajomi-Lázár 2003), constantly shifting global media terrain and technology, and essentially contested nature of media representation? In this paper, I would like to urge for a different perspective on Bosnian media by moving the lens through which it is observed from what editors of this volume call "political demand" to "market demand" as the main force shaping the media. This is not to say that overt political pressures on media no longer matter in Bosnia and Herzegovina (as Karol Jakubowicz states in his chapter on public service reform, where don't they?); rather, it is to suggest that commercial concerns and "soft news" have become just as important in Bosnia and Herzegovina as they have elsewhere in the world. In other words, Bosnia's media landscape may have become much more similar to the commercialized American and European media sphere than to the idealized Western European models of public service upon which its assessments are usually based. Democratization of the media has yet to produce a satisfactory public service system in Bosnia and Herzegovina – but it has definitely helped usher Latin American soap operas, Serbian turbo-folk, *Desperate Housewives*, Bingo, karaoke and reality TV shows, such as *Big Brother*, onto its TV screens.

The chapter provides an overview of the current media landscape in Bosnia with particular focus on the unintended consequences of international media assistance – complicity of international community in the slide towards commercialization of Bosnian, and regional, media; increased technological gap between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Europe (not to mention the US); and, finally, broader impact of de-politicization of media sphere in countries in transition. Taking a cue from Karol Jakubowicz’s chapter on public service reform in Central and Eastern Europe, I will argue that Bosnia and Herzegovina represent yet another case of media’s “systemic parallelism” with the country’s political and social institutions, and yet another case where disillusionment, frustration and cynicism about the functioning of public service broadcasting, and media in general, may have severe consequences for political developments in the region – all the more so as the international community constitutes an inextricable factor in that disappointment.

### **Post-Dayton Bosnia**

The Bosnian war ended with a peace accord reached at Wright-Patterson Air Base in Dayton, Ohio, on 21 November 1995, and signed into an agreement on 14 December 1995 in Paris. Construed, primarily, as a document whose purpose was to end violence, the Dayton Peace Agreement appeased territorial ambitions of nationalist leaders in the former Yugoslavia and “devolved rapidly from an interim solution to a virtually fossilized governing instrument.” (Hitchner 2005, p. 2.) The Agreement created a state comprising two ethnically defined entities – Republika Srpska, where the majority of the population is Serbian, and Bosniak-Croat Federation, where ten administrative units – called cantons – have either Bosnian Muslim (Bosniak) or Croat majority population. Both the state and the two entities have been endowed with multiple layers of government and multiple venues for ethnically based political representation. The most important bodies on the state level are presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is comprised of three representatives of the three ‘constitutive peoples’ – a Croat, a Serb and a Bosniak; and the Council of Ministers, elected by the bicameral Parliament, whose upper House also upholds the principle of ethnic parity with five members each from the three “constitutive peoples”. The Bosniak-Croat Federation, due to its checkered ethnic character, also has a bicameral Parliament while ethnically far more homogeneous Republika Srpska has a unicameral Assembly.

Cantonal and local governments often replicate the complex structure of state and entity parliaments and governments, while a combination of the first-past-the post and proportional electoral systems encourages parties to compete for a large number of positions in various government offices. Thus, although ethnically based parties continue to dominate political life in an institutional structure which stimulates ethnicity as the dominant political feature, in the last October 2006 elections, electorate could choose among 9,000 candidates in 47 different political parties and eleven coalitions as their representatives in fifteen institutions on three levels of government. (Dnevni Avaz, cited in Jusic 2006) A recent study of electoral process in Bosnia and Herzegovina from 1996 till 2005 provocatively – but correctly – characterized it as “ten years of democratic chaos” (Arnautovic 2007)

To make things even more complicated, Bosnia is still de facto run by the Office of the High Representative, an ad hoc international institution created by the Dayton Peace Agreement and responsible for the implementation as well as interpretation of the Agreement. Initially a joint appointee of the United Nations and European Union, the High Representative is now simultaneously the European Union’s Special Representative, “working with the people and

institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the international community to ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina evolves into a peaceful and viable democracy on course for integration into Euro-Atlantic institutions.” (OHR website). Over the years, duties and responsibilities of OHR have varied – depending as much on the political and economic circumstances in Bosnia as on the personality of the High Representative himself. Paddy Ashdown, former leader of the British Liberal Democrats, who reigned over Bosnia between 2002 and 2006, was frequently accused of attempting to run a British Raj in the Balkans (Knaus 2003). His successor as High Representative, Christian Schwarz Schilling, German parliamentarian with decades of experience in humanitarian work in the region, is deemed much too passive. But regardless of the character of individuals who occupy the position, the institution of the High Representative is still endowed with enormous powers – from vetting and, if necessary, removing candidates for all key political offices to imposing laws as s/he sees fit.

Given the persistent and institutionally perpetuated ethnic gridlock, the Office of the High Representative (OHR) was forced frequently to intervene in domestic politics. The OHR was, thus, responsible for the creation of nearly all attributes of statehood that Bosnia has attained thus far – from the national anthem and the flag to common currency, car licence plates, tax system, border control, military reform and even the final design of the Bosnian passport. The OHR and other representatives of the international community have been criticized, both within Bosnia and outside of its borders, for being too heavy-handed, hypocritical and outright colonial in their dealings in Bosnia. Several years ago, Canadian political scientist David Chandler (2000) persuasively argued that the presence of the non-accountable law-making international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina also takes accountability away from Bosnian politicians, thus stimulating all political actors to simply engage in the game of “faking democracy” instead of genuine democratization. More recently, Bosnian political scientist Nermina Sacic (2007), at a conference devoted to the role of international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, simply concluded that “the politics of the international community has been reductionist and non-democratic, i.e. in defiance of the democratic spirit which governs its mission, since most of the laws and regulations have been created without consulting the public. Therefore, it may be important to see that similar mistakes are not repeated in other countries of Southeastern Europe.”

Faced with the existence of two powerful internal entities on the one hand, and just as powerful representatives of the international community as inventors of statehood on the other, Bosnian public intellectuals often bemoan the weakness of the state in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In words of Asim Mujkic (2007a, 2007b), professor of political science at the University of Sarajevo, Bosnia has become an “ethnopolis” with no hope for the construction of a civic state any time soon. His colleague, and former editor of the independent weekly *Dani*, Nerzuk Curak (2006), argues that Bosnians have to forget about the contested ideas of state and sovereignty in order to learn to live together. At the same time, international financial institutions criticize the multilayered government institutions for being much too expensive, taking 50 per cent of the GDP and draining the limited budget of the Bosnian state of its revenue. Privatization, cuts in social welfare, reduction in payments for veterans and pensioners, are all recommended as parts of standard neo-liberal package to improve the state of the Bosnian economy. Bosnian citizens, meanwhile, are struggling for survival: 20 per cent of national income comes from remittances of family members and workers abroad – by far the highest percentage in the region; trade deficit is 3.6 times higher than in the rest of the region; the official unemployment rate is 44 per cent in the Bosniak-Croat Federation and 37 per cent in Republika Srpska; and

it is estimated that more than 50 per cent of Bosnian population lives below the poverty line (World Bank and UNDP data). This, therefore, is the complex, difficult and often depressing political, social and economic context in which media reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina has to be examined.

### **Reforming Bosnian Media**

Transformation of media in Bosnia and Herzegovina under the tutelage of the international community – the OHR, OSCE and European Commission – has already been described and assessed in detail in several academic studies (Kumar 2006; Kurspahic 2003; Thompson and De Luce 2002; Jusic 2005) and numerous reports commissioned by international agencies (USAID, OSCE, IREX, Stability Pact). It is continuously scrutinized in local magazine and newspaper articles. Based on these accounts, the key features of the intervention of the international community into the media sphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be summarized as follows. Intervention into the Bosnian media – both financially and in terms of personnel – has been the most ambitious incursion into journalistic practices and institutions by the international community in any post-conflict society thus far. However, the attempt to transform media in Bosnia started only in 1997, two years after the Dayton Peace Accord, which, in view of some analysts, may have been much too late (Thompson and De Luce 2005). The intervention has been focused on the creation of alternative media outlets to the prevailing nationalist press and TV stations – initially, by fostering independent media and then, later on, by creating regulatory bodies and transforming the existing state-TV stations into a single public broadcasting service for entire Bosnia and Herzegovina. The greatest failure – and the most expensive experiment – of the international effort was the creation of the independent TV channel OBN, envisioned in 1996 as the network of independent stations from all over Bosnia and as the replacement for state-wide TV. Twenty million US dollars of international aid later, and with almost 70 per cent of coverage of the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, OBN was forced to shut down as it never found its audience (Kumar 2006; Ranson n.d.). As we shall see below, OBN was later sold in London under some very strange circumstances and now, as a private TV station, it has many more viewers than it ever did while lavishly sponsored by the international community.

Three aspects of the international community's intervention seem worth emphasizing in this chapter. First, international efforts have been seriously thwarted from the outset by deep divisions between the US and EU officials over the course of desired media transformation (Brunner 2003; Jusic 2005; Thompson and De Luce 2002). While the United States representatives insisted on commercial viability and economic independence of media from the state, EU officials were primarily interested in the establishment of public service broadcasting. The failure of OBN may, at least in part, be ascribed to this discord between the US and EU over the future character of the media system, particularly public television, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Even today, the clash between the "European model" (viable public service sector which exists alongside with commercial TV), which has become a sine-qua-non of accession into EU, and American insistence on media sustainability, which governs US decisions on further donations, permeates the international community and colours their reports on and assessments of Bosnian media.

Second, many international advisors often assumed that media outlets and journalists they were working with in Bosnia and Herzegovina had no worthwhile and relevant pre-war professional experience. Political subservience of some journalists and media outlets during the

war were interpreted as symptoms of the communist legacy, and of the underlying lack of professionalism, political opportunism, and overall lack of standards in media circles of the former Yugoslavia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular (Taylor and Kent 2000; 2003). As Kemal Kurspahic (2003), renowned journalist and former editor of Sarajevo daily *Oslobodjenje*, puts it:

foreign ‘media interventionists’ have fully ignored the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina had a respectable radio-television before the war, as well as journalists who had fought for and succeeded in gaining an enviable level of independence in the twilight of the single-party state. This is why Bosnian journalists themselves have never been brought to the position of equal and decision-making partners in that project.

Jenny Ranson, CEO of OBN (1998–2000), conceded that most “internationals involved were inexperienced” and “had no knowledge of local history or sensitivities.” Yet, she also thought that

finding qualified (local) staff, especially managers, was a constant problem. Older people had been trained under communist centralized system and so found it hard to adjust to a Western management regime including delegation and responsibility. (Ranson n.d.)

Needless to say, for journalists who struggled throughout the war to do their job with integrity, and for all those who were recipients of major international awards before the war, or who superbly organized the coverage of the XIV Winter Olympic Games, or who had worked for years as equal partners with their European counterparts on various Eurovision projects – such assumptions by their international colleagues seemed offensive and caused unnecessary frictions and tensions in their joint endeavors. “Repeatedly”, cites Ranson Alyson Scott’s interview, “I heard from my Bosnian colleagues, ‘They think we’re animals’, and ‘They think we’re idiots’, and sadly, there were elements of truth to this.” (Ranson n.d.)

The tendency of international advisors and reformers to underestimate local journalists and staff also determined the character of aid. According to the Media Task Force of the Stability Pact for south-eastern Europe, 40 per cent of financial support in the region was spent on training, an additional 26 per cent on association building, media centers and law reform. Only 34 per cent was direct aid to media. Roughly a third of all funds listed by Stability Pact went on training programmes or direct support of media for stories on corruption and criminality in the region. Training programmes, however, often proved problematic. Jenny Ranson expressed the frustration of international advisors with local attitudes towards training, when she wrote that “many staff, including journalists, editors and managers, did not believe they needed training, and used it to enjoy study visits abroad or time off with no discernible changes in practice.” Yet last year, local magazine *Dani* exposed a USAID and New York University joint programme in investigative journalism as a hoax. The Center for Investigative Journalism or CIN, as it was called, had a budget of 1.8 million US dollars, was run by barely qualified individuals from the United States, and in two years of its existence produced 62 stories of which only twelve were published. After a brave and critical internal USAID assessment in August of 2006 (Cornell and Thielen 2006), management of the Center was kindly asked to leave Bosnia, and leadership positions transferred to several local staffers. Hopefully, the Center itself will soon be folded under the successful and reputable umbrella of Sarajevo Media Center. Interestingly

enough, with all the money spent on training programmes, international donors never thought that more money should be invested in local education, especially journalism schools at Bosnian universities, which remain understaffed and with very limited resources for technical or practical training of their students.

Finally, and for the purposes of this paper, most importantly, the entire project of media transformation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has been based upon the same political premises as the Dayton Peace Agreement. The UN, EU, US and other powers and organizations generally viewed the wars in the former Yugoslavia and Bosnia as ethnic wars and as the product of “ancient hatreds”. Therefore, the solution sought at Dayton was to de-ethnify Bosnian politics by creating institutionally enshrined ethnic parity in two territorial entities, parliaments and the presidency. Likewise, media reform was also essentially perceived as the process of ethnic neutralization and de-politicization. Hence, aside from the fact that “ethnic hatred” and “ethnic warfare” were never the only possible explanations for the wars in the former Yugoslavia (Gagnon 2004; Bowen 1996) – and that, consequently, solution offered at Dayton simply institutionalized ethnicity as the basis of all politics rather than neutralizing it (Curak 2004; Mujkic 2007a and 2007b) – such interpretations also relied on a very narrow understanding of politics and of the media. By limiting their conceptualization of politics to ethnicity and institutions, media reformers created strict rules of language use and election coverage, banished some compromised journalists from public life, established principles of ethnic representation in public media outfits, funded numerous training programmes for local journalists and fostered development of associations and regulative agencies. They have failed, however, to recognize the persistently important link between entertainment and politics in former Yugoslavia, and infused a fear of politics to such a degree that news and even election coverage have become “politically neutered”.

Thus, Tarik Jusic, programme director of Sarajevo Media Center, warned before elections of 2006 that media should do their civic duty and move beyond passive reporting of political events and statements of political candidates as has been the case in previous elections (Jusic 2006). Radenko Udovicic, programme director of Journalism School MediaPlan, correctly noted that no matter how painful it might be, media should finally address and confront extremist political views, which are still obviously present in Bosnia but rarely analyzed in media. According to Media Plan research, TV news on all three public television stations simply avoid themes around which there is no consensus of all three constitutive peoples (Bosnian Muslims, Serbs and Croats) (Udovicic R. 2006).

These three factors – conflict between European and American models of media system; tensions and mutually dismissive attitude between local journalists and international advisors; and political neutralization of media (particularly broadcast, which is strictly regulated by Communication Regulation Agency) – have all contributed to an environment in which superficial entertainment and tabloid journalism appear far more appealing to journalists than in-depth analysis of events. As a consequence, they have helped create an incredibly complex, fragmented and diverse media system, which is a far cry from ideals of public service and unsustainable by market forces alone – a system, which, in words of a senior American official, “is not bad, but also not good – just OK”, and as such no longer considered worthy of substantial international investments. USAID expects that donor assistance will be dramatically reduced in the future, with funding going only to tried-and-proved institutions such as Media Plan Institute, Media Center and the key regulatory body – Communications Regulatory Agency (Cornell and Thielen 2006). Thus, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as in many other cases

examined in the present book, the liberal, market-driven model of the media will, most likely, by default – if not by design – eventually become the dominant one.

### **Public Service Broadcasting Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina**

If intervention into the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina came much too late, the process of transforming Bosnia's state television and radio into public service broadcasters has been even further delayed. The delay was initially caused, in part, by the near-exclusive focus of the international community and the Office of High Representative on the creation and maintenance of alternative broadcasting venues – OBN and Radio Fern. In 1996 when OBN was created, the hope of the OHR was that OBN would become the state-wide commercial television broadcaster, linking a number of independent private TV stations throughout Bosnia. Radio Fern, on the other hand, was created as the information service for the first elections in 1996. It became a talk radio in 1997. When it folded in 2001, its personnel moved to BH Radio 1. Thus, it was not until 2000 and 2001, when it became obvious that OBN could not compete with entity broadcasters RTV BiH and RTRS, and when Radio Fern shut down, that the international community put real emphasis on the creation of the public service broadcasting system in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Yet the crux of the problem in the creation of PSB actually rested in the Dayton Peace Agreement itself. The Dayton Peace Agreement barely mentioned media, and its subsequent interpretations, particularly the so-called Madrid declaration of the Peace Implementation Council (the body that oversees activities of the OHR), allowed for the placement of state media under the entity and municipal control. Not surprisingly, any attempt to create a new legal framework and a state-wide public broadcasting service, met with resistance from these vested interests, interlocked with pressures from Bosnia's powerful nationalist parties which treated entity media as their own parlors.

Thus, more than a decade after the war, a series of decisions towards the creation of PSB taken by the OHR, numerous highly paid foreign media experts who acted as the HR's special appointees in charge of PSB reform, an expensive BBC consultancy project, and tremendous EU pressure – Bosnia and Herzegovina still does not have a fully functional public service broadcasting system. The plan created in 2000, under the guidance of John Shearer (a much disliked BBC expert who was the HR's Broadcasting Agent between 2000 and 2003), envisioned the creation of four distinct units. This plan included two entity television and radio broadcasters, one each in Republika Srpska and in the Federation, a state-level public broadcaster, and a state-level corporation for public broadcasting which would act as a technical coordinator and distributor or programming, advertising, and funding among the three emitters. The two entity broadcasters were created in 2001. Radio-television in Republika Srpska simply continued its existence as an entity broadcaster. Federal TV was created on the ashes of BHTV – once upon a time, Television of Bosnia and Herzegovina, successor of pre-war RTV Sarajevo, which many Bosnians, especially in Sarajevo, continued to view as the symbol of unity and resistance to Serbian aggression during the war. Newly created BHRT, a state-wide public service broadcaster, which has strict rules of ethnic parity in terms of language (Bosnian, Croat, Serbian) and script (Cyrillic and Latin) use, as well as the ethnic background of its journalists, transmitted the first newscasts on 7 May 2001. It did not start full-time programming on a countrywide frequency until August 2004. The fourth, joint, corporation for public broadcasting has not yet been created.

The process is now stalled mostly because of the demands of the main Croat nationalist parties that Croats, too, deserve their own public service channel. In 2005, Bosnian Parliament

and the National Assembly of Republika Srpska adopted three laws, which govern the creation of a single state-wide public broadcasting system – the law on Public Broadcasting System, law on state-wide Public Service Broadcaster of BiH and entity Public Service Broadcaster of the Republika Srpska. The fourth law, on the entity Public Service Broadcaster of the Federation, was adopted in the Federation Parliament in June of 2006, but Croat representatives voted against it on the grounds that the vote “violated the Vital National Interest of the Croat constituent people” (Haraszti 2007). The disputes over the law, and its interpretation continue, blocking in the meantime the creation of the public service system and, particularly, the joint corporation – or the “fourth channel” as it is sometime referred to (Kulenovic 2006).

But public broadcasters are facing even more difficult issues. Many analysts contend that the system, as envisioned, and even without an additional channel for Croats, is not sustainable – either financially or in terms of programming (Henderson et al. 2003). BHRT is in dire financial situation since collection of subscription fees never reaches beyond 65 per cent (Haraszti 2007). Croats in western Herzegovina, where they are majority population, are instructed by their political parties not to pay for the public service system, which, in their view, does not represent their interests. The rate of collection in the rest of Federation and in Republika Srpska is also very low. The fee, which is about a half of the fee assessed before the war when the collection rate was between 85 and 90 per cent, and Bosnia had only one state-level broadcaster, is paid with utility bills (electric or telephone), but consumers have the right to refuse to pay that part of the bill. Already heavily indebted and overstuffed, public service system is, therefore, just as dependent on advertising revenue as its commercial competitors.

Dependence on advertising revenue and its distribution are also a source of contention. By far, the highest share of advertising revenue is collected by Federal TV, followed – though remotely – by RTRS. BHRT receives only 4 per cent of total advertising expenditures on television stations (see table 1).

Revenue distribution agreement, on the other hand, states that BHRT should receive 50 per cent of overall (fees and advertising revenue), while FTV and RTRS should receive 25 per cent. FTV, which has already written off all of its equipment and the building to BHRT in the process of liquidation of BHTV, is now in the position of subsidizing the state-wide broadcaster.

**Table 1:** Television advertising revenue Bosnia and Herzegovina – January 2007

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Share %</b>
OBN	4 757 920.00	30.41
PINK BH	2 972 003.50	19.00
FTV	2 962 540.00	18.94
NTV HAYAT	1 453 573.50	9.29
ATV	1 323 364.00	8.46
RTRS	786 607.00	5.03
MREZA PLUS	772 633.00	4.94
BHT	616 446.00	3.94
Total	15 645 087.00 KM	100.00

Source: *Mareco Index Bosnia, 2006*

Needless to say, such institutional structure and sharing agreements put the two television stations, housed in the same building, and sharing the same equipment, in competition with each other and create resentment among their employees. Just as importantly, the pressure to attract advertising impacts programming decisions of all three public broadcasters. All three struggle to reach the quota of 40 per cent of public service programming, all three have difficulty acquiring 10 per cent of programmes from local independent producers, and all three prefer cheap, in-studio shows, reality and game shows, sports and popular foreign TV series to documentary or education programmes. Local critics are particularly keen to stress that BHRT, the flagship state-wide public broadcaster, does not even have a desk for children and education programming, as was the case before the war.

### **Sliding into Commercial Reality: Financial Interests over Ethnic Loyalties**

Although the tendency towards media commercialism permeates public service broadcasting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, PSB is still unable to compete with private television stations. Between 2002 and 2006, audience share of public broadcasters has slid down from 37.9 per cent to 23.7 (see table 2).

As table 2 shows, foreign TV stations from Croatia and Serbia – to the degree to which they can be considered foreign given linguistic similarity – have made major inroads into BH audiences, mostly legally but sometime illegally. In some cases, it seems that Croat TV stations, HRT 2 and Nova TV in particular, have made tacit agreements with local cable providers in Bosnia that they can carry their signal for free. In exchange, by promising to deliver larger audiences, they are increasing their advertising revenue in Croatia. Questions of exclusive broadcasting rights and their re-transmission on cable are also often at stake – from sports events to popular TV series – and Bosnian private TV stations, fearful of the loss of audience and advertising revenue, are now demanding from the Communications Regulatory Agency to block local cable providers from carrying HRT2 and Nova TV signals. The question has become politicized, as Bosnian Croats feel that, having been deprived of a public TV channel, they are now being deprived of the most popular Croat TV programmes as well.

Permeability of Bosnian media borders has been an issue of concern for years. It was heightened in 2003, when Ivan Caleta, at the time owner of TV Nova in Croatia and TV3 in Slovenia, purchased OBN. That same year, Zeljko Mitrovic, owner of the highly popular TV Pink from Belgrade, purchased four smaller TV stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. OBN and Pink brought reality TV shows into Bosnian households – both have claimed their own versions

**Table 2:** Television stations in Bosnia – Market share of audiences, 2002–2006

<b>TELEVISION STATIONS</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
PUBLIC – BHT, FTV, RTS	37.9	33.5	31.8	24.8	23.7
LOCAL/REGIONAL	42.6	45.0	48.9	40.6	40.3
FOREIGN (Serbian and Croat) TV	14.3	16.3	14.6	30.8	33.3
OTHER SATELLITE TV	5.2	5.2	4.7	3.8	2.7

Source: *Mareco Index Bosnia, 2006*

of Big Brother thus far – and successfully attracted audiences. TV Pink has in just four years become the most popular TV station in entire Bosnia and Herzegovina (see table 3).

Both also reveal, along with a few Bosnian counterparts, the degree to which commercial interests can eventually trump ethnic loyalties, and the strange ways in which the slide into entertainment has been, perhaps unintentionally, entwined and helped by the presence of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the region.

OBN, for instance, that stillborn child of the international community, was, as mentioned, sold under very murky circumstances in London, in 2003, where the company had been registered as a trust. OBN went into liquidation in January of 2001, but the first hurried attempts to sell it proved to be disastrous. One of the potential buyers was a businessman from Republika Srpska, Gavriilo Bobar, known for his ties with war criminals Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic. When the scandal broke out, OBN trustees went in search of another buyer. In 2003, the company was sold to Mr Ivan Caleta, but the details of the deal were kept away from the public, and his identity was not immediately revealed. Indeed, OBN is still registered in Sarajevo, under the name of Gabrijel Vukadin, general manager of OBN. Mr Vukadin is, however, just the fictitious owner, whose name is there to satisfy the 51 per cent rule of domestic ownership over media companies in Bosnia. Mr Caleta, who also owns Slovenian TV3 and several marketing agencies in Croatia and Bosnia (he lost control over Nova in 2004 after being knee-capped in front of his house in Zagreb), cleared OBN's debt and equipped the company with transmitters to ensure coverage over the entire territory of BH. In 2004, Mr Caleta linked Nova, TV3 and OBN in the first and mega-successful reality show – *Story Super Nova Talents* – and the show created a marketing windfall for OBN's owner. Other media companies in Bosnia now argue that Mr Caleta uses his advertising agency in Zagreb to link advertising sales in Croatia and Bosnia, and that way offers advertising minutes on OBN at significantly lower prices than his media competitors in Bosnia can. Dumping, thus, may be one of the reasons why OBN still attracts over thirty per cent of all TV advertising sales in Bosnia (see table 1). According to a USAID assessment team, OBN "unabashedly claims to target its programming towards women aged 17–48, particularly those employed and living in urban areas – as those women make household choices regarding consumer goods, and are therefore sought after by firms that OBN covets as advertisers." Consequently, the programming consists of films, serials and telenovelas, while "the network provides the minimum amount of news and information content prescribed by CRA regulations in order to concentrate on entertainment programming." (Cornell and Thielen 2006)

**Table 3:** Top TV Stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina – Audience shares, 2002–2006

		2002		2003		2004		2005		2006
1	FTV	30.1	FTV	26.9	FTV	23.8	FTV	13.7	PINK BH	12.5
2	RTRS	7.3	OBN	6.9	PINK BH	10.4	PINK BH	11.6	FTV	11.8
3	OBN	5.8	RTRS	6.5	OBN	7.7	TV BN	6.1	BHT	7
4	NTV	5.5	NTV	6.2	NTV	6.6	BHT	6	OBN	6.4
	HAYAT		HAYAT		HAYAT					
5	TV TK	3.9	TV BN	4.2	RTRS	5.2	OBN	5.3	TV BN	5.6

Source: *Mareco Index Bosnia, 2006*

The other successor to OBN is USAID/IREX-sponsored Mreza Plus, a network which links five BH TV stations (Alternative TV from Banja Luka, TV Hayat from Sarajevo, RTV Mostar, HTV Mostar Oscar C and TV Tuzla), originally linked through OBN. Mreza Plus also thrives on commercial programming – from *Desperate Housewives* to Formula 1 races – which, frequently, puts it at odds with above-mentioned Croat stations and Mr Caleta’s OBN. Mreza Plus, also, did not start producing a 30-minute daily news programme until 2006. Mr Darko Aleksic, network manager, attended USAID management training programmes and is proud of the fact that the network – with its commercial, mostly American, programming – overcomes all ethnic barriers in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr Zeljko Mitrovic and his TV Pink are another example of ambivalent relations between commerce, ethnicity and international community. Mr Mitrovic was once a member of JUL, a political party in Serbia founded by Slobodan Milosevic’s wife, and his television station the favourite of Mr Milosevic’s family. The building, which housed TV Pink, was strategically bombed during the 1999 NATO raids on Belgrade as it also housed TV Kosava, owned by Mr Milosevic’s daughter. During the Milosevic years, TV Pink was broadcasting an entertaining mix of talk shows, pirated movies and soap operas, with the message “enjoy life, forget politics”. The key element of Milosevic’s media strategy was to destroy alternatives to his own political vision (Gordy 1999). Pink also promoted and celebrated the turbo-folk genre in popular music, infamous for its underlying nationalism and numerous links of its stars with key figures of Milosevic’s regime, including immensely popular Svetlana-Ceca Raznatovic. After the so-called October revolution in Serbia, in 2000, Mr Mitrovic switched political sides and joined Milosevic’s opponents. No longer on the US Treasury list of individuals with whom US companies cannot trade, Mr Mitrovic befriended a number of western diplomats and hired a lobbyist in Washington to take care of his business interests on the other side of the Atlantic (Manasek 2005). Pink continues to feed films, reality TV shows and turbo-folk music to its audiences – just as in Milosevic’s years – but this time around in support of Serbia’s budding democracy.

As mentioned, in 2003, Mr Mitrovic purchased four smaller stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. He subsequently opened a TV studio in Bijeljina, Republika Srpska, and then later in Banja Luka and Sarajevo. Within just four years, and with 12 per cent audience share, TV Pink has become the most popular TV station in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see table 3). Media analysts now claim that “although there was a lot of repulsion for this TV station in Sarajevo before it started broadcasting because of its owner’s ties with Slobodan Milosevic, the station’s programming has proven to be diverse, entertaining, good quality and all-Bosnian with particular emphasis on events in Banja Luka and Sarajevo.” (Udovicic R. 2006) In the fall of 2006, TV Pink brought the Serbian version of *Big Brother* show to Bosnian audiences with a multi-ethnic cast of characters, including a young man from Sarajevo, in fierce competition for a 100,000 euros prize. The show’s ratings exceeded all expectations. Ironically, the original Serbian *Big Brother* was produced by B92, staunch opponent of Milosevic’s regime, the bastion of independent journalism with public service orientation in Serbia. The director of B92, Veran Matic, justified the decision to produce *Big Brother* by saying that if reality TV is our reality – that is, if all TV stations in the world broadcast reality shows, and if *Big Brother* remains absolute champion in programming formats and the global phenomenon of reality TV – then B92 wants to produce the best of the best of reality TV shows.

But, perhaps, the best example of the ways in which financial interests eventually overcome ethnic loyalties – and the most paradigmatic figure of Bosnia’s media landscape – is Mr

Fahrudin Radoncic, owner of the daily newspaper *Dnevni Avaz* in Sarajevo. Started as an occasional publication of the leading Muslim party in Bosnia – SDA – during the war, *Dnevni Avaz* has since grown into the newspaper with the highest circulation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with an estimated daily average of 40,000 and weekend circulation of 80,000 copies. Mr Radoncic, a former journalist and a war-time assistant to Mr Sefer Halilovic, commander of the Bosnian army, is frequently attacked by the Bosnian political elite and other media outlets because of his aggressive business strategies and transparent desire to influence public opinion and politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The origins of Mr Radoncic's capital, with which he started the paper, are still unknown, and his financial dealings have been subject of several (in Mr Radoncic's view, politically motivated) investigations. Frequently accused of shady business practices, and equally shady alliances with shady Balkan characters, Mr Radoncic's greatest sin, however, seems to have been his fascinating business acumen. He has built his press and media empire by undercutting opposition (e.g., by purchasing the largest printing press in Sarajevo in 2001, thus making all other magazines and newspapers published in Sarajevo dependent on Avaz press), fierce pursuit of advertising share, excellent distribution network of his papers in Bosnia and abroad, paternalistic care for his deeply loyal employees, and lowest-common-denominator journalism. (See table 4 for advertising share among daily newspapers.)

Aside from Avaz, Mr Radoncic's company A-Roto Press also publishes a weekly magazine for women, *Azra*, a weekly tabloid, *Express*, a daily tabloid, *AS*, and a weekly sports newspaper, *Sport*. In 2007, after some years of promise and delay, Mr Radoncic also re-launched his TV station, TV Alfa, which boasts objectivity as its greatest asset. Interestingly, TV Alfa was penalized in 2004 by CRA for anti-Semitic content of some of its programmes.

Mr Radoncic has been known for his shifting political preferences, as he has backed different candidates over the past ten years. His opponents are convinced that his political moods, which powerfully colour the news in his publications, correlate with prospects for the expansion of his business empire. In the last election, held in October 2006, he was accused of influencing and even outright determining the election outcome, especially the victory of presidential candidate Haris Silajdzic. Representatives of the international community are also concerned about Mr Radoncic's political influence and, in private conversations, reject any comparisons between

**Table 4:** Major daily newspapers in Bosnia and Herzegovina and their advertising revenue – January 2007

Daily	TOTAL	SHARE %
<i>Dnevni Avaz</i>	418 318.38	34.00
<i>Dnevni List</i>	296 914.00	24.13
<i>Oslobodjenje</i>	206 090.00	16.75
<i>Nezavisne Novine</i>	156 583.00	12.72
<i>Glas Srpske</i>	109 780.00	8.92
<i>Vecernji List</i>	42 832.00	3.48
TOTAL	1 230 517.30	100.00

Source: *Mareco Index Bosnia, 2006*

Mr Radoncic and Rupert Murdoch as an insult to Mr Murdoch. At the same time, however, they too believe that they depend on Mr Radoncic's paper as the link to the hearts and minds of ordinary Bosnians. Avaz has been the favourite outlet of all High Representatives thus far, especially Paddy Ashdown. In the contest of mutual adoration, Avaz named Ashdown 'Personality of the Year' in January 2003, while in his acceptance message Ashdown crowned Avaz 'newspaper of the year' and 'the clearest example of professional and business success.'

Although OHR representatives claim that the paper is no longer privileged as much as it was during Ashdown's reign, Christian Schwarz-Schilling also has a weekly column in Mr Radoncic's paper. For years, Mr Radoncic rented one of his villas as a residence to American ambassadors and some suspect that Avaz's increasingly critical stance towards the US is a result of the broken lease agreement. Nonetheless, Fahrudin Radoncic was invited as a Bosnian representative to President Bush's Prayer Breakfast in Washington D.C. in 2007 and was the first Bosnian to attend.

All media outlets linked to Mr Radoncic display a mix of gossip, entertainment, brief news, brisk comments, blunt views and little analysis – a *Daily Mirror* recipe for broadening of media appeal and attracting readers. And yet, despite his success, Mr Radoncic's ambitions at the moment seem to go beyond the media. He has transformed a half of his newly built Avaz building (which envelops the ruins of Sarajevo's oldest, and now barely surviving, daily newspaper, *Oslobodjenje*) into a hotel. He also plans to build the tallest office towers on the Balkans in Sarajevo and has signed an agreement with the richest man in Serbia, Miroslav Miskovic, to build twenty shopping centres around Bosnia within the next four years. Public outcry over Mr Radoncic's decision to join forces with a man who made a fortune under the reign of Slobodan Milosevic – and, thus, place his financial interests above ethnic solidarity – has not yet ceased.

And, finally, to conclude this survey of Bosnia's slide into commercial reality, let me just mention that most Bosnian newspapers and political magazines – including those that were once heavily subsidized by the international community – now have sister gossip, sports or specialized magazines, perfectly suited for waiting rooms in beauty salons or increasingly privatized medical service offices. While exact circulation data in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not exist (publishers are resisting any attempt to create market research instruments for the press), a recent IREX study of media sustainability shows that women's magazines from Bosnia and Croatia have taken a lead in terms of circulation (see table 5).

Political magazines, on the other hand, which used to live off foreign donations, are now increasingly engaged in media wars. This is not surprising. In the highly saturated media market,

**Table 5:** Reading rates of magazines

Magazine	Reading rate
Azra (women's magazine, affiliate of Avaz)	14.7%
Gloria (Croatian women's magazine)	12.5%
Dani (independent political magazine)	9.4%
Slobodna Bosna (independent political magazine)	7.2%
Express (weekly tabloid, affiliate of Avaz)	5.3%

Source: IREX, *Media Sustainability Index 2005*; *Mareco Index Bosnia*

with advertising revenue valued at approximately 80 million euros (or one-fifth of the Croatian market which has only four TV channels with national coverage), battle for readership and eyeballs is becoming fierce. Thus, if international subsidies were a major factor in proliferation of media outlets in Bosnia, and international community already a midwife of media commercialization, it is hard to see how anything but a race to the bottom will become Bosnia's media future once the subsidies completely disappear.

### **Digital Laggards**

And while the choice between public service broadcasting and mindless entertainment, ethnic interests and money-making continues to preoccupy both media observers and practitioners in the region, a few Bosnian media analysts have noticed that such preoccupation only deflects attention from a far more serious problem – Bosnia's technological lag behind an increasingly digitized media world. As Boro Kotic, director of Sarajevo's Media Center noted, "EU plans to move from analog to completely digital TV broadcast by 2012, while Bosnia and Herzegovina remains the only country in Europe, including our neighbors, which has not even raised an issue of a pilot digital TV signal." According to Mr Kotic (2007), the Bosnian public service broadcaster is already an anachronistic institution, with too many channels that cannot be sustained by the Bosnian advertising market, too many employees, an enormous BHT building in Sarajevo, which is not used to its capacity, and rapidly declining audiences. "Debate about two or three or four channels with national markings (...) will be pointless in a digital environment with hundreds of thematic channels. In fact, paradox of current public service broadcasting debate in Bosnia, is that it is already outdated in Europe – it's just that nobody has told us this secret."

Mr Kotic's article prompted a response from Ms Dunja Mijatovic (2007), Director of Broadcasting at the Bosnian Communications Regulatory Agency. She also suggested an opening of discussion about new information technologies and their use in communications and politics, the digital divide, and ways in which Bosnia, and its citizens, may benefit from new technologies. But a serious initiation of such debate may have to wait for years. After the national elections of 2006, Bosnian citizens had to wait more than six months to have a government, since the complicated coalition of their elected representatives could not decide on distribution of all available ministerial portfolios. If the newly formed government continues with that pace, it is difficult to expect that any major decisions regarding any of the pressing social and economic issues will be made under their mandate. And the low level of Internet penetration in Bosnia – according to ITU data it stands at only 17 per cent of population – makes it unlikely that pressures for comprehensive digital strategy would come from citizens themselves. Thus, the key concern of Rupert Murdoch and his look-alikes in contemporary global media environment – how to keep audiences in face of Internet competition – has no serious bearing on Bosnia's media executives as yet.

Bosnia's dismal Internet situation reveals deeper political, social and economic problems of its post-Dayton existence. Twelve years after the war, more than half of Bosnian population is still excluded from the social mainstream. A daily purchase of one newspaper would cost a pensioner one-tenth of monthly pension, while a monthly Internet connection would take up one-fifth. Poverty, poor transportation links and the strict visa regime imposed on Bosnian citizens keep the country and its peoples disconnected from developments in Europe and the rest of the world. One cannot, therefore, but wonder – and media reform and democratization may be a great example – if millions of dollars spent on Bosnia's re-integration into the world did not have the opposite effect – turning the country inwards, to its own reality shows, with entertainment,

on the one hand, and nationalism, on the other, as ways of bridging otherwise extreme economic divisions and structural inequalities.

## Conclusion

In his chapter on public service broadcasting reforms in Central and Eastern Europe, Karol Jakubowicz relies on Hallin's and Mancini's notion of "political parallelism" between media and political systems. Jakubowicz's analysis is further enriched with the introduction of political culture as a variable as well as with his reliance on dynamic, rather than static, accounts of political institutions in countries of transition. He is skeptical about the future of public broadcasting in post-communist countries.

Although Bosnia's situation, at the first glance, may seem different because of its post-conflict situation, deep involvement of international community, and politically – not just economically – porous borders to neighbouring Serbia and Croatia, its complex political system, fragmented political culture and weak political society seem perfectly reflected in the cacophonous media environment. Twelve years of international guidance have helped fracture the Bosnian media landscape, politically neutralize its messages, and introduce market-driven wars over advertising and audience shares into its saturated media space. In a peculiar symbiosis with Bosnia's nationalist leaders, just as in politics, they were not able to bring Bosnia into global economic and infrastructural trends, which are now deemed necessary for Bosnia's integration into the European Union. De-politicization of commercial media in Bosnia may have succeeded, and may constitute a progress in comparison with inflammatory wartime propaganda. However, just as elsewhere in the world, and the United States in particular, de-politicization of media and the shift towards entertainment have also helped maintain a political status quo, nationalist and globalist at once, feeding off each other in perpetual complicity.

And to the degree to which space, architecture and landscapes speak about power, particularly in the inherently fluid media worlds, it may be appropriate to end this chapter with the images of two buildings, perhaps the best representation of Bosnia's shifting media environment. One building is Mr Radnocić's shiny blue Avaz high-rise, half-hotel, half-media headquarters, with a rotating panoramic restaurant, saunas, gyms and a printing press, swirled around the devastated building of Sarajevo's other daily newspaper, *Oslobodjenje*. And just a kilometer down the street, the other building, that of Bosnia's public broadcasters, BHRT and FTV, which was in the early 1980s one of the most technologically advanced radio and television centres in Europe, is now half abandoned, full of outdated and poorly maintained equipment. The building no longer displays a sign, "NOT FOR SALE", placed by its employees at the time when the international community demanded the sale of the premises in order to fund the PSB. But the question is how long will it take before the building and the institutions it houses are not – both literally and metaphorically – put up for grabs, sold perhaps to Mr Radnocić or one of his business associates from Serbia or Croatia.

## Note

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# **MEDIA CONCENTRATION TRENDS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE**

*Zrinjka Peruško and Helena Popović*

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## **1. The Media, Markets and Democracy**

Global media development in recent decades highlights several trends with potential impact on the role of the media in democratic societies. Globalization, in the sense of the integration of world markets, is playing out in the media field as well. The global expansion of media industries leads the increased concentration of media owners as well as the ever bigger media companies. The concentration of media industries is the main contemporary trend at the global level, with the consequence that a smaller number of media companies are controlling an ever larger number of media products and world markets.

The premise prevailing in contemporary media policy theory is that ownership concentration leads to diminished diversity of media content, leading in turn to diminished plurality of programmes in cultural as well as social and political terms.<sup>1</sup> In democratic political systems the media should enable citizens to learn and become involved in political processes, as well as to enable communication of diverse ideas, communicated by diverse actors. This is why

pluralism and diversity in the media are one of the fundamental topics of media policy in European democracies.

Early modern theorists viewed the market as that balancing factor which would hold in check the despotic governments and provide a free press.<sup>2</sup> As in the beginning, so in the transitions of the 1990s, the market was perceived in the new post-communist democracies of Central and Eastern Europe as that balancing factor that could prevent the recurrence of the erstwhile overarching rule of the political realm. In the early modern times, the belief in “decentralized market competition as a vital antidote to political despotism” (Keane 1991, pp. 45) was extrapolated on to the media enterprise and freedom of expression. And without a doubt, this early hope was initially fulfilled. The power began to slowly shift from the realm of politics to that of the market – “...the market being an alternative to politics (up to a point) for making decisions, or an alternative for reaching outcomes as by-products or ‘as though by a hidden hand’ instead of as decisions” (Lindblom 1998, pp. 20). Democracy and market economy should not be conflated, but also cannot be dissociated (Le Goff 2002) in the empirical experience of modern societies. The pluralism of contemporary democracies is necessarily based on the cooperating/competing roles of different social institutions and not on the all-encompassing role of only one (i.e., the state). Thus, the market as a social institution figures importantly in the practice of democracy as a social and political system. This role of the market and free enterprise is perhaps even better appreciated in Central and Eastern Europe which has experienced the failure of the “planned economy” of the socialist system.<sup>3</sup>

Although a comprehensive analysis of the region’s media market development in the 1990s is yet to be written, the growth in the number of media outlets, types of media content and products as well as the diversity of owners is a direct consequence of the introduction of the market system of free enterprise. Where there were once party/state-controlled broadcast monopolies new media companies entered. The political realm is no longer restricting the free flow of information in Central and Eastern Europe. However, the opening of the media markets of the countries of the region (many of whom are now also members of the European Union) brought them into the global media environment. There, competition is not perfect and the large players and technological and policy liberalization trends leading to market concentration are creating conditions where the market is increasingly seen as producing negative effects for the freedom and diversity of information in the public sphere.

The essential aspect of democracy is in the pluralism of social institutions and in the sharing of their power. Accordingly, full control of the media by a market-based institution is as undesirable as full total control by the state. At the European level, the quest for media pluralism and diversity is built into the European Convention on Human Rights (Article 10), in which the freedom of expression and media are guaranteed. The application of this article through the judgements of the European Court for Human Rights obliges all the member states to protect pluralism of the media in order for them to carry out their democratic function. All the ensuing political texts and recommendations of the Council of Europe are developed from this basic understanding. Based on this premise many European media policies control concentration of ownership in the media (and not only in terms of ensuring market competition), as well as support diversity by other measures (including support for public service broadcasting).

Concentration is in economic terms a characteristic of a market in which the competition of companies is constrained, to different degrees, with monopoly position being the drastic example in which the access to a given market is totally barred for other players. In this text,

we are interested not in the economic aspects and ramifications of concentration in the media sector, but in the social and political consequences that these developments possibly have on the fulfilment of the media's social role.

In addition to structural diversity (of owners, companies, types of media, different territorial coverage – from local to national), diversity and pluralism needs to be in the final analysis reflected in media content, in order to enable the development of a democratic society. In the realm of media content, diversity implies types of programme genres (different news genres, documentaries, movies, new genres), topics that are covered (politics, economy, culture, science, education, religion), audiences they address (majority and minority, children, groups with special needs), actors with access to the media and the political orientations and world-views they present. The last element of diversity begins to describe media pluralism as that quality of the media necessary for public debate, for a culture of democracy that enables democratic governance and the development of democratic societies.

The effects of concentration on pluralism of content relate to the diminishing of choice and diversity in the number of titles (in the press) and in the mainstreaming of the remaining titles in order to maximize audiences. Another aspect is editorial concentration, a practice of "diversified" media conglomerates: media content is produced in one central place and distributed to local audiences. The diversity and pluralism is at risk again, as only one viewpoint is presented in different kinds of media (press, TV, radio, Internet). Concentration also has negative effects on programming quality, as was shown in an analysis of the US entertainment programme diversity and quality after recent mergers (Einstein 2002). Standardization of the cultural content in the media is also a result of concentration: all media companies use the same audience-attracting strategies (Humphreys 1996). If we take a more radical view, the very essence of the corporate media ownership is a threat to the development of civil society (Roth 2004). The media follow editorial policies that are commensurate with the aims and social values of their corporate owners (Bagdikian 2000). Views that are contrary to these interests have less of a chance of entering the public sphere, or may be blocked altogether, even if they represent the majority of civil society (McChesney 2000).

Other studies have analyzed the relationship between type of the market and the content of the media. Roth (2004) shows the correlation of the structure of the media market and the diversity of the media system in the Netherlands. Comparative research on the quality of programming (Ishikawa 1996) showed (as was to be expected) a higher level of diversity for public television channels, while the lowest results were scored by American commercial television networks. The relationship is, however, not uncontroversial: repeated analysis in Sweden in 1996 showed that "in the presence of increasing competition from commercial channels, Sweden's public service television system increased its diversity, while her public service radio system decreased in diversity" (Hillve et al. 1997).

The process of media concentration can be observed at three different levels: *horizontal merger* – whereby two firms combine forces which are at the same position in the supply chain and are engaged in the same activity; *vertical growth* – which involves "expanding either 'forward' into succeeding stages or 'backward' into preceding stages in the supply chain (creation of media output and distribution or retail of that output in various guises)" (Doyle 2002, pp. 4); *diagonal expansion* which occurs when "firms diversify into new business areas" (like merging of a telecommunications operator and a television company) (Doyle 2002, pp. 4). In media policy terms, diagonal expansion translates into rules on cross-media ownership.

Arguments in favor of media concentration are that concentration (which means fewer competing suppliers) implies a more cost-effective use of resources. That, in turn, means that the availability for innovation enables an increased range of output (Doyle 2002, pp. 13). The OFCOM review of media ownership rules lists the following potential benefits of media consolidation:

- economies of scale and scope in news gathering and dissemination, which can reduce news costs and improve access to international news;
- access to better news management and superior talent;
- improved access to overseas capital for investing in the news function;
- improved access to news gathering, editing and dissemination technology. (OFCOM 2006, sec. 2.20, pp. 7)

However, as Dowd (2004) emphasizes, tendencies in media concentration to constrain diversity are connected to the fact that media production only presents a small segment of a conglomerate's potential product. Another constraint on diversity is the fact that media firms "face inertial pressures in the production process", which results in the repeating of previously successful content (Dowd 2004, pp. 1412).

Doyle (2002) points out several determinants of media pluralism:

- Size and wealth of market (research shows that larger and wealthier markets can afford greater diversity, for example there is a positive correlation between size of population in EU countries and the number of daily newspaper titles available). These variables are taken into consideration in media ownership regulation on national, regional and local level, however, no solution has yet been found on a supra-national European level;
- Diversity of suppliers – important because the reduction of the number of media suppliers can "translate into media power." (Meier and Trappel 1998, pp. 39; in Doyle 2002, pp. 19). The influence of the owner is visible in the selection of editors as well as the decision about investments and "arrangements for sourcing or distributing content". (Meier and Trappel 1998, pp. 39; in Doyle 2002, pp. 19) – decisions which results in the over-representation of the owner's values and interests;
- Consolidation of resources – the question about how media resources will be managed, especially consolidation of editorial functions: in order to gain diversity of input for a media product has to be gained from different sources;
- Diversity of output – the main aspect of political and cultural pluralism. Since diversity of ownership does not necessarily results in output diversity (for the reasons stated earlier), the latter is additionally regulated through other policy instruments (obligations to source a percentage of output from independent producers).

## **2. From Politics to Markets in Central and Eastern Europe**

Media pluralism and diversity was a fundamental aim of European media policies (Ward 2002) even before it became the central value of the (European and global) countertrend to media globalization and the increasing commercialization and unification of the world media market. In a post-socialist context, attempts to ensure and protect media diversity and pluralism are burdened by the difficulties that occur regarding the democratization of the media in general, connected both to economic and political changes.

Media policy developed during the transitions of the 1990s in the European post-socialist countries in three, sometimes overlapping, phases. The first was focused on de-linking the media from the state, and included the achievement of freedom and independence from the political realm. This phase in most of the countries included the creation and restructuring of public service broadcasting systems and introducing structures that guarantee its independence from the political and economic forces (the success has been varied). In the initial phase of post-socialism, the battle was fought “in the political and administrative domain, and the ‘enemy’ was the state.” (Jakubowicz, in Paletz et al. 1995, pp. 137).<sup>4</sup> The second phase was marked by attention to market developments and includes liberalization of telecommunications and broadcasting markets and the increased entry of the foreign capital in the media markets. This was also the time when attention starts to shift to threats from market developments, and the realization that pluralism is (surprisingly) at lesser risk from political than market pressures. The third phase is marked by European integration, and the main activity is harmonization of media legislature with the EU *acquis* in the audio-visual field. This phase includes more attention to the implementation of media legislation (a sore point for many countries of the region). The direction of post-communist transitions as well as the media development in CEE was without a doubt streamlined, organized and defined by the “magnetic pull of the EU”.<sup>5</sup>

Regime change in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe has had a huge impact on media systems. The transformation from state-controlled, highly centralized media system, to the opening of the market formally started in the beginning of the 1990s, with the abolition of censorship and the implementation of new media regulation. However, elements of market privatization in CEE are recognizable already in the eighties, when new commercial enterprises started to appear.<sup>6</sup> In this period, Western European media firms started to show interest in Eastern European media markets, but, as Hans Heinz Fabris (Fabris in Paletz et al. 1995) pointed out, they were faced with problems in connection with “currency convertibility, poor economies, limits on western participation in joint ventures, poor working conditions, and the lack of new media legislation” (pp. 223). Nevertheless, at the end of the 1980s, after the overthrow of the regimes in 1989, foreign investors were attracted to enter these markets, populated by publics interested in their novel media content, by workers willing to work for lower salaries, as well as by the advantages offered by well-developed audio-visual production facilities in several of the CEE countries.

The domestic players involved in the changes of the CEE media systems, embraced the opening of the markets in an optimistic, even idealistic manner, firstly – because it meant autonomy from the state; secondly – because it was believed that the “demands of the market would prevent political partisanship” (Sparks 1998, pp. 172); thirdly – because it ensured employment security, and lastly – because it was believed that competition would raise the quality of programme output. Overall, the opening of the market was, in a general sense, positively accepted. In the media landscape, these changes resulted in the mushrooming of new titles in the newspaper market, the urge for new policy regulations of the area and the appearance of foreign investments in the media markets. The produced resentment as foreign investors gained control over media enterprises at low cost and were seen as social actors that could jeopardize the newly gained national sovereignty of the states.

If we look specifically at the common denominators of the media markets in the post-socialist states, they could be described as fragmented and small, with a large number of media. In addition, parallel media markets exists, divided according to linguistic/ethnic lines. The region is also burdened with the expansion of tabloid media, local and regional market concentration,

and “close links between the largest and the most influential media on the one hand, and local owners of capital and political parties on the other” (Hrvatín & Petković, in Petković 2004, pp. 20).

Even though the old media system was in most countries instantly replaced by a market-oriented system, this applies more to the press than the broadcasting media. In regards to the press, as Jakubowicz points out, there were no “provisions governing foreign involvement in the press or against concentration of capital” (in Paletz et al. 1995, pp. 40), nor were there any policies that would promote the rights of minorities or other interest groups, which all resulted in a “wild” privatization of the press enterprises. However, the press boom that occurred in the initial phase of the post-socialist period was soon dampened by the introduction of tax systems, the increase of the production, print and distribution costs and other factors resulting in a decline of readership (Prevratil, in Paletz et al. 1995, pp. 162).

Broadcasting was not so easily released from political control. The newly elected political parties continued to control the broadcasting systems, due to the fact that “they believed that, as the new democratically elected governments, they deserve the support and have the right to use, radio and television to promote the process of reform.” (Jakubowicz, in Paletz et al. 1995, pp. 40). In Croatia the early debates around the liberalization of the television sector centered additionally on the issue of sovereignty, as well as on the envisaged role of television in national cohesion building (Peruško Culek 1999a).

As Sparks has emphasized, the differences between the development of the press media markets and the broadcasting markets can, partially, be explained by the size of the media institutions: particular newspapers were smaller and, therefore, subjugated to particular division among private investors, while “the broadcasting institutions were so large, and so politically sensitive, that they could not simply be seized by one group or another” (Sparks 1998, pp. 104) – thus, all the political actors had to reach a consensus on how to set the rules for broadcasting operations, since they all claimed right to gain and sustain political power. The

**Table 1:** First launch of main western investors in television in Central and Eastern Europe

Country	Group	Channel	Launch
<b>Bulgaria</b>	News Corporation	bTV	2000
<b>Croatia</b>	Central European Media Enterprises (CME)	Nova TV	2000
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Central European Media Enterprises (CME)	TV Nova	1994
<b>Estonia</b>	Modern Times Group (MTG)	TV3	1993
<b>Hungary</b>	RTL Group	RTL Klub	1997
	SBS Broadcasting	TV2	
<b>Latvia</b>	Modern Times Group (MTG)	TV3	1998
<b>Lithuania</b>	Modern Times Group (MTG)	TV3	1992
<b>Poland</b>	-	-	-
<b>Romania</b>	Central European Media Enterprises (CME)	PRO TV	1995
<b>Slovakia</b>	Central European Media Enterprises (CME)	Markiza TV	1996
<b>Slovenia</b>	Central European Media Enterprises (CME)	Kanal A	1991

Source: EUMAP: *Television across Europe: regulation, policy and independence* (2005, pp. 173)

countries of the region introduced new broadcasting acts that enabled commercial television from the early 1990s – Czechoslovakia in 1991, Poland in 1992 and Hungary in 1995.<sup>7</sup> In some countries (Croatia is a good example), the early legislative framework was not sufficiently liberal for foreign investments: even though the legal framework for commercial television was in place in 1994, and the first licences (at the local and regional level) were already awarded in the next year, the limit of 25 per cent share in ownership of a television licence of any company (domestic or foreign) precluded serious interest of foreign investors until the change in the law after 2000.<sup>8</sup>

The prevalence of this “nation-building approach” in which media was seen as a tool of the state, playing an integrative role in the society, and establishing stability, control and homogeneity, by focusing on state interests (Peruško-Čulek 1999a, pp. 246–247) presented a mixture of new and old values and beliefs – one that embraces a new multi-party political system, and another that still claims the right to control communication channels. No wonder, then, that scholarly interests in the first decade of post-socialism were more oriented towards the question of media independence, freedom of speech, and – more generally – towards the establishment of a new media including the implementation of new media regulations modeled on “old” democracies. In addition, one practical research problem appeared as a result of the institutional changes: the lack of new, systematically classified and collected data. At the same time, as a reminiscence of the past, scarce existing data were not transparent to the public.

As market development in the media field was seriously tackled only after the political framework for media freedoms was more or less firmly established, studies dealing with media markets in CEE countries started to appear only at the end of the 1990s.<sup>9</sup> At the turn of the century, scarce data was available on media markets in the post-socialist region, regardless of the fact that CEE and the Baltic States were deeply penetrated by foreign investments. On a regional level, the existing data on European media markets referred to the “old” democracies, while CEE countries were briefly touched upon, as a matter of comparison and prediction of market trends.<sup>10</sup>

After 2000, with EU accession nearing, and with the issue of ownership concentration increasingly viewed in terms of media diversity and pluralism (mainly thanks to the sustained effort and activity of the Council of Europe, as well as repeated pressure from European Parliament), studies increasingly began to focus on the Central and Eastern European region.<sup>11</sup> After the EU enlargement to the East in 2004, more detailed analysis of media ownership regulations and the media market players in the Member States started to appear.<sup>12</sup>

At the same time, research and studies that focused on South-Eastern European countries were still more oriented towards the media landscape and its legislation, professionalism in the media associations that operates in the area, as well as towards the donor activities – still

**Table 2:** Number of households and different type of television channels

	<b>TV households</b>	<b>Basic Cable</b>	<b>DTH Satellite</b>	<b>Terrestrial</b>
<b>Western Europe</b>	142.7m	29% (40.6m)	6% (8,6m)	65% (93.5m)
<b>Eastern Europe</b>	92.1m	15% (14.0m)	6% (5.8m)	79% (72.3m)

Source: *Pluralism in the Multi-Channel Market: Suggestions for Regulatory Scrutiny 1999/2000*, p. 10

present in some of the analyzed states, due to slow changes in the processes of institutional change.<sup>13</sup> After 2000 studies with comparative data started to uncover the profile of the developing media markets of post-socialist Europe.<sup>14</sup>

The shape of media markets is related to general market strength and size of the economy. In the new Member States of the EU, market strength (in terms of per capita revenues) is between 25 and 75 per cent of the older Member States. The markets are smaller in terms of audiences as well as the populations in individual countries are generally smaller. That being said, the main characteristics of the present media markets are defined by the role in its development of advertising investments and by the predominant role of television (IMCA 2004).

Advertising revenues are the primary source of revenues in the audio-visual industry across the board, with a few exceptions where the public funds make up for significant percentages (i.e., in Slovenia with 44 per cent and Slovakia with 34) (IMCA 2004).

The strength of the audio-visual market (including public sources, television subscription fees, advertising and other revenues in radio, television, cinema and Internet) is still below the EU

**Table 3:** Share of advertising revenue within the media sector

Country	Television/market share in%	Press/market share in%	Radio/market share in%	Outdoor and other/market share in%
<b>Croatia</b> ***	49,7%	34,4%	7,0%	8,8%
<b>Czech Republic</b> *	43,8%	25,1	5,42	3,0%
<b>Estonia</b> **	26,0%	56,0%	9,0%	9,0%
<b>Hungary</b> *	62,0%	26,6%	4,2%	13,1%
<b>Latvia</b> **	33,0%	46,0%	12,0%	9,0%
<b>Lithuania</b> **	41,63%	43,17%	7,26%	7,9%
<b>Poland</b> *	50,0%	37,0%	8,0%	5,0%
<b>Slovakia</b> **	70,8% – gross	18,4%	6,8%	4,0%
	47,2% – net	33,1%	9,9%	9,7%
<b>Slovenia</b> *	43,3%	41,8%	7,0%	7,2%

\* data from 2002

\*\* data from 2003

\*\*\* data from 2004

+ The data in the tables compiled from different country reports and the sums are sometimes not a 100 per cent; also, it is not clear if the data are for gross or net revenues.

Source: *Final report of the study on "the citizen in the EU: obligations for the media and the Institutions concerning the citizen's right to be fully and objectively informed"* European Parliament, prepared by the European Institute for the Media in 2004 (Kevin, D., Ader, T., Carsten Fueg, O., Pertziniidou, E., Schoenthal, M.).

Source for Croatia: *Hrvatsko medijsko tržište: Regulacija i trendovi koncentracije*, eds. Peruško, Z., Jurlin, K. [2006].

Source for Lithuania: *The Baltic Media World*, eds. Richard Baerug, author: Halliki Harro-Loit: *The Baltic and Norwegian Journalism Market*, pp. 90–121.

15 average of 182 euro per capita. The CEE audio-visual revenues are highest in Hungary (137), followed by the Czech Republic (99), Slovenia (88) and Poland (70), while the smallest are in Romania and Lithuania (15) (IMCA 2004). Television revenues account from 60 per cent in the Baltic countries, to more than 75 per cent in the largest market countries, and even more in others – up to 92 per cent (in Romania). The main composition of the television market in CEE includes one public service broadcaster with two channels and two commercial broadcasters at the national level. Public service channels show market strength in smaller and less developed markets (Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, and we could include Croatia as well), and the predominance of private commercial channels in larger audio-visual markets (with the exception of Poland, where public television is a major force on the market). These data point to the still-developing media markets in the CEE, as the characteristic of a developed market is a lower rate of television participation in advertising revenues, with a stronger influence of the print and other media. The IMCA study points to longer viewing times in many CEE countries in comparison to the EU 15 (average of 186 min. a day). The distribution of viewing times in CEE follows roughly the North-South divide in media consumption also seen in Western Europe – the northern countries' audiences read more, and the southern audiences spend more time with TV.

The EFJ report showed that the main investors in the CEE radio, television and press markets are German, Scandinavian and Swiss but also US-based and US-owned media groups. While US-based media groups conquered the audio-visual sector (Viacom, the Walt Disney Company, AOL Time Warner, Liberty Media, Central European Media Enterprises Ltd – CME, Scandinavian Broadcasting System SA SBS), European based media groups took control of the press market in CEE countries, especially the regional press (Passauer Neue Presse-PNP, Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung-WAZ, Axel Springer Verlag, Ringier, Orkla) (EFJ 2003, pp. 7).

The main investors in television are foreign media groups: SBS (Viacom), CME (Estée Lauder), MTG (Kinnevik), RTL (Bertelsmann), LARI (Lagardère, HBO (Time Warner), UPC (Liberty Media), as well as the Canal+ group, Murdoch's News Corp, Endemol and AGB Italia (IMCA 2004, pp. 35). In many countries the global companies are in partnership with local players in the ownership/control of licences and broadcasting rights, but the know-how, technological and programme modernization as well as the imports of programme bouquets are determined by the foreign partners who provide the financial input.

Commercial operators have the highest audience share in Bulgaria (bTV, 31,8%, News Corporation), Czech Republic (Nova TV, 42,2%, CEM), Estonia (TV3 – 23,6% Modern Times Group), Hungary (RTL Klub, 29,4%, RTL Group), Latvia (LNT, 22,1%, Polsat, Janis Azis, Baltic Media Holdings), Lithuania (Tele 3 – 27,5%, MTG), Slovak Republic (TV Markiza – 33,7%, CME) and Slovenia (Pop TV – 27,0%, CEM) (however, the sum of audience share of the PSB (all channels) is higher than the commercial (PSB – 37,8%) in Slovenia).

PSB television (TVP) is more popular in Poland (TVP 1 has the highest audience share of 24,9%, and the total audience share of all four PSB television channels being 51,9%), Romania (TVR1, 22,1 %) and Croatia (HRT 1, 38,6%) with both PSB channels sharing 54,2% of the audience.

The level of concentration is high in most of the states, except for Latvia and Romania. However, one has to take into consideration that it is difficult for more than a few broadcasters to survive in smaller markets, due to financial reasons (low advertising spending). Hence, in smaller countries, external media pluralism, involving a large number of competing channels

**Table 4:** Foreign media companies operating in CEE markets (2003/2004)

<b>Country</b>	<b>Press</b>	<b>Television</b>	<b>Radio</b>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	WAZ (Germany) Springer (Germany)	Antenna TV SA (Greece) News Corporation (US) Eurocom (cable)	
<b>Croatia</b>	WAZ (Germany) Burda (Germany) Sanoma Magazines International (Finland) Styria Media Group (Austria)	Central European Media Enterprises Ltd (CME) RTL Television*	
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Vltava-Labe-Press (VLP) Ringier (Switzerland) Rhenische Post Group Sanoma Magazines (Finland) Passauer Neue Presse (PNP) (Germany) Burda (Germany) Springer (Germany) Bauer (Germany) Bertelsmann (Germany)	Central European Media Enterprises Ltd (CME) (without concession)	Lagardere (France)
<b>Estonia</b>	Schibsted (Norway) Marieberg (Sweden) Bonnier (Sweden) Bertelsmann (Germany)	Schibsted (Norway) Modern Times Group (MTG) (Sweden)	
<b>Hungary</b>	Axel Springer Verlag (Germany) WAZ (Germany) Heinrich Bauer Verlag (Germany) Sanoma Magazines (Finland) Ringier (Switzerland) Bonnier (Sweden) Orkla (Norway) Bonnier (Sweden)	Scandinavian Broadcasting System (US) Bertelsmann (RTL) (Germany) Tele-Munchen Gruppe (Germany) Scandinavian Broadcasting System (US) Modern Times Group (MTG) (Sweden)	Marquard Media AG (Switzerland) Lagardere Group (France)
<b>Latvia</b>			Modern Times Group (MTG) (Sweden)
<b>Lithuania</b>			Bonnier/Marieberg (Sweden) Modern Times Group (MTG) (Sweden)

<b>Poland</b>	Orkla (Norway)	Bertelmann (RTL) (Germany)	Logardere Group (France)
	Passauer Neue Press (PNP) (Germany)	Vivendi Universal (France)	
	Bauer (Germany)	Scandinavian Broadcasting Systems (SBS) (US)	
	Springer (Germany)		
	Bertelsmann (Gruner+Jahr) (Germany)		
	West Allgemeine Deutsche Zeitung Group (Germany)		
	Edipresse (Switzerland)		
	Marquard (Switzerland)		
	Bonnier (Sweden)		
<b>Romania</b>	WAZ (Germany)	News Corporation (US)	Logardere Group (France)
	Burda (Germany)	Central European Media Enterprises (CME) (US)	
	Ringier (Switzerland)	Scandinavian Broadcasting System – SBS (US and Luxembourg)	
	Edipresse (Switzerland)	Millennium Electronics Ltd. (UK)	
	Sanoma (Finland)	Central European Media Enterprises (CME) (US)	
<b>Slovakia</b>	Passauer Neue Press (PNP) (Germany)		
	Bertelsmann (Gruner+Jahr) (Germany)		
	Bauer (Germany)		
	Holtzbrinck (Germany)		
	Ringier (Switzerland)		
	Sanoma (Finland)		
<b>Slovenia</b>	Motopresse (Germany)	Central European Media Enterprises (CME) (US)	
	Burda (Germany)		
	Bonnier (Sweden)		
	Leykam (Austria)		

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\* In 2003, RTL Group applied for the second national commercial channel in Croatia. The RTL Television was launched in 2004. Adapted from: Medijska koncentracija: izazov pluralizmu medija u Srednjoj i Istočnoj Europi (Peruško 2003a, pp. 48–50; and the Final report of the study on “the citizen in the EU: obligations for the media and the Institutions concerning the citizen’s right to be fully and objectively informed” European Parliament, prepared by the European Institute for the Media in 2004 (Kevin, D., Ader, T., Carsten Fueg, O., Pertzinidou, E., Schoenthal, M.).

**Table 5:** Television markets in Central and Eastern Europe: players and concentration levels

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>Ownership of operators</b>	<b>Audience share – main channels</b>	<b>C3<sup>15</sup> – level of concentration</b>
<b>Bulgaria*</b>	PSB: BNT (channel – Kanal 1) Main commercial operators: News Corporation: Bolkan Nyuz Korporeushan EAD (channel – bTV); CME (channel Nova TV)	bTV – 31,8 Kanal 1 – 24 Nova TV – 17,9 Planeta – 2,3 Diema+ – 2 Evrokom – 1,3 Nova TV – 42,2 CT 1 – 21,5 CT 2 – 9,0 Prima TV – 21,1 Others – 6,1	C3=73,7 High concentration 32,6% – PSB 67,4% – foreign commercial operators
<b>Czech Republic**</b>	PSB: Ceska Televizie (CT), (channels CT 1 and CT 2) Main commercial operators: CET 21 (channel Nova TV) (PPF); FTV Primiera S.r.o., channel: Prima TV PSB – Eesti Telesioon (ETV) (channel – ETV) Main commercial operators: TV3 AS, (channel TV3) (Modern Times Group); Kanal 2 AS (channel – Kanal 2) (Schibsted Group) Perviy kanal Estonia – channel in Russian	CT 1 – 21,5 CT 2 – 9,0 Prima TV – 21,1 Others – 6,1 Eesti Television – 18,0 TV3 – 23,6 Kanal 2 – 19,6 Pervyi Baltiski Kanal – 9,6 RTR/Rossiya/RTR Planeta – 4,6 YLE – 1,4	C3= 84,8 High concentration 25,4% PSB 74,6% – domestic commercial operators
<b>Estonia**</b>	PSB – Eesti Telesioon (ETV) (channel – ETV) Main commercial operators: TV3 AS, (channel TV3) (Modern Times Group); Kanal 2 AS (channel – Kanal 2) (Schibsted Group) Perviy kanal Estonia – channel in Russian	Eesti Television – 18,0 TV3 – 23,6 Kanal 2 – 19,6 Pervyi Baltiski Kanal – 9,6 RTR/Rossiya/RTR Planeta – 4,6 YLE – 1,4	C3= 61,2 High concentration 29,4% – PSB 70,6% – foreign commercial operators
<b>Hungary**</b>	YLE – Finnish PSB PSB – Magyar Televizio (MTV) (channels – MTV 1 (free-to-air), MTV 2 (available on cable and satellite) and Duna TV). Main commercial companies: Magyar RTL Television, (channel – RTL KLUB); MTL SBS Televizio, (channel – TV 2); Duna TV Ri. (channel Duna TV); Viasat Hungaria, (channel: Viasat 3)	M1 – 15,5 M2 – 1,9 Duna TV – 1,7 TV2 – 27,4 RTL Klub – 29,4 Viasat 3 – 3,1 Video – 3,5 Minimax – 1	C3= 72,3 High concentration 21,4% – PSB 78,6% – foreign commercial operators

**Latvia \*\***

PSB – Latvijas Television, (channels LTV 1 and LTV 7)  
 Main commercial operator:  
 Latvijas Neatkarīga Televizija (channel – LNT)(Polsat, Polish company – 60% share)  
 MTG (channel – TV3)  
 Channel 3+Baltic, Pevy Baltiysky Kanal Latvia and Peviy Baltiyskiy Muzykalnyi Kanal – channels in Russian language

C3= 53  
 Moderate concentration  
 26,0% – PSB  
 74,0% – foreign commercial operators (LNT, 60% share of Polsat – Polish company)

**Lithuania \*\***

PSB – Lietuvos Nacionalinis Radijas ir Televizija (LRTV), (channels – LTV and LTV 2)

C3=66,2  
 High concentration  
 18,9% – PSB  
 39,6% – domestic commercial operator  
 41,5% – foreign commercial operator

Main commercial operators:  
 LUAB Laisvas ir nepriklausomas Kandas, (channel – LNK)  
 Tele-3, (channel – Tele 3);  
 UAB TV 1, (channel – TV 1)  
 Pevy Baltiysky Kanal Lithuania – Russian-language channel  
 PSB – Telewizja Polska SA (TVP) (channels – TVP 1, TVP 2, TVP 3 and TVP Polonia)  
 Main commercial operators – Canal +  
 Cyfrowy SP (channel – Canal +);  
 Telewipolsat, RTL polska, (channel – RTL 7)  
 Telewizja Wisia SP, (channel –TV Wisia)

LTV – 12,5  
 LTV 2 – 0,6  
 Tele 3 – 27,5  
 LNK – 26,2  
 Baltijos TV – 8,8  
 PBK – 3,6  
 5Kandas – 1,6  
 Tango TV – 1,4  
 TV 1 – 1,4  
 Video – 0,6  
 TVP 1 – 24,9  
 TVP 2 – 20,5  
 TVP 3 – 5,1  
 TV Polonia – 1,4  
 PolSat – 16,2  
 TV Wisla – 14,0  
 TV4 – 2,8  
 RTL 7/ TVN7 – 2,0  
 Canal + – 0,2

**Poland \*\***

C3=61,6  
 High concentration  
 73,7% – PSB  
 26,3 – domestic commercial company

Main commercial operators – Canal +  
 Cyfrowy SP (channel – Canal +);  
 Telewipolsat, RTL polska, (channel – RTL 7)  
 Telewizja Wisia SP, (channel –TV Wisia)

**Romania\***

PSB – TVR (TVR1, TVR2, TVR Cultural, TVRI)  
 Main commercial operators: Media Pro International SA (Pro TV, Acasa), (CME),  
 TV Antena 1 S.A. (Antena 1) (CCAI)  
 PSB – Slovenska televizija STV, (channels – STV1 and STV2)  
 Main commercial operators: Markiza,  
 MAC TV – (channel TV Joi)  
 Czech and Hungarian channels have an important market share  
 PSB – RTVSLO, (channels – TVS1 and TVS2 and third regional channel TV Koper Capodistria)  
 Main commercial operators: Central European Media Enterprises Ltd, (channels Pop TV and Kanal A);  
 TV3 Televizijska Dejavnost, (channel – TV3)

TVR1/Romania 1 – 22,1

TVR2 – 4

PRO TV – 16,7

Antena 1 – 16,6

Acasa TV - 9,2

Prima TV – 5,1

Jednotka STV 1 – 19,9

Dvojka STV 2 – 4,7

TV Markiza – 33,7

TVF Joi – 13,6

TA 3 – 1,1

CZ Channels – 11,2

HU channels – 8,5

TVS1 – 26,0

TVS2 – 10,4

Pop TV – 27,0

Kanal A – 8,1

Koper – 0,4

TV3 – 1,9

Croatian channels – 6,4

C3=55,4

Moderate concentration

39,9% – PSB

30,1% – foreign commercial company

30,0% – domestic commercial company

C3 = 67,2

High concentration

29,6% – PSB

50,2% – foreign commercial company

20,2% – domestic commercial company

C3 = 63,4

High concentration

57,4% – PSB

42,6% – foreign commercial company

**Croatia\*\*\***

Croatian channels available  
 PSB – Hrvatska radiotelevizija (HRT), (channels: HRT 1, HRT 2)  
 Main Commercial operators: Central European Media Enterprises Ltd, (channel – Nova TV);  
 RTL Group, (channel – RTL Televizija)

HRT 1 – 38,6

HRT 2 – 15,6

RTL – 24,4

Nova TV – 13,6

Other – 7,8

C3 = 78,6

High concentration

69,0% – PSB

31,0% – foreign commercial company

\* Audience share main channels 2005 (based on the data provided in the Commission Staff Working Document, Media pluralism in the Member States of the European Union, Brussels, 16 January 2007, SEC(2007) 32).

\*\* Audience share main channels 2004 (based on the data provided in the Commission Staff Working Document, Media pluralism in the Member States of the European Union, Brussels, 16 January 2007, SEC(2007) 32).

\*\*\* Source: Hrvatsko medijsko tržište: regulacija i trendovi koncentracije, eds. Peruško, Z., Jurlin, K. (2006) (*The Croatian Media Market: Regulation and Concentration Trends*, unpublished study for the Media Division of the Council of Europe).

controlled by different players is harder to sustain. Thus, one should focus more on internal pluralism (SEC(2007) 32).

The introduction of markets and democratic political systems in CEE countries has led to the creation of commercial privately owned media, which have vastly increased the media system diversity in comparison to socialist times. Media concentration trends, however, also appear in Central and Eastern Europe. Media markets in most countries of the CEE region are highly concentrated and with a very significant foreign ownership. In addition to concentration, in this region the transnational media concentration is particularly apparent, the extent of which as well as the consequences are not yet clear (AP-MD 2004).

The data presented above mainly speak to structural diversity of media systems in CEE and do not say much about the issue of internal pluralism and diversity of media content. It is in this area where, in the final analysis, we truly find the conditions for pluralism in the political and social sphere. So far, little evidence about diversity and pluralism of media content is available from the Central and Eastern European region, apart from statistics on broadcast programme genres (for instance, in the Yearbook of the European Audiovisual Observatory). The Croatian case will serve as an example of a more in-depth look at pluralism in a new media market. The data we base the analysis on come from two recent studies: Media markets in Croatia (Peruško, Jurlin 2006) and "Study on the assessment of content diversity in newspapers and television in the context of increasing trends towards concentration of media markets".<sup>16</sup>

### **3. From structural to content diversity in a new media market: the Croatian case**

The adjustment of Croatian media to a democratic political system started with the transitional changes in the 1990s, but the consensus to embrace the pluralistic paradigm (as opposed to previously dominant state-building paradigm) was reached only after 2000.<sup>17</sup> With the acceptance of Croatia's application for membership in the EU and the commencement of the candidacy procedure, Croatian media policy entered its third phase, increasingly aware of the globalization and integration context.

The interest for analysis of media markets in Croatia appeared in the research community at the end of the 1990s, at the time of the first significant foreign investments in the media. The first study including market data – shares of the audience (viewers, listeners, circulations in the press), and shares in advertising – was published in 1999.<sup>18</sup> Thereafter, several research projects and published texts focused on the issues of concentration of ownership, pluralism and diversity.<sup>19</sup> All were based on scarce publicly available data, and none performed a systematic economic market analysis.

The television market in Croatia is clearly national, as fourteen regional and local television stations have an audience of less than 9 per cent. In radio broadcasting, however, the market is regionally structured (the study on media markets in Croatia identified 21 regional markets). Based on the Croatian average, 47 per cent of radio audiences are held by the local station, 18 per cent by the regional station, and 24 per cent by national commercial stations. Three national public channels have a joint share of 10 per cent of the radio audience. On average, in each county there are two or more strong radio competitors (Peruško, Jurlin 2006).<sup>20</sup>

Two commercial televisions at the national level are majority-owned by foreign companies (RTL Group in RTL Television, and CME in Nova TV). Public service television HTV operates two national terrestrial channels. The television market in Croatia is highly concentrated: the C3 for audience shares of the first three television channels in Croatia in 2004 was 78 per cent (Ward

2006), while the H index in 2005 was 0,54 (Peruško, Jurlin 2006). Croatian public television still has the leading market share of television audiences in Croatia, and, in spite of a decline, has retained the highest audience ratings among countries of comparable size. Adult audiences (over 34) predominantly watch two public television channels (HTV 1 and HTV 2) (59%). Young adults prefer RTL Televizija, followed by HTV 1, HTV 2 and Nova TV. Children are true fans of RTL (34.7%), followed by HTV 1, Nova TV and HTV 2.

The Croatian case differs (at the level of the media system) somewhat from the rest of the Central European countries in several pre-transition respects.<sup>21</sup> Television Zagreb (to become Croatian television HTV after 1990 and part of the public service broadcaster Croatian Radio Television HRT) was (unlike the television stations of the Soviet bloc countries which formed the Intervention exchange) part of the Western European EBU-based Eurovision programme exchange, along with all of the television centres of the former Yugoslavia. This afforded not only a glimpse into the news and documentary productions of Western European countries, but also into their fiction and entertainment productions (BBC productions especially). Programme scheduling also included American television programmes and films. *Peyton Place*, *Bonanza*, *Dallas* and some other well-known examples in the new television genres were familiar to Croatian audiences in the decades preceding the transition. Technological development of the Television Zagreb was before the 1990s on a par with that in smaller Western European countries (i.e., Austria). Both of these factors influenced the future development of the television market in Croatia,<sup>22</sup> making it a much harder prospect for commercial stations to obtain quick profits from old western soaps and quiz shows.

In terms of programme genres, the television market is very highly concentrated in the genre of cultural programmes, art and religion (where the HTV has almost 100% market share); and sports, music, information and political programmes, documentaries, science and education programmes (80% contributed by HTV). With those programmes, HTV contributes significantly to the diversity of the television programmes in Croatia.

In the information genre (news and political magazines), HTV 1 and HTV 2 combined have 80 per cent of the television audiences; followed by Nova TV (14%). The share of RTL in this genre is less than 7 per cent. In the entertainment genre, the leader is RTL (almost 50% of the audiences), followed by HTV (25%), and Nova TV with 20 per cent. There is strong competition in the markets of films, series and, to a lesser degree, in the entertainment and children's programming.

A further view into pluralism of content was afforded with the analysis of the genre output and news programme content.<sup>23</sup> Diversity and pluralism of media output can be said to exist if there is balance between the representation of actors carrying characteristics of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, educational background, ideas, beliefs etc. Diversity inspiring tolerance and respect among citizens can only be accomplished if these groups and categories are presented in an unbiased way.

At the level of content diversity, we present here only the distribution of programme genres and the diversity of topics and actors (i.e. direct speech) in television news programmes as they play out in the programmes of two privately owned broadcasters operating at the national level (NOVA TV, RTL TV) and the Croatian public service television (HTV).

Even though all three broadcasters give most space in direct speech to the anonymous general public (i.e., *vox populi*) in their news, the percentage is lower in the news of PSB (22%) compared to the privately owned broadcasters (Nova TV, 27% and RTL TV, 26%). Differences are visible in that the PSB gives more space to actors representing state institutions and public

employees, government and ministers, national defense and security forces and civil servants, while privately owned broadcasters gives considerably more space to the general public, as well as to celebrities. They also give more space to company representatives and independent experts, but the differences are small. The division between commercial broadcasters' tendency towards infotainment (Delli Carpini, Williams 2001) and HTV's policy of giving more space to actors and institutions representing the state is clearly visible.

The most frequent topic covered in the news bulletins is that of home security and crime. This topic, a mainstay of tabloid media, is most present in RTL TV news (36,8% of all news topics) followed by HTV (33,3) with the lowest percentage in Nova TV (26,9). According to our sample, Nova TV seems to give importance to social issues (15,7% as opposed to 9,4 on RTL and 12,9 on PSB) while RTL TV gives a considerable amount of space to sport – 16,6 per cent (HTV has a special sport news programme broadcast after the evening news which was not part of this sample). Politics accounts for 12,9 per cent of the public service news, 11,5 on Nova TV and 8,1 on RT TV, while international affairs and politics gets around 4 per cent on all programmes. PSB gives more importance to business and economy compared to the commercial broadcasters (PSB 14,1 Nova TV 9,1 and RTL TV 7,6). Arts and culture are equally covered in the news of Nova TV and HTV, but neglected in RTL TV news (only 1,4%). The latter gives more space to human interests topics.

In the analysis of genre, the differences in the programme output of commercial and PSB television is most visible. While commercial broadcasters show 17,9 per cent (RTL TV) and 13,6 per cent (Nova TV) of light entertainment, HTV only has a percentage of 2,4 per cent of this genre. The differences are also visible in the time provided for soap operas: Nova TV – 25,9 per cent, RTL TV – 19 per cent and the PSB – 8,2 per cent. RTL TV gives more space to comedy (15,1%), drama (9,4%) and chat and talk shows (6,6%) compared to Nova TV and HTV, while Nova TV gives considerably more space to movies, 27,2 per cent, than RTL TV (18,8%) and HTV (16,9%). However, movies are the most frequent genre in Croatian national broadcasters programme viewed in total. HTV differs from the commercial broadcasters in that it has the highest percentage of news (5,5%), children's television (9,7%), quiz and panel games (3,6%), political interview and discussion (3,4%) and documentary (3,3%). It also contributes to the diversity of content, and thus fulfils its role as to serve the public, since it is the only broadcaster that broadcasts school and educational programmes, breakfast television, magazine, arts and culture, current affairs, nature and wildlife, religion, cinema, history and hobbies and leisure.

#### **4. What future for media pluralism and diversity?**

The Croatian data clearly show that the majority of genres with socially important content (news and information, culture, political discussion and other topics not in the category of light entertainment – mainly devoted to reality television) are broadcast on the public service broadcasting channels HTV 1 and HTV 2. Not surprisingly, audiences at the national level are highly concentrated in these segments on the public service broadcaster. This highlights the important role of public service broadcasting in providing diversity of non-entertainment content, and the unwillingness of commercial broadcasters to invest in this type of programming. In this respect, the implementation of media policy needs to be questioned, as all broadcasters are obliged to contribute to cultural identity, the promotion of cultural creativity, and development of education, science and the arts.

Within the Croatian television market, the public service broadcaster is clearly more diverse in its programming than its commercial competitors. When we compare the findings, however,

with the programmes of public service broadcasters in Norway, UK and Italy, HTV shows the smallest percentage of news and current affairs programmes (Ward 2006). HTV's largest programme segment is movies, as opposed to news programmes which are the largest segment in the other PSBs studied. The study of the Croatian media markets showed that in the segment of movies and series, the Croatian market is very well segmented and similar shares are held by all three companies broadcasting at the national level. This would tend to show that the public service broadcaster is giving in to commercial pressure. Whether the reason is the size of the market or the level of concentration, or both, Croatian PSB (still one with the highest audience ratings among CEE PSBs) is finding it difficult to cope with commercial pressure.

Regarding the diversity of topics and actors presented in the news, the differences between the public service broadcaster and the commercial stations are only slight, with some more emphasis in HTV on the economic and business news, political affairs and public service topics. HTV also gives a little more voice to "official sources" and none to celebrities. This could be assessed in two ways: the need of the public service broadcaster to compete for news audiences brings about the mainstreaming of its news output (although they have 80% of the national audience in news and current affairs programmes) or as improvement in regard to political independence shown in a greater similarity of news selection choices of the PSB to commercial broadcasters. The second evaluation is rather stretched, though, and even if partially correct – i.e., the news selection values have indeed changed in Croatia in the past decade (Stantić 2003) – the trend should not lead to the exclusion of hard news from the television news programme.

The Croatian data further tend to show a high degree of similarity of the largest programming segments of public service television and the commercial broadcasters, which could support the first thesis that commercial competition in a highly concentrated market brings about the convergence of programme output. The public service broadcaster is still producing the majority of socially important content. Media policy in Croatia should take further steps to ensure that the programming obligations in this respect are met also by the commercial broadcasters.

The Ward (2006) study of four European countries showed that a linear relationship could not be claimed between the content diversity in television news coverage and newspapers and the level of market concentration; and that resources, size of market and the regulatory framework are important elements in determining the diversity of the programming. One of the reasons for this honest conclusion is, of course, in the nature of the study: a snapshot of one moment in time. Media concentration is a process and not an event, and longitudinal data are necessary to analyse it. The Ward study for the Council of Europe is one of the rare attempts to directly link concentration and diversity and pluralism of content and is in that respect not only interesting for its results but also as a methodological basis for further work. Further study and attention to this issue are necessary, not only for a policy perspective, but from the research one as well.

Diversity and pluralism of the media in terms of their social and political role is increasingly linked to the growing consolidation of media industries at the international level. Some evidence of the negative relationship has been already accumulated. Recent European reports on media concentration and/or pluralism<sup>24</sup> point to several transversal conclusions:

- The trend of global media consolidation shows up in national markets as growing concentration of media ownership/control by a relatively small number of media companies;

- The trend is evident in the press markets, as well as in television broadcasting, cable and satellite transmission;
- European countries are attempting to control the concentration by limiting market shares in regard to mergers and (sometimes) cross media ownership; this is showing not to be effective in terms of limiting the market presence brought about by performance (i.e. growth of companies);
- Different models of regulatory measures are employed in different countries; there is no European model of ensuring diversity and pluralism;
- There is as yet no discernible pattern of media concentration types in different models of media markets;
- Though no causal relationship (in terms of empirical methodology) has yet been shown to exist, as regards the impact of concentration on diversity and pluralism of media content, the relationship is implicitly (and sometimes explicitly) assumed to be negative;
- The role of public service broadcasting is highlighted in terms of securing diversity and pluralism at the level of media systems;
- Regular monitoring is necessary at the European level of concentration, pluralism, and transnational aspects of media consolidation.

Regarding Central and Eastern European countries, we could add several more conclusions/concerns which emerge from studies and texts on the topic and apply specifically to post-socialist Europe:

- The media markets are still developing and have not reached the levels of the EU 15;
- Most of the media companies participating in the consolidation/concentration of media markets are of foreign origin;
- This transnational aspect of media concentration is more pronounced in the East than in the West, where the media industry developed indigenously over decades. There is no clear conclusion if this is a negative development;
- The issue of pluralism and diversity – in terms of the political and social role of the media in democracy – is compounded by the political history of state intervention and oppression of freedom of expression. Pluralism and diversity was after 1990s first provided by market-based media rather than the former state media and broadcasters, now transforming into public service broadcasters;
- The transformation of state broadcasters into PSB is difficult – for political and financial reasons;
- Across all the media in CEE, the professionalization of journalists has not yet been attained, making them more vulnerable to influences from both the owners and the political pressures;
- Market data are still not thorough or transparent enough, and the analysis of concentration trends is only in an initial stage;
- Studies on diversity and pluralism of content are almost non-existent (or not published in international journals or English-language publications).

In his discussion on market concentration and its effects, Timothy J. Dowd points out two different standpoints which could be applied to the analysis of CEE media markets as well:

- a) the “cyclical account” (Peterson and Berger 1972, 1975; in Dowd 2004) emphasizes the negative effect, in which there is a negative relationship between concentration and diversity. As Peterson and Berger point out, long periods of high concentration are followed by short periods of de-concentration which occur when “unique historical factors produce a gap in the “majors’ control” (Dowd 2004, pp. 1416) and the audiences demands different products that are not to be found in the supplies of the majors. This short period of competitiveness is then replaced by high concentration again, that occurs when the majors “absorb the new challenge.” (Dowd 2004, pp. 1416)

The cyclical account might be used to explain the boom in the media sources and companies in the early transition years, when the market was open but not yet regulated. State media (old “majors”) were deprived of their market dominance by the collapse of the communist system and market competition began. Commercial media (new “majors”) then entered by a different door (the market) and the process of concentration began anew.

- b) the “open system account” emphasizes the importance of the interaction between concentration and decentralized production: centralized production and high concentration dampen diversity, while the “expansion of decentralized production reduces the negative effect of concentration on diversity” (Dowd 2004, pp. 1444). According to this standpoint, the effects of concentration are softened by the logic of production: the ability of small independent firms to respond to new demands resulted in decentralized production of big firms (establishment of semi-autonomous divisions, or signing contracts with independents, project-based approaches, inter-firm alliances); in this way, the majors are able to keep track of new trends and demands of the market.<sup>25</sup>

We still lack sufficient data to test the second thesis. Even though we are seeing a growing number of studies focusing on CEE media markets, the data available are still not as detailed, comprehensive and, of course, cover a short time span (so it is difficult to show trends). Data on media markets and ownership structure need constant updating, due to constant changes of the dynamic environment in which they exist. There is no doubt about the importance of the media in contemporary societies; in a general sense, it reflects a society as a whole, since it provides “cues about the nature of social reality, for the agendas of our concerns, and for the climate of public opinion” (McLeod, Kosicki, Pan 1996, pp. 246). The latest European Commission (2007) document on media pluralism in Member States highlights the need to focus more on the study of internal pluralism, which means that new indicators for assessing pluralism should be developed.

In order to show the influence of ownership concentration on content, it is necessary to study both. While there is ample evidence of the concentration trend worldwide as well as in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, the relationship to content has not often been studied, especially in new European democracies. While this paper, based on data concerning Croatia market structures and content diversity, cannot be said to prove that the concentration of the television market reduces the diversity of programme content, some conclusions on the influence of competition and the structure of the media policy in respect to diversity of content have been drawn.

If we agree with Le Goff’s thought – “L’illusion selon laquelle nous en aurions fini avec l’histoire et la barbarie, que nous pourrions désormais vivre dans un monde pacifié et unifié

par les lois du marché, a fait long feu” (Le Goff 2002, pp. 188),<sup>26</sup> there is work to be done. The “invisible hand of the market” let loose in the field of media and communication cannot, on its own, produce the necessary conditions for pluralist democracy to flourish. Conscious reflection and democratic decision-making is necessary. Thus, the future level of diversity and pluralism in the media will reflect the (political and policy) decisions that we make today. This responsibility cannot be avoided.

## Notes

1. See AP-MD reports *Media Diversity in Europe* and *Transnational Media Concentration in Europe*.
2. See the account of the early modern ideas in chapter 1, “Liberty of the press”, and the relationship of the market to the liberty of the press especially pp. 44–50. J. Keane “The Media and Democracy”. Polity Press. 1991.
3. The (few) positive impacts of communism/socialism on modernization (especially in Russia), or the negative impacts on freedom of expression or individual action cannot be elaborated here.
4. For comprehensive analyses of these changes, see Paletz & Jakubowicz (eds.) *Business as Usual*, and L. D. Paletz, K. Jakubowicz, P. Novosel eds. *Glasnost and After*.
5. Jurgen Kocka’s phrase in the lecture on the “European project” at the Goethe Institute Zagreb, 1 February 2007.
6. For example, in Hungary, 1986, Radio Danubia.
7. See the introductory chapter by Sükösd and Bajomi-Lázár, “The second Wave of Media Reform in East Central Europe”, in *Reinventing Media* for an account of the newer media policy developments in East Central Europe.
8. In the Croatian case the political framework before 2000 was probably an even more serious barrier to investment in the media.
9. For example, the publication *The Economics of the Media: The Convergence of the Transition Countries with EU Member States*, Hruby et al., deals with the ownership in new democracies of CEE, with a special emphasis on broadcasting markets in the 90s. A short general overview of television markets in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Russia and Slovakia is given, with a more detailed focus on Slovakia and, to a lesser extent, Czech Republic.
10. An example of this is the report *Pluralism in the Multi-Channel Market: Suggestions for Regulatory Scrutiny*, by C. Marsden, in which the author deals with media pluralism and convergence in Europe, with a main focus on western and northern European countries.
11. The European Federation of Journalists published a report in 2002, on media groups in “old” democracies, with data on the media landscape in regards to the broadcasting platform, cable, satellite and multimedia platform and the press platform, in order to identify the main players in the media markets. This was followed by a complementary report in 2003, named *Eastern Empires*, which concentrated on foreign media ownership in the press and broadcasting media markets in post-socialist countries.
12. The Final report of the study on “The Citizen in the EU: Obligations for the Media and the Institutions Concerning the Citizen’s Right to Be Fully and Objectively Informed”, prepared by the European Institute for the Media in 2005, includes data on broadcasting (radio and television) operators, press and publishing companies, cable and satellite companies and the share of advertising revenues. Probably the most comprehensive study on the structure of audio-visual media markets in the CEE was published in April 2004, commissioned in 2002 by the DG Culture of the European Commission prior to the last wave of accession and conducted by IMCA international media consultants & associates (*Etude du paysage audiovisuel det des politiques publiques des pays candidats dans le*

*secteru audiovizuel*. Rapport transversal, version definitive. IMPCA pour la commission européenne – DG EAC Etude DG EAC/59/020). Individual country reports are available for Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. Among the first transversal publications on the regional developments in the audio-visual sector was published in 1992 by Eurocreation & IDATE, offering a view into the territory of the former Central and Eastern European film and audio-visual industries, new policies and international cooperation. The 1996 book *The Development of the Audiovisual Landscape in Central Europe since 1989* (John Libbey Media University of Luton Press), presented by the EU Commission in cooperation with Eureka Audiovisual, includes authored chapters on different countries with some data, but not in a comprehensive comparative mode. The 2005 EUMAP study (OSI/EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program) “Television across Europe: regulation, policy and independence” provides in-depth accounts of the country-by-country television systems with the greatest emphasis on the regulatory aspects and independence. The texts include market data as well, but the sources and methodologies are not always comparable. The latest study with market data is the Commission staff working-document *Media Pluralism in the Member States of the European Union from 2007* which gives an analysis of EU Member States, including the two new ones: Bulgaria and Romania.

13. An example is the report *Media in South Eastern Europe: Legislation, Professionalism and Associations of the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe*, conducted by the Media Task Force (2003). The report covers the media landscape in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulagarai, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia.
14. The first thorough attempt to assess media ownership in connection to pluralism in former socialist states, which includes South-Eastern Europe, is *the Media Ownership and its Impact on Media Independence and Pluralism* (ed. B. Petkovic). The report mapped eighteen European countries covering the legislative framework, the privatization processes and the media markets (press, television and radio), giving an important view on the situation in the whole region. A year later, in 2005, the monitoring report *Television across Europe: regulation, policy and independence* was released, focusing on the policy, regulatory, market and institutional aspects of commercial and public service television. It covers eight CEE countries that acceded to the EU in May 2004 (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia), Bulgaria and Romania (which joined the EU in 2007), Turkey and Croatia (two candidate countries), four “old” EU Member States (France, Germany, Italy and the UK) and the potential EU-candidate countries in South-Eastern Europe (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of Macedonia and Serbia).
15. Indicator of concentration of the three strongest players on the market, by which 0–35 represents low level of concentration, 36–55 moderate level of concentration and above 56 high level of concentration.
16. “Study on the assessment of content diversity in newspapers and television in the context of increasing trends towards concentration of media markets”, by David Ward, Centre for Media Policy and Development (London), for the Media Division of the Council of Europe. The Croatian research was performed at the Department for Culture and Communication, IMO, Zagreb. The content analysis was performed simultaneously in Croatia, Italy, Norway and the UK. A quantitative content analysis was conducted in the period of two weeks (24.10.2005 – 06.11.2005), through the monitoring of daily newspapers and television news coverage, as well as genres appearing in the programmes of the broadcasters. For the purpose of this paper, the data set on television news coverage and genres was used.
17. For more information on the development of the Croatian media system and policy in the 1990s, see Z. Peruško Čulek (1999) *Demokracija i mediji*, Barbat: Zagreb and Z. Peruško 2003. “Croatia: The

- first ten years. In Paletz & Jakubowicz eds., *Business as Usual*, Hampton Press, p. 111–145. For a detailed account of the television policy and sector in contemporary Croatia, see Z. Peruško 2005. "Croatia". In *Television Across Europe: Regulation, policy and independence*. EUMAP & NMP: Budapest.
18. Peruško Čulek, Z. ed. Nova medijska agenda: za europsku medijsku politiku u Hrvatskoj. *Medijska istraživanja*, vol. 5, no. 2: 1999.
  19. Peruško, Z. «Medijska koncentracija: izazov pluralizmu medija u Srednjoj i Istočnoj Europ», *Medijska istraživanja* (god. 9. br.1) 2003 (39–58). Round Table on Media Pluralism IMO & Council of Europe [http://www.imo.hr/culture/conf/medconf02/Media\\_Diversity\\_and\\_Pluralism.pdf](http://www.imo.hr/culture/conf/medconf02/Media_Diversity_and_Pluralism.pdf); Malović, Stjepan, Report on Croatia, u Brankica Petkovic ur., *Media Ownership and its Impact on Media Independence and Pluralism*, Ljubljana, Peace Institute and SEENpM, June 2004. Peruško, Zrinjka. *Mediji. Otvorenost društva Hrvatska 2005*. ur. Simona Goldstein. Institut otvoreno društvo Hrvatska, 2005. Peruško, Jurlin, *Hrvatsko medijsko tržište*, (unpublished study).
  20. Peruško, Jurlin, *Hrvatsko medijsko tržište*, (unpublished study).
  21. Vesna Pusic on defining the transition in relation to the pre-transition character and history as well as to the post-transition dominant aim in the 1990s., also see Jakubowicz's interpretation and Peruško Čulek for a more detailed analysis of the 90s decade of transition in media and media policy in Croatia, in Paletz, Jakubowicz eds., *Business as Usual* (2003).
  22. For a recent account of the Croatian television market, see Z. Peruško, "Croatia" in *Television across Europe: Independence*, 2005.
  23. The data base set for the analysis of content diversity was created in the comparative "Study on the assessment of content diversity in newspapers and television in the context of increasing trends towards concentration of media markets", by David Ward.
  24. Ward 2006, Ward 2004, EIM 2004, OSCE 2003, AP-MD 2003, AP-MD 2004, EFJ 2002, EFJ 2003, Commission Staff Working Document (SEC(2007) 32).
  25. Dowd's research on one specific media market – that is, on the US recording industry – with a focus on new performing acts and new recording firms in the mainstream market, confirms the open-system account. This approach can be applied to other media markets as well, even though the network television companies (ABC, CBS) "increasingly rely on in-house production in the wake of deregulation and high costs" (p. 1445), thus, centralized production combined with increasing concentration results in the diminishing of program diversity
  26. Le Goff, *La démocratie post totalitaire*, 188.

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